

Herbs Make Scents

THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
VOLUME XXXIX, NUMBER 4



SOUTH TEXAS UNIT
APRIL 2016

Editor –Linda Alderman ewalderman@comcast.net

April 2016 Calendar

- April 12** - Tues. - 10 a.m. **Day Meeting** at the home of Tamara Gruber. Program “*The Herbs of China Bales: Rue*”, presented by Lois Jean Howard. **Bring a dish to share.**
- April 20** - Wed. - 6:30 p.m. **Evening Meeting** at the Cherie Flores Pavilion in Hermann Park (1700 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77004), hosted by Benée Curtis and **TBD**. Program: “*Fifty Shades of Blue: Our Un-Dyeing Passion for Indigo, Part 2*”, presented by the HSA-STU Indigo Study Group.” **Bring your plate, napkin and a dish to share.**
- April 22**-Fri. 1-5 p.m. **Set-up** for Herb Day Symposium
- April 23**-Sat. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. **Herb Day Symposium** at St.Paul’s Methodist Church on Main Street
Set-up – Sat. 7:30a.m.

May 2016 Calendar

- May 10** - Tues. - 10 a.m. **Day Meeting** at the Cherie Flores Pavilion in Hermann Park (1700 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77004), hosted by Cathy Livingston and Ann Schrock. Program “*The Herbs of China Bales: Blood Root*”, presented by Lois Sutton. **Bring a dish to share.**
- May 11** - Wed. – 7 p.m. **Board Meeting** at **TBD**
- May 18** - Wed. - 6:30 p.m. **Evening Meeting** at the Cherie Flores Pavilion in Hermann Park (1700 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77004), hosted by **Lois Jean Howard and Beth Murphy** Program: **TBD, presented by Benée Curtis. Bring your plate, napkin and a dish to share.**
- Newsletter deadline: 25th of every month**
Submissions should be at most 1 page in Times New Roman 12

Happy Birthday!



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4/1 Janis Dana
4/23 Thelma Rowe
4/26 Lynda Mills





Chairman's Corner

Celebrating the 150 Anniversary of the English Gardener, Beatrix Potter

What's new about Herb Day 2016?

Food, a Scottish Greeter, and a Pop-Up Exhibit!

New member Elizabeth Grandis is perfecting her Scottish accent, and will set the tone for the day. You may think you're in England! Another tone setter for the day will be lunch, provided by new member and wonderful caterer, Andi Leger, owner of the French Fig. The menu will include authentic Lake District cuisine presented in festive fabric lined baskets, made by her mother and aunt. This different touch will provide a nice change for our guests. The celebration will also include a departing tea that will include cucumber sandwiches. The traditional welcoming repast will feature Lake District scones and Grasmer ginger bread made by members from the personal recipes of, English-born member, Jacqui Highton.

Herb Day 2016 is going to be a special treat! Learning about Beatrix Potter, the passionate gardener, naturalist, author, artist and late Victorian entrepreneur, will be a delightful escape, allowing attendees to escape the maddening age of speed and electronics for a little while, and best of all, to enjoy the great opportunity to shop for herbal products, plants, and books!

Consider bringing a guest, you will both be happy that you did. You could make the invite a wonderful birthday present for someone special or nice way to say thank you to a friend or acquaintance. Don't hold back; send the announcement to everyone on your email list.

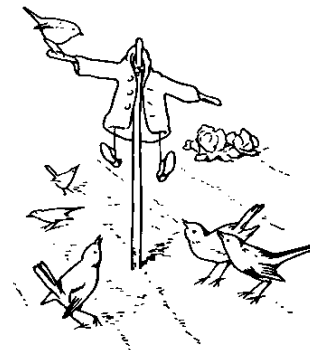
Our speakers are outstanding. Helen Mann of PBS Fame; Linda Lane, our former leader and Beatrix Potter enthusiast; and Henty Flowers, horticulturist for Festival Hill Gardens at Round Top, will educate and entertain us.

New Feature at membership table... Beatrix Potter Pop-up Exhibit.

We have heard that many of you have vintage Beatrix Potter themed objects and books that you would like to share, but are understandably concerned about their security. To this end, membership co-chair, Albert Ramos, has the perfect solution. He would like to use the memorabilia at the membership table in the main room, and has asked our new member artist, Dena Yanowski, to arrange these objects, and man the table for the entire day. While there, she will talk about the books and themed objects using information that you provide. Of course, all this will be done in museum fashion, no touching will be allowed. Additionally, Dene will see that your name appears on each object you bring. *Following the event, your objects will be released to you.*

I hope that you'll be able to participate. I have a really nice, old Peter Rabbit figure that was passed down to me from my family. I was thinking that keeping it to myself doesn't really result in people seeing and also enjoying it. So I have decided that I want to share my Beatrix Potter prized possession. I hope you will join me and share yours. At members request we will have another display of contemporary Beatrix Potter inspired objects including vegetable themed ceramics.

Sally Luna
Unit Chair





About Our Meetings . . .

It was a veritable sea of blue at the March meeting of the HSA-STU, but our moods were anything *but* blue! In fact, we were very happy because 22 members attended and we welcomed 15 guests. Twelve of our guests visited us for the first time. Member **Elizabeth Grandich** invited 4 of these guests, and new member **Mary Sacilowski** invited a guest as well. In addition, **Karen Cottingham** invited 3 of our first-time visitors, and **Susan Wood** brought a fellow herbal enthusiast from the Pioneer Unit. And to top it all off, soon-to-be member **Julie Fordes** invited a friend. We even had two guests come because they read about us in the community newspaper, *Village News/Southwest News*. So thank you to everyone for pitching in. You're not only helping grow our membership, but you're doing a great job of sharing the fine programs our meetings offer.

Before I forget, both members and guests who wore blue denim had a chance to win one of two large lavender *sachets* covered with vintage indigo-dyed fabric from Mali that **Karen Cottingham** brought as door prizes. Member **Nita Rowe** was pleased to have the lucky number for the first sachet, and guest **Christine Hughes**, from Liverpool, England was equally happy to have won the second.

I said earlier that it was a "sea of blue" because it seemed like everyone - members and guests alike - wore blue in recognition of the title of the March (and April) program, *Fifty Shades of Blue: Our Un-Dyeing Passion for Indigo*. **Karen Cottingham** introduced the subject and gave us a fascinating overview of the history of indigo and the role it played worldwide in science, exploration, economics and trade, religion, botany, agriculture, art, costume, cultural identity, and even the American Revolution. **Nutti Doodeheefver** then captivated us with her enchanting discussion of woad, one of many plants from which indigo is derived. Nutti illustrated her talk by showing images of *The Bayeaux* tapestry and one of the famous Unicorn Tapestries, both woven with indigo-dyed threads that are still vibrant today, several centuries after their creation.

Finally, **Joan Jordan** presented an engaging discourse on the early history of indigo in the USA. She focused on two important indigo pioneers, Eliza Lucas Pinkney of South Carolina (mid-18th century) and Zephaniah Kingsley of Florida (late-

worked in Antigua, Eliza successfully introduced indigo to the American Colonies. Young Eliza overcame tremendous odds, sabotage, and international intrigue, to not only establish the plants on her own land, but to process them into the dye that helped finance the American Revolution. Joan also shared with us the story of Zephaniah Kingsley and his skill in growing and processing indigo, which was in large part made possible by the traditional knowledge of his Senegalese wife.

Several display tables were richly covered with vivid blue thanks to the generosity of two of our special guests, **Maryvone Shaw** and **Scharine Kirchoff**. Maryvone owns **The Blue Hand**, a "cultural gifts store" at 2323 University in the Rice Village. She loaned us several dozen examples of vintage, handwoven indigo-dyed fabrics, clothing, and accessories from all over the world: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Guatemala, Japan, and Mali. The deep blue of the thicker African textiles - a result of multiple dips in the indigo dye vats - actually seemed imbued with power and strength.

Scharine Kirchoff is a 4th generation textile artist from Okinawa, Japan who now lives and works in the USA (www.ryukyuheritagetextiles.com). She was so generous to help decorate our display tables with samples of her exquisite work. Scharine's handwoven fabrics are spun with natural fibers and dyed in a centuries-old traditional Ryukyu fashion. Her work is both lovely and peaceful. The indigo and other dyes in Scharine's art are harvested from her own natural dye garden, and some of the patterns come from leaves she gathers during walks and hikes. I'm glad I took the time to examine Scharine's work. The delicacy, elegance, and subtlety of her pieces were an interesting contrast to the heavier African textiles. You can see and learn more about Scharine's work in our April meeting when she presents a program entitled *Botanical Colors in the Spirit of an Ancient Craft*.

The March meeting was fascinating, and the April meeting will be just as wonderful. In addition to Scharine's program, we will continue learning about indigo in Part 2 of *Fifty Shades of Blue*, presented by fellow members **Nutti Doodeheefver** and **Lucia Bettler**.

Continued on next page





About Our Meetings (Continued)

Our recent programs have been greatly enhanced by the acquisition of a projector. The vivid images shown during the presentations demonstrate the depth of our speakers' research and help engage us in their talks. "Thank you", board members, for approving the projector purchase. Next on our "needs" list will be a public address system.

Finally, the evening wouldn't have been as fun and charming as it was without the invaluable contributions of **Janice Stuff**. Janice was the hostess for tonight's event, and with the help of **Martha Burg**, they decorated the buffet tables with lovely bouquets of blue and green flowers. But Janice was so much more than a hostess. After helping organize the speakers' slides, she also operated the projector to keep pace with Karen, Nutti, and Joan's engaging comments. Helping Janice with hostess duties were **Darcia Williams** and **Pam Harris**. Darcia made a delicious punch that had members going back for more, and Pam Harris made the most refreshing and fragrant water I've ever tasted. Thank you everyone for another wonderful evening meeting.

March 8th Day Meeting

It was threatening to be a stormy day and I wondered how many members would attend the meeting in my community room at Brookdale, centrally located at Westpark and Buffalo Speedway. I shouldn't have needlessly worried. Carol Cobb made the trip from Cypress and Linda Alderman trekked in from League City, plus 12 more from around our vast city of Houston. They came to hear Jacqui Highton's program about the wicked plants in Susan Albert's book, Witches Bane.

In addition to learning about dangerous plants we had an update by Lois Sutton on Herb Day, a report about the craft group from Lois Jean Howard about how the craft group was progressing with ideas for Herb Day and the need for help on various committees working toward a successful luncheon on Herb Day.

-Thelma Rowe

Coming UP!!!!

Pam Harris is looking for YOU!

Thursday, April 7 there will be a craft workshop at the home of Pam Harris, 2624 University.



Please bring a brown bag lunch, a dessert and drinks will be provided. RSVP to prharris014@gmail.com or call 713-661-1109.

We are working hard on decorations and have some great things planned. Please be willing to **work the day of set up, Friday April 22** and after the event on Saturday to clean up and pack up.

Also, Cathy Livingston has volunteered to call people who are **willing to bake the snacks for the morning** of Herb Day. We are making two different treats, a gingerbread that is a specialty of the Lake District and scones to go with clotted cream and strawberry jam. Again, please be willing to participate.

Andi Leger caterer and owner of The French Fig has volunteered to oversee the kitchen and make sure that everything runs smoothly the day of. Bring your contribution on Friday and we will store it overnight.

We will **need pretty platters and bowls for serving**, if you are willing to share your personal treasures **bring them on Friday** also.

Andi, who is on the path to membership in the group, is **also catering our lunch for Herb Day**. I am so excited about what she is doing! There is not a set menu yet, but it is on the way and her presentation of the box lunch is going to be fantastic; you have a surprise coming with her lunch! In addition to these things Andi is also making cucumber sandwiches for the morning snacks. We will **need a couple of people willing to help Andi with the kitchen** (plating and serving snacks) **and with handing out the box lunches**. If you would like to help with this task, please email me at prharris014@gmail.com and let me know and I will pass it along to Andi.

Thank you for helping, remember, many hands make light work!
Pam Harris



Coming UP!!! (Continued)

April 20, 2016, 6:30 - 9:30 PM.

Program: *Fifty Shades of Blue: Our Un-Dyeing Passion for Indigo*

On April 20, we will continue with Part 2 of *Fifty Shades of Blue*. Herb Society member **Lucia Bettler**, of the eponymous *Lucia's Garden* at 2360 W. Alabama, will discuss the spiritual aspects of indigo, drawing on her husband's Peace Corps experience in the African "Land of the Blue Men" ..

The final presenter will be a special guest speaker, the indigo scholar, **Scharine Kirchoff**. Scharine is a 4th generation textile artist who is preserving and carrying forward the indigo dyeing and weaving traditions of her Okinawan ancestors. Her program, *Botanical Colors in the Spirit of an Ancient Craft*, will also include highlights of her recent interviews with elderly indigo dyers and weavers in Turkey and Jordan. By documenting these conversations, Scharine is preserving traditional knowledge that might otherwise become lost with the passing of this generation of artists and artisans.

I look forward to seeing everyone and hope to meet many more guests who share our enthusiasm for herbs.

-Karen Cottingham

Save the Date!

October 28-29, 2016

South Central District Gathering
Beaumont, Texas

Trips to Orange to see Shangri-La Gardens and the Stark Museum!

More information will be forth coming. For questions, email herblady@austin.rr.com

Board Meeting – February 29, 2016

- 5 new members have joined the unit since September 2015!
- We are searching for a sound system for our speakers at night meetings.
- The Judson Robinson Center has been booked for Herb Fair 2016, but we would like members to help locate another site.
- We need all members to help on an Herb Day committee!!





Living with Passion and Spice 21st Annual Herbal Forum -- Roundtop Lucia Ferrara Bettler, 2016

“If you ask me what I came into this life to do,
I will tell you -- I came to live out loud.”
■ Emile Zola

That quote could have been written about a chili pepper with its sassy flavors and tangy bite. This year we are focusing on the culinary influences of chilies, wonderful native spices of Mexico that impart exciting flavor to the cuisines of many cultures.

When Columbus sailed the ocean in 1492 in search of spices, he found members of the Capsicum genus. These chilies were immediately transported around the world by Spanish and Portuguese sailors, as well as by over land trade routes. Chiles were soon integrated into the cuisines of North Africa, the Middle East, India, and many tropical areas throughout the Pacific.

Today, we think of the overflowing chili Mercados of Mexico and South Texas, the foods of Cuba & Latin America; we adore our Tex-Mex and decorate with the hanging ristras of New Mexico nor can we omit the flavors of Creole and Cajun Louisiana.

Some cultures not only savor hot foods, but engender the archetype of passion -- think Tango in Rio de Janeiro & Buenos Aires, Flamenco in Spain, Pablo Neruda's poetry, Frida Khalo's paintings, the writing of Chilean author, Isabel Allende.

Living in Texas, we are surrounded by the color, passion, joy for life and the deep spirit of Mexico and Central America. The cultural influences of Spain, the Moors, and the indigenous Indians accent our daily lives, our architecture, our gardens, and our food.

I grew up in the Navigation/Ninfa's/East End of Houston ... we were at home in our Catholic parish with spaghetti dinners, homemade tamales and kolaches at our bakes sales. But, oh how we loved the homemade tamales. Images of Our Lady of Guadalupe were in the prayer books of the devoted, on storefront windows, and on the sides of passing trucks.

If you are up with the dawn on December 12, the feast day of Our Lady, in St. Anne's Parish you will be transported to a foreign land, as devotees

process through the streets singing the Virgin awake with Mananitas.

In our neighborhood, life was a celebration -- the gardens were filled with colorful perennials in coffee cans and spilling out like fireworks in any container that might hold them. In the same vein, an herbalist friend, Lucinda Hutson, of Austin has created herb gardens filled with the spirit of Mexico, its liveliness and various flavors. Perhaps to “live out loud”, we need only to “listen with the ear of our heart”, live with purpose, passion, curiosity and gratitude. We need only to immerse ourselves in the life before us.

What do you long for? What calls you? What could you not live without? What twists you inside out? Your passion might be a small private thing -- not all creativity needs to be public. You don't have to create an award winning garden, write a best seller, or become a famous chef. Simply create a garden for the love of it; write to express your feelings; cook a delicious meal for friends and loved ones. We gardeners have a passion for herbs -- and all things connected to them -- bees and butterflies -- wind and water -- well-seasoned food. We are here today because of the passion of Madalene Hill and several others for these ancient plants ...

If Passion were a woman, I would say she lives fully & pursues what interests her and makes no apology for it. She is generally not quiet and loves red and vivid colors; every day is an adventure, filled with new sounds and experiences. She is highly decorative -- her clothing and her surroundings ... she burns bright ... and sometimes has to take some time off to recharge. Creativity is her best friend.

Ruth Gendler, author of *The Book of Qualities* writes, “Creativity loves all the seasons; she is on intimate terms with the sun and the moon -- she loves to gossip with the birds and dance with the animals ... she understands cycles and the ebb and flow of life and the secret meanings of the months when nothing seems to get done.”

Creativity is the relationship between a human being and the mysteries of inspiration ... it taps into the love we have for that which brings us to life and makes us juicy and vibrant.

Take heed and warning, with all the small details coming into our brains due to the influx of



technology, we are filling the space within us and not allowing ourselves, our hearts, and our wild imaginings to go deeper to the well of our authentic selves!!! Pay attention to your surroundings ... unplug ... let go of the phone!!! I cannot tell you how many teachers and spiritual guides I have heard in the last few months who are repeating this over and over. Those devices are ruining our longings -- our passions and our creativity. Not only technology, but what you choose to read, listen to, and the people you surround yourself with can have a deep impact on your passion and creativity.

Treat life as art -- get inspired by other creative people ... start by listening ... to your dreams and imaginings ... Look at the people in your life -- do they enhance your journey ... your passions ... ?

Years ago, my friend Jano led me to Frida Khalo -- to creating new cooking classes -- to a trip to Oaxaca, Mexico -- all of which enriched my life immeasurably.

Gina Santangelo writes in the magazine dedicated to living creatively, *Bella Grace*: "Life should be lived with a full heart and open eyes." I agree with her. We should be tapping into the life force -- living with spirit -- the soul --embracing what brings us fullness and joy. I want to know what is in the heart of humans, whose everyday passion for living and creating comes through ...what courage do they live with ... what enchants them.

I have a habit of reading the obituaries daily (yes, in the actual newspaper) ... not just to see who has died, but to be inspired. Sometimes I cut the column out and glue it into my journal, to reflect upon it. Once in a while one person stands out -- one who truly lived life out loud. A person may be known by just a small circle of friends, yet they can inspire all of us with their natural curiosity and authenticity.

My message to you, let inspiration guide your passion -- your curiosity --
Keep the spark alive ... fill your life with what interests you ... moves you ... ignites you...

Poet Jack Gilbert wrote: "Do you have the courage to bring forth the treasures that are hidden inside you that are hoping you will say YES to?"

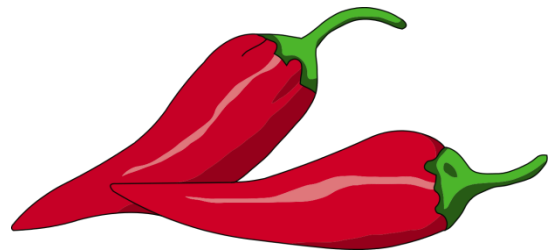
We all have buried treasure within us. That hunt for

our inner treasure is creative living ... a life driven by curiosity and passion. As Rumi told us, "Tend to your vital heart and all that you worry about will be solved."

So be a Chili pepper, have courage, live out loud.

I leave you with this poem by e. e. cummings --

"I thank you God for this most
amazing day,
For the leaping greenly spirits of
trees,
And for the blue dream of sky and
for everything
Which is natural, which is infinite,
which is yes."



Chili Pepper -- plant of the year!

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
P.O. Box 6515
Houston, TX 77265-6515



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

Herbs Make Scents – April 2016