

Herbs Make Scents

THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
VOLUME XLVI, NUMBER 2



SOUTH TEXAS UNIT
FEBRUARY 2023

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

February 2023 Calendar

- Feb 10, Fri. 10:00 am** **Westbury Garden Workday** at 12581 Dunlap Street, Houston, TX 77035
- Feb 14, Tues. 10:00 am** **Day Meeting** is an Herb Study Program on Common Sage (*Salvia officinalis*). Comprehensive research study presented by members at the Cherie Flores Pavilion, 1500 Hermann Dr. Houston, TX. Review of proposed crafts for Herb Day: Bring examples and ideas. **Bring your own lunch.**
RSVP ddwheeler16@hotmail.com. **Open to the public.**
- Feb 15, Wed. 6:30 pm** **Evening Meeting** “*To Have and to Hold - The Traditional Herbs of Marriage*” presented by STU members **Karen Cottingham** and **Elizabeth Martin** 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.**
- Feb 24, Fri. 10:00 am** **Westbury Garden Workday** at 12581 Dunlap Street, Houston, TX 77035

March 2023 Calendar

- Mar 4, Sat. 10:00 am** **Westbury Garden Workday** at 12581 Dunlap Street, Houston, TX 77035
- Mar 7, Tues. 10:00 am**
(Note: Change of Date) **Day Meeting** is an Herb Study Program on Mexican oregano (*Lippia graveolens*) and Craft workshop. Comprehensive research study presented by members at the Cherie Flores Pavilion, 1500 Hermann Dr. Houston, TX 77030. Bring your own lunch. **12:00 – 2:00 pm following** lunch, there will be an Herb Day Craft workshop. **RSVP** ddwheeler16@hotmail.com. **Open to the public.**
- Mar 7, Tues. 7:00 pm** **Quarterly Full Moon Ramble** Is a members only Zoom meeting
- Mar 17-18, Sat.-Sun 8:00 am** **Pioneer Unit Plant Sale**, Round Top, TX. See details in the Chairman’s Corner
- Mar 22, Wed. 6:30 pm**
(Note: Change of Date) **Evening Meeting** “*The Aromatherapy Medicine Chest*” will be presented by **Fran Higgins**, licensed massage therapist, licensed aesthetician, and certified aromatherapist. Fran is retired from Source Vital Apothecary, and prior to that, she worked with **Lucia Bettler** at Lucia’s Garden. Location: the Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion, 1500 Hermann Dr, Houston, TX77030. Doors open at 6:30 pm, program at 7:00 pm. **Free and open to the public.**
- Mar 24, Sat. 10:00 am** **Westbury Garden Workday** at 12581 Dunlap Street, Houston, TX 77035
- Newsletter deadline: the 25th of every month is strictly enforced (March Editor is Janice Freeman)**



- 08 Terry Snook
- 13 Maria Treviño
- 14 Elizabeth Grandich
- 18 Donna Adair

Chairman's Corner

Big News!! We are having Herb Day for the first time in three years!

Saturday, April 22 from 8:30 am to 2 pm

Fondren Hall at St. Paul's United Methodist Church on Main Street

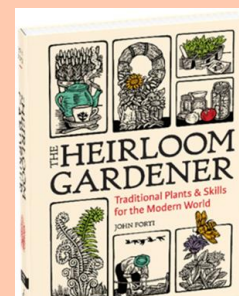
Theme: *Living Our Herbal Legacy - Inspiring Today's Cooks, Gardeners and Herbalists*



We have secured a keynote speaker, John Forti, who will participate from New England via Zoom. John's presentation for us will be based on his most recent book, *The Heirloom Gardener - Traditional Plants and Skills for the Modern World*. He will tailor his talk to us by providing an herbal emphasis. Richly illustrated with period images and contemporary photographs, John's PowerPoint shares inspiration from our long history of heirloom preservation, herbalism, garden craft, and homestead lifeways that we can apply to our own gardens and landscapes. Artisanal gardening lifestyles that are helping us to rebuild vibrant local agricultural economies and celebrate sustainable cottage industries that are contributing to our new, homegrown American

crafts movement and backyard environmentalism.

At a time when we could all use a little good news, we hope you will join us for a refreshing look at how you can make a difference and build habitat in your own backyard and community.



continued



Herb Day will also feature plenty of hands-on experiences and demonstrations to complement our keynote speaker. We will have our Herbal Marketplace with plenty of crafts and plants for sale. We are still searching for the perfect speaker to wrap up the day. As soon as all details are finalized, we will create a publicity flyer for distribution.

Thanks to all who have volunteered so far, and to the Herb Day Committee, **Tricia Bradbury, Karen Cottingham, Catherine O'Brien, Donna Wheeler and Maria Trevino**

There is nothing like a little road trip to Festival Hill in Round Top to visit our sister unit, the Pioneer Unit based in and around Round Top. They have an incredible selection of plants (shop early for the best selction) and of course the Herbal Forum. Just save room in your garden for our own plant sale!



Just a quick update on our program Full Moon Zoom: The program was started in March of 2021 as a way for our members to keep in touch during Covid. Our members needs have changed since then, we will now have our informal, member’s only Full Moon Zoom **quarterly starting March 7**. Thankfully, **Nicole Buergers and Laura Mullen** will still host and provide us with an herb to focus on. I hope to see you all there in March.

Until next time,
Julie
Unit Chair



Sage, *Salvia officinalis*

Sage was the most popular herb in the U.S. until World War II. Herbal uses include culinary, ornamental/fragrance, medical, ceremonial, and are great pollinators.

...Want to learn more about sage?

On Feb. 14 at 10:00 am, members will meet at the Cherie Flores Pavilion, 1500 Hermann Drive, to share their report on this herb. RSVP ddwheeler16@hotmail.com. **Bring your own lunch.**

To Have and to Hold - The Traditional Herbs of Marriage

Presented by **Karen Cottingham**
and **Elizabeth Martin**

February 15th at 6:30 pm

Cherie Flores Pavilion
1500 Hermann Dr.



Unit Membership Renewals Coming Up!

Maria Treviño, Treasurer

This year we will begin collecting the dues for the 2023-2024 fiscal year on **May 1st** and will continue through the end of **June**. The STU fiscal year ends June 30th.

The directory is compiled from the dues paid by members. We want to include all our active members in the directory we intend to publish in a timelier manner, so get your dues in during the dues period if you want to be included.

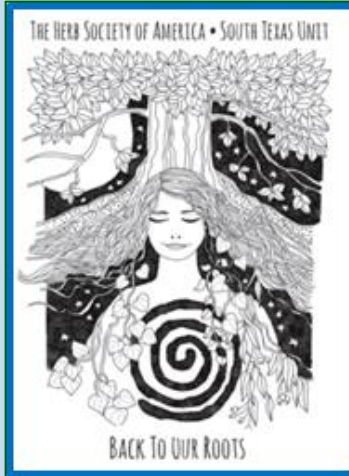
This year we will be doing something new. On May 1st or soon after, you will be receiving via email an "invoice" from me through Square. The invoice will reflect the amount you paid the prior year and due by June 30th. If you want to use a credit card, you will be able to click on the PAY NOW button on the invoice and go directly to the payment page on Square. You will also have the option to simply mail a check to the unit.

Thank you for your continued support of the South Texas Unit.



Back to our Roots

Julie Fordes



The freeze took out our lavender, rosemary and much of the calendula despite being covered. We still have our echinacea, chamomile, and oregano. Thank you, **Janice Stuff, Janice Dana and Donna Adair** for planting more calendula. Thanks also to **Laura Mullen** who is tending a flat of calendula in her greenhouse. They will be ready for transplanting soon.

Workdays will continue on Friday mornings in February and switch to Saturday mornings in March.

I would like to add yarrow to our medicinal garden. I think it needs to be a bit warmer before we start the seeds. If you have some yarrow seeds you would like to start for the garden, let me know. Additionally, if you have an idea for a plant that should be in the garden, let me know.

WESTBURY COMMUNITY GARDEN WORK DAYS

Fridays

February 10th and 24th @ 10 AM



Bring your tools and a mug for tea. I'll bring hot water.

Julie



2023 Herb Fair Update from Catherine O'Brien



Hyssop

As you are out shopping throughout the year, here is a grocery list of items that the Faith Strunk and her Fragrance folks need for milk baths and/or soaks:

- ♥ coconut milk powder, baking soda, citric acid, arrowroot powder or cornstarch, non-fat dry milk
- ♥ salts – Himalayan salt, sea salt, Dead Sea salt, Epsom salt)
- ♥ sugars – granulated sugar, brown sugar
- ♥ oils – olive oil, grapeseed oil, sweet almond oil, virgin coconut oil, fractionated coconut oil, avocado oil, jojoba oil, or macadamia nut seed oil.

Try to catch these oil, sugar, and salt donations on sale and bring them to the monthly meetings. Catherine will keep a tally and get them to the right committees. We can stop purchasing when we have enough.

If you couldn't plant seeds last month, here is a list of herb plants that can go into the garden during February: fennel, lemon balm, oregano, parsley, rosemary, thyme, and mints. The mints that we need are peppermint (*Mentha piperita*) and red stem apple mint *Mentha x gracilis* 'Madalene Hill,' a hybrid cross between *M. arvensis* and *M. spicata*. Along with lemon balm, these mints go into the Texas Herb Tea and the Christmas Herb Tea.

Warm season annuals (e.g., anise, hyssop, or basil) can be planted in flats or containers that can be moved and protected from temperatures below 50 degrees.

An old timer's advice to remember is to watch for the budding of pecan trees as this is most likely a sign that the danger of freeze is past, and spring has arrived.

Give yourself a Valentine gift by planting an antique rose. You can prune your antique roses to shape the plant — any severe pruning is not necessary. When pruning it is a good idea to use alcohol or Lysol on your pruning shears to keep from spreading infections from plant to plant. Those Clorox® wipes in the dispenser make a convenient tool for disinfecting your pruning shears. And if you would like to harvest rosebuds, rose petals, and flowers for tea blends or bath salts (Rose Milk bath soak), please do not use pesticides, fungicides, or herbicides. According to **Jeanie Dunnihoo**, if you buy roses and other flower plants that are not labeled "organic" at the time of purchase, they will be within 2-3 months, providing you don't continue to spray them with chemicals.

If you want to supply some color to the flower mix for the Calming Bath Soak, February is a good time to plant bachelor button (cornflower) seeds and keep harvesting those calendulas. Cornflower seeds do not require any pre-treatment (e.g., soaking or stratification) before sowing. Sow seeds directly about ¼ inch deep when the temperatures are about 60°F. If still too cold or if we are expecting another frost, sow them in trays. Seeds germinate in 7-14 days. Cornflowers should flower in approximately 70-80 days.

The Daytime Herb Group is brainstorming craft ideas for Herb Fair: planter boxes, more vinegars, bookmarks to go with the book sale and jam jar covers to go with **Benée Curtis'** array of jellies, which sold over 200 jars last year. If you are interested in crafts, contact **Donna Wheeler** at ddwheeler16@hotmail.com.



COUNTING YOUR HOURS A “HOW TO” FOR NEW MEMBERS AND REFRESHER FOR OTHERS

Carolyn Kosclskey, Membership Chair

Collecting volunteer hours is an important job for each unit! We are asked by HSA to submit a sum of our members' hours each year at the end of July. During the year from July 1 through June 30 each member records their volunteer hours on their personal calendar and submits that total in early July to the membership chair. Hours are recorded in 1 hour and ½ hour increments, rounding up for 15+ minutes of activity. What counts? Volunteer hours can take on many forms. Examples include, but are not limited to the following:

Attendance at live and virtual business meetings;

Attendance at Full Moon Ramble events;

Participation in preparing for Unit Events such as the New Member Orientation, Herb Day and Herb Fair. This also includes time spent preparing and crafting articles sold at Herb Fair;

Gardening at the Westbury Community Garden or a school garden;

Education, such as preparing and presenting for a group, or writing a book review or article for the newsletter including submitting recipes and photographs;

Administrative work, such as fulfilling a board position or appointed position.

In July when submitting your total hours no need to itemize, just remember hours can be in whole hours or half hours as needed (2 ½ hours = 2.5 hours).

Carolyn

Research and Herb Discussion

Donna Wheeler



On January 10th, the South Texas Unit day group met at Donna Wheeler's home to study the herb chervil. This gathering was the 2023 kick off for meetings researching and discussing herbs and related topics. Sixteen members from our unit enjoyed learning more about chervil, examining a live plant, tasting the herb fresh and

dried on pita bread. Each member went home with seeds to plant. We look forward to getting together at our next day meeting in February.



The HERB SOCIETY of AMERICA



Pink Peppercorn, Schinus molle

- The pink peppercorn, is also known as the California peppertree, Peruvian peppertree or false peppertree.
- *Schinus molle* is an evergreen tree with fragrant yellow or white flowers and is in the Anacardiaceae or cashew family.
- It has been naturalized in California and is native to South America, and has an invasive nature in some growing regions.
- Commercially, many of the pink peppercorns on the market today are grown on the French island in the Indian ocean, Reunion, and in the Brazilian state of Espirito Santo.
- The dried pink berries (botanically, a drupe) are not related to *Piper nigrum*, black pepper, although they do have a peppery flavor and are often blended with black peppercorns.
- An extract from the berries is used to flavor beverages and syrups. The peppercorns are used in both savory and sweet dishes.
- It has been described as having a peppery, with a mild, sweet, citrus, fruity and resinous flavor.
- In Peru, the pink peppercorns were used to make an alcoholic beverage from pink peppercorns that resembled beer and was called chicha de mole.
- In Central America, all parts of the plant have been used in traditional medicine to address a wide variety of ailments, including treating wounds and infections. It has been used as an antidepressant, as an analgesic, antifungal, antispasmodic, diuretic, topical antiseptic, anti-inflammatory.
- Pink peppercorn leaves have been used as a textile dye in the Andean region.
- The oil from the leaves of the pink peppercorn was used in the embalming and early mummification practices in the Inca civilization.

It is the policy of The Herb Society of America, Inc. 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. Please consult a health care provider before pursuing any herbal treatments.



Speakers' Bureau Update

In January, **Julie Fordes** and **Catherine O'Brien** co-presented *Introduction to Herb Tea (Tisane) Blending* to the Idylwood Garden Club. Julie explained the tea blending pyramid and how herbs are beneficial to digestive, respiratory, and circulatory system, about nervines and adaptogens, and how they are used as anti-inflammatories, antioxidants, antivirals, and anti-microbials. Julie talked about the ingredients in the South Texas Unit's Christmas Blend, while Catherine poured cups of freshly brewed tea for the 15 attendees to enjoy. The highlight of the meeting was mixing their own tea of red stem apple mint, lemon verbena, calendula, blue mallow, and ginger, which they promptly named "Idylwood Blend."

An honorarium from Idylwood Garden Club was donated to the Madalene Hill Scholarship Fund. If you are interested in joining the Speakers Bureau, contact Catherine at 281-467-1139 or vibrio13@mail.com



Julie Fordes demonstrates blending tea





Julie Fordes, Yvette Darnell, Sara Diaz (front row); Faith Strunk, Catherine O'Brien, and Mary Nurre (back row) took advantage of the unit's discount and enjoyed a class together at Houston Botanic Garden: Introduction to Herbalism.

♥ happy ♥
Valentine's
♥ day ♥



AT-HOME RECIPES



At-Home Recipes February 2023

Carolyn Kosclskey



Trivia: The major source of this spice, said to be the second most expensive after saffron, is Madagascar. [See answer at end]

February is considered the last month of winter and a transitional month offering a gentle reminder that spring is not far away. Left behind is the darkness of the past calendar year(s) and there is a glimmer of light ahead signaling new beginnings.

There are many holidays this month, some more so than others may lend themselves as inspiration for meal plans. Groundhog day is on the 2nd, followed by the American Heart Association National Wear Red Day on the 3rd. The Chinese Lunar New Year which begins on January 22nd celebrating the year of the rabbit celebrates the Chinese Lantern Festival on February 5th. Another great American day of celebration is Super Bowl LVII (57) on Sunday February 12. President's Day (originally established in 1880 as George Washington's birthday) is on the 20th. For President's Day it is written that both Washington and Lincoln enjoyed hoe cakes and corn cakes, and the holiday is often celebrated with a cherry pie. Shrove Tuesday/Mardi Gras is on the 21st, the next day being Ash Wednesday. Pancakes are often associated with Mardi Gras. Did you know that the whole mix can be baked in a 9 X13 pan like a cake and served as portions allowing the cook to eat with the rest of the family. Genius! <https://www.butterandbaggage.com/sheet-pan-pancakes/>

One of the most traditionally celebrated days on the February calendar is Valentine's Day and many of the recipes for that day feature strawberries. What's not to love about a beautiful red and fragrant fruit that's low in calories, high in fiber, potassium and powerful antioxidants. The strawberry is a perennial and a member of the rose family and most of the ones in stores this month will be from Florida and California. There are an abundance of recipes in cookbooks and on the internet for its use in beverages, salads and desserts. There is a great recipe from member **Janice Dana** for *French Strawberry Glaze Pie* (February 2021) and for *Chocolate Cherry Cake* (February 2022) from treasurer **Maria Treviño**, both of which may be found in the recipe sections of the online *Herbs Make Scents* newsletter achieves found at <http://www.herbsociety-stu.org/newsletters.html>.

Four of our members celebrate birthdays in the second month of the year and Donna Adair (February 18) has shared memories from birthdays past.



My favorite childhood birthday cake was a white layer cake with lemon curd in the center and white icing, probably 7-minute icing because I remember my mother at the stove "forever." I've never tried to emulate it, afraid anything I'd make would tarnish those memories.

On the not-so-happy memory front, I grew up in a small town (approximately 2,000 population -- then and still now), and another girl from there was born two hours after me. As "birthday twins," we celebrated our birthdays together, alternating hosts. When we were in the fourth grade, after several months in the hospital, she died from car-accident injuries. My birthday celebrations after that were within our family, and even they were a bit sad.

My own daughters are fraternal twins, and when they were younger the three of us made their birthday cakes together in the form of cupcakes. One likes chocolate, and the other doesn't.

QUICK AND EASY LEMON CURD

From the files of Donna Adair

Ingredients

6 lemons
¼ cup butter (1/2 stick), softened
2 cups sugar
4 eggs

Directions

Grate zest from lemons to equal 2 tablespoons. Cut lemons in half; squeezing juice into a measuring cup to equal 1 cup. Beat butter and sugar at medium speed with handheld mixer until blended. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating just until blended after each addition. Gradually add lemon juice to butter mixture, beating on low speed just until blended after each addition. Stir in zest (mixture will look curdled). Transfer to a 3-quart microwave-safe bowl.

Microwave Method. Microwave on HIGH 5 minutes, stirring at 1-minute intervals. Continue to microwave on HIGH, stirring at 30-second intervals, 1 to 2 more minutes or until mixture thickens coating the back of a spoon and starts to mound slightly when stirred. Place heavy-duty plastic wrap directly on warm curd to prevent a film from forming, and chill 4 hours, or until firm. May be stored in an airtight container in refrigerator up to 2 weeks.

Stove-Top Method. Prepare as directed in first paragraph transferring mixture to a heavy 4-quart saucepan. Cook over medium-low heat, whisking constantly, 14 to 16 minutes, or until mixture thickens. Makes 2 cups.

<https://www.southernliving.com/recipes/quick-easy-lemon-curd>

Below is an old recipe that many of us may fondly remember for 7-minute frosting. The two most important things in successfully making this recipe is to make sure the sugar dissolves in the egg whites (test by rubbing between your fingers) before beating, and that the mixture is beaten over simmering not boiling water. For the rest of us Betty Crocker Fluffy White Frosting may be available at some grocery stores (\$12!) and through Amazon.



SEVEN-MINUTE FROSTING

<https://www.kingarthurbaking.com/recipes/seven-minute-frosting-recipe>

Seven-minute frosting has been around since at least the early 1900s. To make the unique texture this frosting is known for, egg whites and sugar are combined and beaten over simmering water to dissolve the sugar and achieve a very light, fluffy texture.

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups (298g) granulated sugar
- 1/3 cup (74g) water, cold
- 2 large egg whites
- 2 teaspoons light corn syrup
- 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
- Pinch of salt
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Instructions

In the top of a double boiler, combine the sugar, water, egg whites, corn syrup, cream of tartar, and the pinch of salt. [It's important the sugar dissolves in the egg whites before beating (test by rubbing between your fingers), to prevent grittiness.] Beat with an electric mixer at a low speed for 30 seconds, then set the pan over (but not touching) simmering water. Continue beating at high speed for about 7 minutes, or until it's stiff and glossy. The mixture should measure at least 161°F (71.7°C) on a digital thermometer at the end of the 7 minutes. Remove from the heat, add the vanilla, and beat for another 1 to 2 minutes. Use right away, as the frosting will set quickly.

Answer: Vanilla

The March At-Home Recipes section will feature recipes that are Irish inspired (think Irish coffee, corned beef and cabbage, Irish soda bread) or are “green” (think green smoothies, dips, green veggies, gelatin dishes). Readers enjoy personal comments regarding the origin of the recipe so please include that. You may submit your recipe (in a form convenient for you) to Carolyn Kosclskey at therecipeladycollection@gmail.com.



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

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

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