

# Herbs Make Scents

THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA  
VOLUME XXXIX, NUMBER 2



SOUTH TEXAS UNIT  
FEBRUARY 2016

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## February 2016 Calendar

- Feb 9** - Tues. - 10 a.m. **Day Meeting** at the home of Shirley Mills. Program "*The Herbs of China Bales: Bleeding Heart*", presented by Janice Stuff. **Bring a dish to share.**
- Feb 17** - Wed. - 6:30 p.m. **Evening Meeting** at the Cherie Flores Pavilion in Hermann Park (1700 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77004), hosted by Nutti Doodeheefver and Martha Burg, Program: "*Become a Culinary Alchemist with Old World Vinegars*," presented by David Eisner-Kleytle, Director of VOM FASS Oils, Vinegars and Spices. **Bring your plate, napkin and a dish to share.**
- Feb 29** - Mon. - 7:00 p.m.  
**(Change of Date!)** **Board Meeting** at the home of Pam Harris

## March 2016 Calendar

- Mar 8** - Tues. - 10 a.m. **Day Meeting** at the home of Thelma Rowe, 5151 Buffalo Speedway, Houston, TX 77005. Program "*The Herbs of China Bales: Witches Bane*", presented by Jacqui Highton. **Bring a dish to share. Meeting Open to Guests**
- Mar 23** - Wed. - 6:30 p.m.  
**(Change of Date!)** **Evening Meeting** at the Cherie Flores Pavilion in Hermann Park (1700 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77004), hosted by Palma Sales and Janice Stuff. Program: "*Indigo: The Herb that Colored the World Blue, Part 1*," presented by Nutti Doodeheefver, Lucia Bettler, Joan Jordan & Jacqui Highton

**Newsletter deadline: 25<sup>th</sup> of every month**

**Submissions should be at most 1 page in Times New Roman 12**

Happy Birthday!



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2/20 Melba Moses

## Rosemary for Remembrance

Beth Murphy's father





## Chairman's Corner

Happy Valentine's Day!

The first meeting of the Herb Society (HSA-STU) in 2016 was held at the new Cheri Flores Pavilion in the Hermann Park Garden Center on January 20, 2016. The general membership voted (27-2) to use this venue for future night meetings. The Pavilion director, Linda Black, advised that we should not hold the March evening on the third Wednesday evening as usage of the park during spring break is expected to be higher than normal causing potential parking problems. To this end we will hold the **March evening meeting on the fourth Wednesday, March 23, 2016**.

The facility rental cost is \$45.00. The conversancy provides two staff members for each of our meetings, an event coordinator and a custodian. We found these staff members very helpful and cheerfully accommodating. We had Laida Varner and Jesse Walpool. I have requested these staff members for all of our meetings if possible.

We were provided with eight (8) chairs at each of seven (7) 60-inch round tables. We had two 6-foot tables for registration and pass alongs and two long tables for food. The facility is well appointed with a coffee pot, ice maker, punch bowl, microwave and sink with hot and cold running water. There was a table for a projector and a screen.

**New Time for All Evening Meetings: 6:30 pm, Dinner at 7:00 pm.**



### Herb Day

Our public education out-reach project, Herb Day, will be held on April 23 in the education building of St. Paul's Methodist Church on Main Street (in the Museum district). Please volunteer to help with this project. It will be great fun and a wonderful way to make new *Herbie* friends. The theme will be "A Day in the Garden of Beatrix Potter." As you begin your spring gardens, plant for this event, remembering parsley and carrots! We need presenters, researchers, artists, cooks, gardeners and the talents of each member.

The board meeting will be held on February 29th. Please submit any ideas that you would like the board to consider.

Remember to eat extra dark chocolate this month! It's good for the heart!

Sally Luna, Unit Chair



a warm brick wall. Wild snowdrops grow beneath the fruit trees.

There are four sections to the Hill Top garden – the old kitchen garden, a grassy paddock, the orchard and the flower garden beside the slate pathway. Beatrix considered each planting very carefully, begged cuttings from around the country side.

Potter left Hill Top and the surrounding lands to the National Trust. The house opened to the public in 1946 and today it is one of the Trust's most popular properties. Her lovely garden is usually at its best in early July. The gardeners who work there today have a constant challenge in keeping the garden looking beautiful for the more than 100,000 visitors who go there every year.



### Beatrix Potter Musings

Sally Luna

I thought a few remarks about Beatrix Potter would be good to share so that we can all get in the proper spirit for Herb Day. The following are excerpts from Susannah Fullerton's blog.

Beatrix Potter fell in love

with the English Lake District when she was a child. After she began to publish her stories for children, along with the charming illustrations she created to accompany them, she finally had money of her own. She knew that she wanted to purchase land in that part of England. So, it was thanks to *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* that in 1905 she bought Hill Top, a 17th century farmhouse in the tiny village of Near Sawrey. There was little garden there when she bought Hill Top – only a small walled kitchen garden opposite the front door. She rapidly turned into a keen gardener and her diaries and letters often mention details of what she was growing.

A visitor to the Hill Top must walk up the narrow Brathay slate garden path, by beautiful Lakeland dry stone walls. Beatrix loved the path and included it in *The Tale of Pigling Bland* and *The Tale of Tom Kitten*. Her preference was for wild and informal gardens, and today the planting continues to honor her tastes. It is a very traditional English country garden, with old-fashioned flowers such as honeysuckle, acanthus, sweet peas, Michaelmas daisies, sweet williams, foxgloves, lavender, lupins, violets, peonies, lamb's ear and mock orange. Occasionally she introduced something more exotic, such as rhododendrons and azaleas. She did not believe that herbs needed an area of their own, but should rather be spread around the garden amongst the flowers and vegetables. Her 1633 edition of Gerard's Herbal is on display inside the house. She grew feverfew, teasel, tansy, mullein, calendula and soapwort. Adjacent to the garden is an orchard and she had great pleasure in harvesting apples, pears and plums from her fruit trees there. She had a grape vine growing against



## Lost and Found

### FOUND!

2 – Serving plates in the colors and shape of Fall leaves – Contact Lois Sutton

White Sweater left at Carol Cobb's home in September – Contact Martha Burg



## New Member Moment!

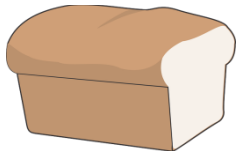


The next time you attend an STU evening meeting and see **Elizabeth Grandich**, be sure to welcome her warmly!

Elizabeth is known to many of you not only from the meetings she attended as a guest, but also because she and her 10-year old son, Richard, cheerfully volunteered all day at the 2015 Herb Fair. They helped customers and maintained good cheer while Richard carried purchases to the customers' cars! In addition to son Richard, Elizabeth and her husband have two other beautiful children. Together, they grow herbs and vegetables in their home garden, and yours truly has been the beneficiary of their bounty!

Elizabeth is a Teach for America veteran and now teaches reading to struggling students in HISD. She also helped all day at Poe Elementary in November for the Indigo Dyeing demonstration during the school's annual Colonial Days educational event. Elizabeth was extremely helpful throughout the day and wrote an article about the experience for our newsletter.

We're happy that Elizabeth is now part of our STU. Welcome, Elizabeth!



We are so very lucky to have **Donna Yanowski** as a new member. For the last 17 years, Donna has been a pre-school

teacher at both Poe Elementary and Blossom Academy. She is the co-founder of Houston Urban Gardeners, affectionately known as HUG, and almost never fails to bring a homemade loaf of bread to share at HUG meetings.

You might also consider Donna to be a professional volunteer. She volunteers regularly at her church and with other community organizations such as the Boulevard Oaks Civic Association. Donna also helped the STU set up for the recent Herb Fair and was a tireless volunteer for the Indigo Demonstration at Poe Elementary in November. In addition to all this, she raises vegetables in her home garden and has raised a beautiful daughter, Dena, whom we also hope becomes a new member.

-Albert Ramos

## About Our Meetings . . .

Our January day meeting was attended by 7 members plus **Linda Alderman** in her lovely town home in Kemah. It was a perfect day to be near the water and see numerous sailboats outside her front patio door.

After a brief business meeting where members were requested to record their attendance and also the hours they spent working on projects they created at workshops or at home, we recognized **Pam Harris** for the national award she was given for the work she has done in behalf of the South Texas Unit. The award is the Certificate of Appreciation from The Herb Society of America.

We were pleased to welcome back **Janice Dana**. She and her husband have been in Arizona for several months. Janice presented our program about two plants - Spanish Dagger and Mexican Sword.

-Thelma Rowe



View from the front Patio



## More About Our Meetings . . .

*Culinary Alchemy with Vinegar*  
by Karen Cottingham

**The February 17, 2016 HSA-STU evening program, *Become a Culinary Alchemist with Old World Vinegars*, could not be more timely for those who wish to be on the “cutting edge” of epicurean trends.**

A food industry consulting firm recently released the “Top Ten Culinary Trends to Watch in 2016”. This year seems to be the year of rediscovering and modernizing old recipes and food traditions. The ten new food products predicted to be most successful in 2016 all “offer a modern twist on a centuries-old tradition.” Topping the list is a vinegar-based drink called “*switchel*”, which dates back to 17th century Colonial times. *Switchel* has also been known as *switzel*, *swizzle*, *ginger-water*, *haymaker’s punch*, and *switchy*. It is a refreshing drink of water mixed with vinegar and often flavored with ginger and sweetened with sugar, molasses, or maple syrup.

David Eisner-Kleyle, our February speaker, is Director of Operations for VOM FASS USA. VOM FASS USA is a subsidiary of a German-based company that offers a comprehensive selection of barrel-aged traditional balsamics, artisanal vinegar specialities, and exclusive fruit balsamic vinegars.

Mr. Eisner-Kleyle will discuss how the application of modern food industry technology to the traditional methods practiced by generations of Italian vinegar-producing families has resulted in today’s award-winning vinegars. We will sample these exquisite vinegars as vinaigrettes and vinegar-based beverages in our own exploration of old recipes and food traditions.

Mr. Eisner-Kleyle will travel from his US district base in New Orleans for this special event, so please make plans to attend and to invite your friends. It is sure to be an interesting and uniquely informative evening!

Stop by the Houston VOM FASS shop at 2424 Times Blvd. in the Rice Village to sample and purchase these choice vinegars. You will never want to use grocery store vinegars again! Pot luck dishes based on VOM FOSS recipes or products will be appreciated to complement this educational program.

*January Evening Meeting* by Albert Ramos

The first evening meeting of the New Year was rung in with 26 members and 21 guests! Two of the members were new, Elizabeth Grandich and Donna Yanowski, both of whom we’re happy to welcome. Not only did Elizabeth and Donna attend the requisite 3 meetings before applying for STU membership, but they also both helped us tremendously with the Herb Fair in November. There’s more about these two, wonderful new members elsewhere in this newsletter.

As for our 21 guests, that’s a record! I don’t think we’ve seen this many guests in years. Nearly a quarter of them are now eligible to become members, and we invite them all to do so.

Hostesses **Lucia Bettler** and **Vivian Scallan** beautifully decorated the meeting room in a Moroccan theme complete with Moroccan lanterns and pottery.

After an excellent potluck meal of delicious Moroccan cuisine, we all sat in rapt attention as our fellow member **Dr. Lois Sutton** presented slides and commentaries from her recent visit to Morocco.

Following the presentation, Karen and Miracle Hilliard awarded Moroccan-themed door prizes that were generously donated by several local businesses and members. Eligibility for the first door prize was based on a member or guest having brought a Moroccan-themed dish for the potluck.

**Pam Harris** was as much a winner as her delicious Moroccan-inspired sweet potato and chickpea dish. For her efforts, Pam took home a beautiful cookbook, [Olives & Oranges](#), generously donated by **Lucia Bettler**, owner of **Lucia’s Garden**.

The remaining door prizes were awarded to members and guests who were able to correctly answer questions related to tonight’s Moroccan theme. The questions and winners are below, and the answers are at the end of this article.

1. In 1969 the musical group Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young performed a song at Woodstock that Graham Nash wrote after having traveled by train through Morocco. What was the song? Guest **Julie Fordes** knew the answer. For her prize, she selected a bottle of “*dukkah*” that **Lois Sutton** donated. *Dukkah* is a North African condiment of herbs, ground nuts, and spices. Mixed into olive oil, it is excellent for dipping bread.



2. Until 1990, which Moroccan spice blend was legally allowed to contain a pulverized emerald-green metallic beetle? Member **Jacqui Highton** must have “beetle-mania” because she knew the correct answer. Jacqui chose a bottle of rose water from **The Savory Spice Shop** for her prize.
3. What was the purpose of the powdered beetle in question 2 above? Both of our newest members answered the question correctly. **Donna Yanowski** chose a Marrakesh Moroccan Spice Blend from **The Savory Spice Shop**, and **Elizabeth Grandich** selected a bottle of argan oil donated by **Vom Fass Oils, Vinegars, and Spices**. Good work, ladies!
4. What is another name for this insect with aphrodisiacal powers? Guest **Kerry Madole** knows her insects and chose a prize donated by **The Savory Spice Shop**: *Ras el Hanout*, a Moroccan spice blend.
5. Which luxury product from Morocco is derived from a fruit that is so delicious that goats climb the trees to eat it? Member **Lois Sutton** gave the answer, but she graciously disqualified herself because of “insider knowledge”.
6. The nopal (or “prickly pear”) cactus is native to Mexico and was brought to Spain in the 16th century. From there, it spread throughout Morocco where it is known as the Barbary Fig. What was once so valuable about this cactus? Three-time guest **Carolyn Catlos** had the answer and selected Moroccan Mint Tea donated by **The Path of Tea** as her prize.
7. What modern luxury product is extracted from the nopal cactus in Morocco? No one knew the answer. Do you? If not, you’ll find it at the end of this article!
8. The Atlas Mountains are a prominent feature of Morocco. Who was Atlas? Member **Susan Wood** won a *Za’atar* Spice Blend from **The Savory Spice Shop** for her answer.

One final door prize was awarded not for answering a question correctly, *but for being helpful*. Because of her tireless and charming assistance throughout the program, **Miracle Hilliard** was awarded a bottle of conditioning shampoo enhanced with Moroccan argan oil. Thank you for all your help, Miracle and thank you **Lois Sutton** for generously donating Miracle’s prize.

We also thank all the local merchants and members who donated these wonderful prizes for our quiz. In addition, we’d like to specially recognize and thank the following members for bringing the fruits of their gardens and kitchens to share with others: **Jeanie Dunning** (scented pelargoniums and Meyer lemons); **Beth Murphy** (Meyer lemons); **Donna Fay Hilliard** (grapefruits); and **Janis Teas** (kumquat marmalade).

If you’ve not attended an evening meeting in a while, please make plans now to join us for next month’s meeting on February 17, 2016. We always have interesting presentations and excellent food for our potluck supper, and the February door prize question theme will be “Love”!

*Answers to the Morocco Quiz Questions:*

1. *Marrakesh Express.*
2. *Ras el Hanout.*
3. *“Love potion” (by Elizabeth) or “Aphrodisiac” (by Donna).*
4. *Spanish Fly.*
5. *Argan oil.*
6. *Cochineal dye (extracted from the parasitic scale insects that live on the cactus).*
7. *Prickly pear seed oil (an extremely expensive oil used in cosmetics).*
8. *Atlas was a Titan god who led a battle against the Olympian gods. The Olympians won the war, and Zeus condemned Atlas to stand on the western edge of earth and to hold up the heavens. It is a misconception that Atlas held the world on his shoulders. The misconception probably came from classical art and sculpture that depicted Atlas holding heaven in the form of a celestial sphere, which was later mistaken for a globe.*





## They Might Already Be In Your Neighborhood! Lois Sutton

Every January, whether I want to or not, I clean out magazines I have tucked aside for some article or another. From the October 2009 *Garden Gate Magazine* I had pulled the article entitled "Attack of the Invasives." Plants that spread out of their planned areas not only replace other desired or native plants, but they threaten foragers and pollinators. They may not provide the food and nectar that had been available previously.

The article listed 46 perennials, vines, trees and shrubs. Of these 15 appeared in Deni Bown's book, *The Herb Society of America's New Encyclopedia of Herbs & Their Uses* – almost a third of the invasive plants are herbal!

The article includes parts of Texas in the Southeast and Southwest growing areas. Our invasive herbs and the way they spread include:

\*American water locus (*Nelumbo lutea*): By root and seed. Clogs water ways & forces out native aquatic plants.

\*Bishop's weed (*Aegopodium podagraria* 'Variegata'): By underground rhizomes

\*Garlic chives (*Allium tuberosum*): By seeds and bulbs. Invades native areas, lawns, perennial gardens.

\*Purple loostetrife (*Lythrum salicaria*): By seed. Takes over wet areas, replacing all native plants and forming a root mass so dense that fish cannot swim through them.

\*Common reed (*Phragmites australis*): By seed and deep underground rhizomes. Takes over wet areas.

\*Horsetail, scouringrush (*Equisetum hyemale*): By root. Can grow in dry as well as wet area.

\*English ivy (*Hedera helix*): By root. As a ground cover it shades out all other plants, including trees it overgrows.

\*White poplar (*Populus alba*): By seed. Once planted as wind breaks. Fast-growing tree.

\*Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*): By seed.

Besides the disruption to desirable plants and pollinators, invasive species often are very expensive to control. Purple loosestrife alone costs taxpayers and private companies over \$45 million annually in eradication and control.

Many horticultural groups and organizations list invasive plants for specific regions. Visit some and check out those new plants you were thinking about adding to your garden.



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## HSA – Notable Native 2016

Mountain Mints

*Pycnanthemum Michx.*

This is an herbaceous perennial (hardy zones 3-9). It likes full sun to light shade and dry well drained soil. It is for fragrance and pollination and not for consumption. For more information see HSA web site [www.herbsociety.org](http://www.herbsociety.org)

## International Herb Society

The horticultural committee of the **International Herb Society** chose **Capsicum**, peppers as Herb of the Year for 2016. For more information see [www.iherb.org](http://www.iherb.org)

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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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.



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