

Herbs Make Scents

THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
VOLUME XXXVIII, NUMBER 7



SOUTH TEXAS UNIT
OCTOBER 2015

Editor –Linda Alderman ewalderman@comcast.net

October 2015 Calendar

- Oct 2-3** – Fri. – Sat. **South Central District Gathering and Mountainview**
- Oct 8** – Thurs. 7 p.m. **Wicked Plants: an Evening with Amy Stewart**, 712 Green Ave., Orange TX, see newsletter for details
- Oct 13** - Tues. - 10 a.m. **Day Meeting** at the home of Carol Cobb, 281-469-5989. Program “*The Herbs of China Bales: Nightshade*”, presented by Pam Harris. **Bring a dish to share. This meeting is not open to guests.**
- Oct 16** - Fri. - 8a.m. **Texas Pollinators’ Garden Symposium**, Walker County Storm Shelter 455 Hwy 75, Huntsville, Texas 77340
- Oct 21** - Wed. - 7 p.m. **Evening Meeting** at Judson Robinson Center (2020 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77004), hosted by Lois Sutton and Pam Harris. Program: “Follow the Scent Trail with Lucia”, presented by Lucia Bettler. **Bring your plate, napkin and a dish to share.**

November 2015 Calendar

- Nov 13-14** **Herb Fair** at West Gray Multi-Service Center, 1475 West Gray, Houston, TX
- Nov 17** - Tues. - 10 a.m. **(New Date!)** **Day Meeting** at the home of Pam Harris, 2624 University, Houston, TX, 77005, 713-661-1109. Program “*The Herbs of China Bales: Mistletoe*”, presented by Linda Alderman. **Bring a dish to share. This meeting is open to guests.**
- Nov 18** - Wed. - 7 p.m. **Evening Meeting** at Judson Robinson Center (2020 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77004), hosted by Joan Jordan and Nita Rowe, Program: “*Designing a Therapeutic Herb Garden: A Garden to Appeal to All of the Senses*,” presented by Amy E. Sullivan, Landscape Architect and Designer. **Bring your plate, napkin and a dish to share.**

Newsletter deadline: 25th of every the month

Happy Birthday!



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13 – Benée Curtis
21 – Janice Stuff
29 – Martha Burg

Rosemary for Remembrance

Carlene Thompson – was a member of our unit for 25 years.





Chairman's Corner

Congratulations to one and all who participated in the September meeting. The ambiance was friendly and energizing. We all enjoyed visiting with our many visitors and each other.

Our first meeting, which opened with a blessing given by member, Lucia Bettler, was a delightful success. Thanks to all who brought a joyous spirit and guests.

Special gratitude goes to Karen Cottingham for locating the incredible speaker, our hostesses, Carol and Calvin Cobb and Irene Potoczniak for the attractive tables covered with vintage linens, decorated with a beautiful tea pot collection, and herbal arrangements.

We all enjoyed the wonderful food and refreshments. Guests and members alike appreciated surprise gifts - the tomato plants grown by Jeanie Dunnihoo and the fresh bay branches from Vivian Scallan's garden. We all like surprise pass alongs. Thank you Jeanne and Vivian!

Please remember our focus this year is **membership**. As soon as you read this newsletter invite three people to our October meeting. The program given by Lucia Bettler is going to be a winner. We all know Lucia is a professional speaker and an herbal authority. We are so fortunate to have her in our group. Let's share her with our friends.

Extending our friendships and our love of learning about herbs with guests is rewarding. Remember every guest is a potential new member.

Finding joy and delight with each of you.

Warmly,
Sally Luna
Unit Chair

About Our Meetings . . .

The October evening program will be presented by Lucia Bettler, Certified Aromatherapist, cooking instructor, expert in herbal history and folklore, and a member of HSA-STU since 1984.

Lucia owns and operates *Lucia's Garden*, a unique Houston gift shop and gathering place dedicated to "helping each other live more mindful and fulfilled lives." Let Lucia transport you to the rose petal harvest in Turkey and to the legendary sites essential to the perfumer's art.

-Karen Cottingham

This year the Day Section is using Susan Wittig Albert's books as the inspiration for herb studies.

15 members enjoyed the September day program, the Morning Glory, presented by Lois Sutton. See highlights of her program in this newsletter. Thank you for preparing the program and hosting the meeting!

-Thelma Rowe

23 members and 8 guests attended the September evening meeting. None of the guests were repeat visitors from July.

The program was super. Kim McHugh, the Tea Master from McHugh Tea Room in Bellaire, was really a fantastic addition to the evening. Also, I was able to get a short biographical sketch of each guest and deliver it in an introduction. The guests enjoyed hearing about themselves, and the members enjoyed learning about their guests. Half of the guests brought a potluck dish to share, which was very nice. I heard from half a dozen members that this was the best meeting they had attended in years.

-Albert Ramos





**Herbal Celebration
for the Winter Season
Setup Friday Nov. 13
Sales Sat. Nov. 14**

The South Texas Herb Society will host the **43rd Annual Herb Fair** on Nov. 13 and Nov. 14 at **the Multi-Service Center** on West Gray. We have received confirmation that the building will be ready to accommodate our Herb Fair

The **Pre-order form** will be posted and emailed to you by early October. Plan to pre-order your items which bring savings to the Unit.

During **October meetings** there will be some packaging and product finishing to complete.

Members save and bring **Plant Flats....** to the Herb Fair.

Flats are needed by customers to buy more plants.

Pickup /Set-up /Clean Up /Take Back
Lead contact: Janice Stuff
jestuff@pdq.net 713-516-5748

Pickup: We still need at least 3 persons on Friday morning to meet at our storage Unit, and help load materials and display equipment used to cover tables, and display products.

Set-up: On Friday volunteers needed during the first hour will be devoted to unloading and setting up the plants. The remaining hours volunteers needed to set up remaining product areas, checkout areas, break room, etc.

Clean-up: On Saturday, after closing, members need to help cleanup, pack any remaining products, and supplies.

Take Back: We still need at least 3 persons to take back supplies and equipment back to our storage Unit.

Herb Fair Workshops

Crafts: Thursdays

For more information, please contact Pam Harris
prharris014@gmail.com

Oct 1: 10 a.m – hosted by Nutti Doodeheever
3826 Durness
Bring your lunch and scissors

Oct 15: 10 a.m – TBD

Oct 29: 10 a.m – TBD

Nov 9: 10 a.m – TBD (if necessary)

Jellies

Lois needed to cancel the previously scheduled October workshops, as she is now traveling on those dates. She will work other days -- call her!

Ways & Means Needs...

... dried herbs for our tea blends for Herb Fair.
We need to be harvesting red stem applemint, lemon balm, lemon verbena, Mexican mint marigold, and any other herbs that could be used for crafts or cooking.





September Programs

The Herbs of China Bayles: Morning Glory Lois Sutton September 8, 2015

In opening pages of *Mourning Glory*, Susan Wittig Albert cautions: “Those of us who cultivate herbs sometimes get into the habit of treating them like well-mannered pets. ... Where herbs are concerned, we like to think that we’re always in charge. But sometimes we’re not so much in charge as we might think.” She then weaves the tale of China, a young reporter (Jessica) and the murder victim, a young woman who dies tragically in a house fire.

Using herbs that have the power to control us, she introduces chapters with morning glory, the Christmas vine, *Salvia divinorum*, plants containing caffeine, tobacco & marijuana, kola nut & coca (cocaine), and plants used to make or flavor alcohol. She also reminds us of aromatherapy and the power of certain essential oils to invigorate, energize or calm.

Convolvulaceae is the family of morning glories and bindweed. It is a complicated family, currently undergoing much research to sort the nine or ten tribes, 58 genera and 1880 species! David Austin, a frequently referenced morning glory researcher, has a website, Convolvulaceae Unlimited, entirely devoted to morning glory and bind weed.

While the family name is from the Latin *convolvere*, “to wind”, not all plants are vines. There are trees and shrubs in the family. Flowers are funnel-shaped with five fused petals, five stamens that fuse to the petals and five sepals. Leaves are simple and alternate, many heart-shaped. The fruit may be a capsule, berry or nut.

The psychedelic effects from ingestion of morning glory (*Ipomoea tricolor*) seeds and extracts were important in Aztec and Zapotec religious or spiritual events. Some plants host the ergot fungus and thus contain ergoline alkaloids (LSD-like).



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An example of this is the Aztec *ololiuhqu* (*Turbina corymbosa*). The Aztecs used these plant alkaloids as a poison, giving their victims a “horror trip”. (enWikipedia)

There were other medicinal uses. Early references include its use in Chinese medicine as a laxative. *Ipomoea arvensis* was used to control bleeding and to reduce fevers while *Ipomoea digitata* is used in Ayurvedic medicine as a diuretic, aphrodisiac and as a rejuvenative tonic. Jalap (*Ipomoea purga*), another Mexican native, was used for constipation and often was mixed with other laxatives or carminatives such as ginger and clove.

An early nonmedicinal use of morning glory was in ancient Mesoamerica. The Olmecs mixed moon vine juice (*Ipomoea alba*) with *Castilla elastic* latex to produce “rubber balls”. Dating for this process goes to 1600 BCE, predating Charles Goodyear’s vulcanization process by some 3,000 years! Breeding of morning glory as an ornamental plant began in Japan during the 9th century. The morning glory symbolizes summer in Japanese art.

Another cultural use is in hoodoo as a lucky or sexual charm. The dried roots, called John the Conquer, are carried and rubbed for good luck in gambling or “flirting.” There’s even a song, written by Willie Dixon, “Rub my Root” with this verse added by Muddy Waters in 1954:

My pistol may snap, my mojo is frail
But I rub my root, my luck will never fail
When I rub my root, my John the Conquer
root ...

Morning glory plants are toxic for pets – because of their high alkalinity – but the larvae of some leaf miner moths eat morning glories, with a potential economic impact on sweet potato production.

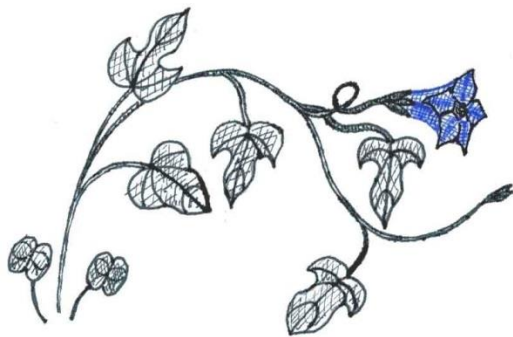


There are two members of the morning family that are edible, the sweet potato *Ipomoea batatas* and water spinach, *Ipomoea aquatica*.

Sweet potatoes have their own extensive history. Sweet potatoes have been documented in Peru to 8000 BCE and in Central America to 3000 BCE. Based on the greater varietal diversity in Central American plants than in Peruvian sweet potatoes, David Austin suggests that Central America is the primary site of origin with the Peruvian sites as secondary, even though archeologic evidence is older there. Despite the New World origin of sweet potatoes only 3% of the world's supply is grown here; the leading growers are China and Uganda.

Water spinach (aka river spinach, water morning glory, Chinese spinach, Chinese convolvulus) is a semiaquatic plant now found throughout tropical and subtropical areas. Its origin is unknown. It is termed a noxious weed in Florida, California and Hawaii but may be grown in Texas as there has been no evidence of the plant escaping into the wild from personal gardens. The leaves and shoots are common ingredients in Southeast Asian foods.

The scourge of the family is bindweed, *Convolvulus arvensis*. It is a Eurasian native, first documented in the US in 1884, arriving most likely as a contaminant in other farm and garden seeds. It has been called the worst weed in California and the western states. The agricultural challenges comes from its rhizome & root structure. It has both a deep vertical root and also shallow, extensive lateral roots. The root and rhizomes can reach 2 ½ to 5 tons per acre, taking up all the available top soil and precluding planting of many vegetable crops.



Lost and Found

Misplaced or lost at the Sept. night meeting:
Blue/white Tea pot Lids.

Check your belongings, unit storage bins, etc.
These items were lost by hostess Carol Cobb.

Contact Carol at carolcobb@comcast.net



Other interesting events...

The Stark Museum of Art is hosting the traveling exhibition Wicked Plants inspired by Amy Stewart's best selling book, Wicked Plants: The Weed that Killed Lincoln's Mother and other Botanical Artocities. The exhibit opens Oct. 3 and runs until Jan. 3, 2016. See the museum's website for many art, botanical, and educational opportunities related to this exhibit, some of which are in conjunction with Shangri-La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center.

Closer to home, Amy Stewart will also appear **October 9 at 6:30 p.m. at Murder by the Book**, an "indie" bookstore specializing in mysteries. (2342 Bissonet St, 713-524-8597). Amy will read from her new release, Girl Waits with Gun based on "the forgotten true story of the nation's first female deputy sheriffs. Elizabeth Gilbert says this book features "some of the most memorable and powerful female characters I've seen in print for a long time."

For those interested in Indigo, the Women's Institute (2202 Avalon Place, Houston, 713- 529-7123) offers a **lecture Sunday, Oct. 18** entitled "Toulouse and Albi: Two Colorful Southwest French Cities." These cities were built by the incredible wealth of the woad merchants, the European source of blue indigo dye. To give an idea how lucrative trade in indigo could be, the Spencer family fortune (Princess Diana's family) was based on their ancestral woad merchants.

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
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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.



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

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