

# Herbs Make Scents



THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA  
VOLUME XLIV, NUMBER 2

SOUTH TEXAS UNIT  
FEBRUARY 2021

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## Feb. 2021 Calendar

All in-person **Day and Evening Meetings** are cancelled until further notice!!!!

Feb 17, Wed. at 7:00 pm

**Pearls for the Pandemic** - "*Valentine Desserts and the Flowers of Love*", presented by **Bee, The Flower Chef** of Flora Cocina. For more information see page 3. Follow our Facebook page or check email for updated information.

Feb 28, Sun. at 7:00 pm

**Full Moon Ramble** – A Zoom gathering for Members only

## Mar. 2021 Calendar

Mar 17, Wed. at 7:00 pm

Future programming is still under construction

**Newsletter deadline: the 25<sup>th</sup> of every month is strictly enforced**  
(March editor Linda Alderman)

FEBRUARY BIRTH FLOWER\*

# Violet

*Viola odorata*



Violets comprise a large genus of more than 500 species found throughout temperate regions of the world. Sweet violets (*Viola odorata*) are perennial herbs that were commercially cultivated in Greece as early as 500 BCE when they were sold in the Athens market. They were grown on a large scale for cut flowers and perfumery during the reign of Queen Victoria. When ionone, the main aromatic component, was synthesized in the late 1800s, commercial cultivation of violet for the perfume industry dropped off. Sweet violets have been used traditionally for bronchitis, coughs, and asthma. *Viola tricolor* (heartsease or johnny-jump-up) is a reseeding annual used traditionally for bronchitis, whooping cough, and rheumatism, as well as urinary and skin problem. Viola flowers are edible and are often candied for use on pastries or sprinkled on salads.

\*From an ecard, courtesy of the American Botanical Council



## Happy Birthday!

Maria Treviño (2/13)



## Chairman's Corner

We have lots to rejoice over in the South Texas Unit. Ten new members, the possibility of gardening together, a huge turnout (100 people) for the last episode of Pearls for the Pandemic, and of course, the ongoing efforts of our members to continue our mission of herbal education in trying times. Our online communications are especially active these days: Zoom meetings, Facebook, our website and our beautiful MailChimp messages. We carry on with the business of growing our own herbs for our products, even though the end of Covid is not yet in sight. We just keep on keepin' on!

Staying motivated gets more difficult as Covid goes on, but I noticed this on The HSA website, and was immediately interested. I just registered for the webinar hosted by The HSA, "Weird Herbs with Amanda Thomsen" Tuesday, February 16. I can't wait to see what she has to say!

As a unit, I feel we have different needs than we had in the beginning of the pandemic. It seems to me, that after a period of growth, we need to 'hunker down' and take care of ourselves. Recharging our herbal spirit and reconnecting with each other. To this end, we will have a portion of each monthly Zoom meeting dedicated to unit business and general information. We will have this after our speaker or program. We will also continue the informal Zoom gatherings that started on the Winter Solstice. Members only 'Full Moon Rambles' will offer us a chance to gather together (although virtually) in an informal setting and share what's going on with our gardens, and our lives. The first Full Moon Ramble was January 28, and at this writing actually hasn't occurred yet. February's full moon will be on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Let's see how this idea pans out.

Our Survey is complete. We had 28 participants, which is less than half of our membership. Of those who voted, 75% (20 people) felt we should postpone having Herb Day until we can do it in person. The Board agrees. The survey results for having an online sale were split right down the middle. We feel that it is not quite the right time to try to pull off an online sale. As for gardening opportunities, and preparing products for sale, **Dena Yanowski** has compiled the individual responses into a list of volunteers that be called upon when the time is right. This is great information to have down the road. Speaking of online sales; check out the January 22 issue of The Lazy Gardener and Friends. **Brenda Beust Smith** has a great article called "Online Plant Sales are (Probably) Here to Stay."

I attended the Zoom meeting for Unit Chairs earlier this week. What a great opportunity to share what we are doing and to learn how HSA units all over the country are dealing with the pandemic. Here are some of the things other units are doing:

- Many will continue with Zoom meetings even after we can safely meet in-person.
- Some units have working groups (ie. Botanic or Horticultural Studies, Culinary, Ways and Means, Book Group, Crafts) that meet independently from the main group via Zoom.
- At least 5 or 6 units (and probably more) have held an online plant sale since Covid began. Each group seemed to do it a bit differently and with different results. Most agree it was hard work.
- We shared the names of speakers as well as other ideas for programming.

I am very proud of how well our unit has risen to these challenging times.

**Julie Fordes**  
Unit Chair



**Announcing Our February 17 “Care and Share”  
Pearls for the Pandemic Program  
“Valentine Desserts and the Flowers of Love”  
With Our Special Guest Speaker  
Bee, the Flower Chef  
“I say love it is a flower...”  
Amanda McBroom**



**Choose your Valentine “Words of Love”  
from the Language of Flowers...  
*Edible Flowers, of course!***

February 17, 2021, 7:00 pm CST  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85811826744>





## Every Garden Needs a Protector, Who's Keeping Watch in Yours?



**Sparky celebrates the new year with golden ginkgo confetti**

*Photo Courtesy of Karen Cottingham*

## Member Concerns



Our condolences to

**Angela Roth**

on the passing of her mother

**amazon**smile

**You shop. Amazon gives.**

An AmazonSmile account has been set up for the South Texas Unit. Be sure to sign up for [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) and select the South Texas unit as described below. Each quarter the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible items to our unit.

The shopping experience is the same as shopping through amazon.com with the added benefit the foundation will donate to our organization.

### **Five Easy Steps to Support the South Texas Unit**

1. Go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)
2. No account? Create one! Have an account? Sign in.
3. Select charitable organization. Found near the top of the [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) home page.
4. Type in Herb Society South Texas Unit and click Search. Once the name comes up hit Select.
5. Enjoy shopping!

Questions? Problems? Contact Maria Treviño at [maria@burger.com](mailto:maria@burger.com)



## The Herb Society of America Membership Anniversaries for the year 2020!

### **45 Years**

Corlas Pearsall  
Joyce P. Taylor

### **40 Years**

Jane Littell  
Lois Jean Howard

### **30 Years**

Benée Curtis

### **20 Years**

Gloria Hunter

### **5 Years**

P. B. Sales

**Thank you for your commitment and service!**

We will honor the 2021 anniversaries later this year.

## Slow Down and...



Photo Courtesy of  
Catherine O'Brien

**“Be not afraid of  
going slowly; be  
afraid only of  
standing still.”**

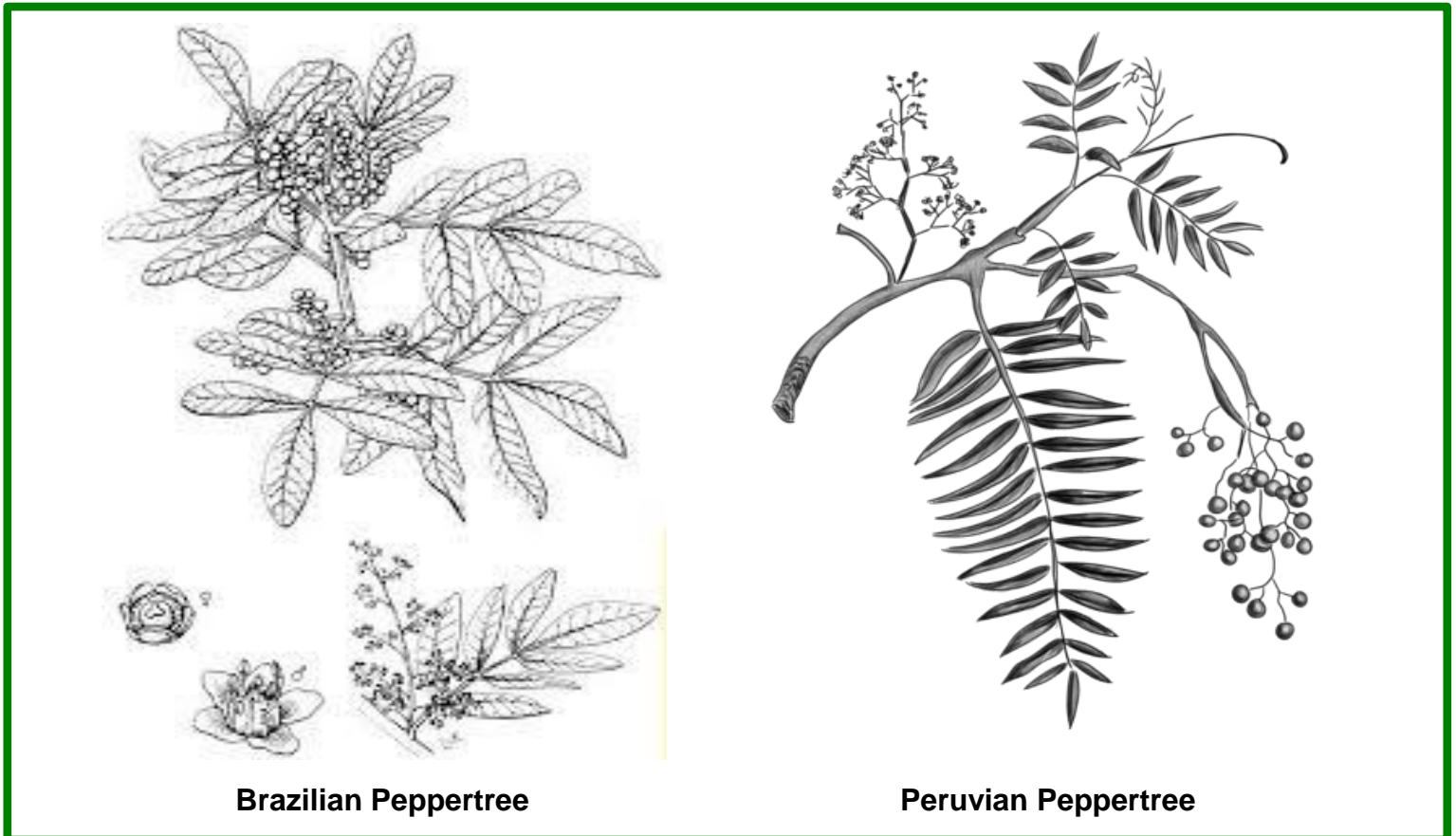
— Chinese Proverb

**...Savor the Day**



**Herb of the Month (HOTM): February 2021  
Pink Peppercorn (Rose Pepper)**

*Laura Mullen*



**Brazilian Peppertree**

**Peruvian Peppertree**

**Latin name:** *Schinus terebinthifolius* (Brazilian peppertree) and *Schinus mole* (Peruvian peppertree)

**Information:** Pink peppercorns are not related to commercial pepper (*Piper nigrum*); they are actually in the cashew family. Both varieties are considered invasive in the US, Australia, and Africa. The Brazilian variety can be found in the southeastern US where it is sometimes known as “Florida Holly”, while the Peruvian variation grows from Southern California to Florida and is known as California Peppertree.

**Culinary tip:** Pink peppercorn is interchangeable with black and white pepper, and it is often mixed with the two for a pepper blend known as Creole. Besides its use as a garnish, it can be used to flavor fish, risotto, salad dressings or sauces – as it is lighter than black or red pepper, it is usually added toward the end of cooking. Thinking outside of the box, it can be used as a contrast in sweet desserts such as Pineapple Upside-Down Cake and cookies.

Continued



**Growing tip:** Peruvian pepper trees are similar to the Brazilian pepper tree, but the latter has rounder and wider leaves. Both can reach a height of 30-50 feet. The dense clusters of berries known as drupes (fruits that bear a single seed) ripen in the Fall. The trees prefer sandy and well-drained soil but have been known to grow in poorly drained infertile soils. They are tolerant of alkaline conditions. Both varieties are good nectar and pollen sources for honeybees.

**Health Benefits:** Pink peppercorns have diuretic, antiseptic, and disinfectant properties. They have been used as treatment for rheumatism and bronchial issues. As they are in the cashew family, they should be avoided by people with tree nut allergies.

**Recipe from Laura's Kitchen:**

### Pink Peppercorn Sauce

$\frac{3}{4}$  c sour cream  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  c milk  
1 T fresh chopped dill  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  T fresh grated horseradish  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  T white wine vinegar  
2 T pink peppercorns  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  t raw honey  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  t salt

Place all ingredients into blender, puree until smooth. Note: 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  T prepared horseradish can be substituted for fresh horseradish and white wine vinegar.

Ed. note: Even though pink peppercorns are blended into black and green peppercorn mixtures and sold in US, a question still remains about possible toxicity. There have been reports of allergic reactions by some people and ongoing concerns about toxicity as demonstrated by animal studies.

Ever wonder what to do in your Garden in  
February?



Visit the South Texas Unit Website for a  
[Monthly To Do List !](#)





## BOOK C O R N E R

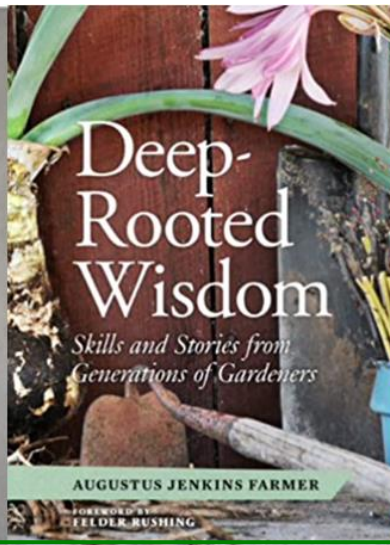
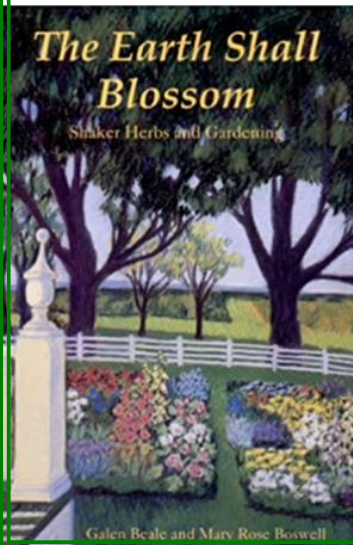
If you have suggestions for books or other media members might like, submit your suggestions to Julie Fordes at [fordes.julie@gmail.com](mailto:fordes.julie@gmail.com)



*Julie Fordes*

I guess you can tell I have spent a bit of time wandering around The HSA website lately. Well here is another gem I just have to share! If you log in as a member and go to Unit Chair Resources, you will find a Suggested Book List. This is a list of plant-related books for discussion groups and book clubs. However, anyone can read them, and I trust each one of these books is worth a read. I have read some of these and look forward to reading more! Here are just a few examples.

Next month, I hope to have more information to share about services The HSA Library offers to members.







Julie Fordes

Turns out the rind from the orange tree in my backyard tastes just as bad as the fruit does. Not suitable for tea, but I am harvesting it anyway for potpourri. We need some good tasting **orange and tangerine rind** for our Texas Herb Tea and our Christmas Tea. **Please save your rinds!** Or skip the hassle of peeling/grating and use the little, easy-to-peel Cutie oranges (washed of course)! I featured orange rind in the Back to Our Roots article in the March 2020 issue of Herbs Make Scents. Head back to the Newsletter section of the website to check it out. [www.herbsociety-stu.org](http://www.herbsociety-stu.org)

### Time once again to think about Calendula Officinalis!

We use the dried flowers for tea and for bath products. Here is a harvesting tip from **Janice Stuff**. After she takes the petals off the flower to dry, Janice saves the flower head separately. The petals are just the right size for tea, and the flower heads are perfect for skin and body preparations.

Our National Herb Society website has fabulous, in-depth information about all kinds of things, and calendula is no exception. Go to the website, go to Learn About Herbs, and then go to the Essential Guide for calendula. [www.herbsociety.org](http://www.herbsociety.org)

This year, I am growing some Orange King calendula (seeds from *Baker Creek*). It is a large, double petaled, bright orange flower. See the photo on right. **Beth and Jim Murphy** are growing Pacific Beauty Blend (seeds from *Botanical Interests*). What a beautiful combination of color all the different dried petals will make! Janice Stuff plans to grow 'Radio Calendula' from seed. (Richters Herbs, Canada) This variety has a large flower head resembling a radio dial.



Orange King Calendula

### Chamomile



Chamomile

Staying home so darn much has given me the opportunity to new explore things. One of these new things is encouraging members to grow *Matricaria recutita* -German Chamomile for tea blends. I did just enough research to figure out that YES, this is a wonderful plant, and I need to start the seeds and spread them around to anyone who will grow them! I was only able to find German Chamomile seeds. I have read that this variety grows a little taller than the Roman. I will do some more research about chamomile, if you have any knowledge to share, let me know, let's get it out there!

I suspect this will be a new plant to grow for many of us. **Beth Murphy and Lois Jean Howard** have grown it before, but not in a while. They are both growing some now. Thanks to **Donna Yanowski** for helping get those wee baby seedlings to a new garden home. We have at least a dozen members who have joined the "Great Growing Chamomile in Houston" experiment! We will keep you posted!

Here's a website with a nice variety of chamomile information:  
<https://gardenerspath.com/plants/flowers/grow-chamomile/>

I have butterfly pea seeds available to members who have a sunny trellis available. You don't have to plant them until mid-March but let me know if you want some.



# Valentine's Day Special Love and the Language of Flowers Quiz



**Match All the Floral Sentiments to the  
Correct Victorian Valentines to Win a Prize!**

**(Only current HSA-STU members eligible. See the contest rule below)**





## Sub Rosa Messages of Love

Karen Cottingham

Proper Victorians, restrained from discussing matters of romance in polite society, were surprisingly fluent in a symbolic language of love called the “language of flowers”. This wasn’t exactly a secret language - most families owned at least one of the hundreds of guide books available. These were dictionaries of sorts which standardized the particular meaning and symbolism assigned to each flower. By consulting these guide books and then visiting the flower markets to compose their messages, discrete young ladies and gentlemen found a way to play the subtle game of courtship.

*There is a language, little known,  
Lovers claim it as their own.  
Its symbols smile upon the land,  
Wrought by nature’s wondrous hand;  
And in their silent beauty speak,  
Of life and joy, to those who seek  
For Love Divine and sunny hours  
In the language of the flowers.*

–The Language of Flowers, London, 1875

Specific messages were encoded into the particular buds, blooms, and floral arrangements the sweethearts exchanged, and allowed them to express feelings that were taboo in Victorian society.



Since it’s almost Valentine’s Day, I thought it would be fun to see how the subtle nuances of love and courtship can be expressed through carefully selected flowers. See if you can decipher the *sub rosa* messages in the Victorian Valentine postcards above.





**Here's the contest rule:** The first HSA-STU member who correctly matches all the Valentines to the appropriate floral sentiment and submits their answer to [karen.redbrick@gmail.com](mailto:karen.redbrick@gmail.com) will be the winner.

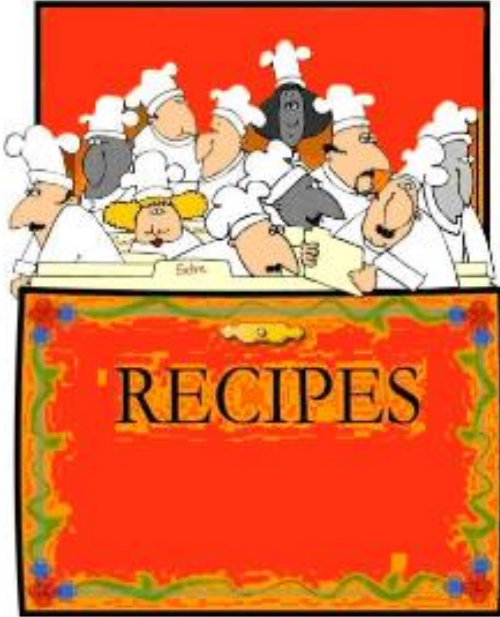
### Here are the floral descriptions to be matched to the Valentines:

- a. This flower, in general, represents pride, beauty, and fascination. The sender is saying "My love and admiration for you knows no bounds", or even "Alas for my poor heart, my heart aches for you." If the flower selected is red, take note - it signals romantic interest, passion, and desire.
- b. Select this one if you are playful but a bit impulsive.
- c. If you can find one of these, its message is "Be Mine".
- d. If you are feeling the exhilaration of love's first emotion, share the good news with a bouquet of these fragrant flowers. They also symbolize youth, purity, and innocence.
- e. Your romance may not seem very promising, but all is not lost. A Valentine picturing this early spring flower hints that there is still hope.
- f. If someone's beloved is elegant, dainty, and charming, this is the flower to send.
- g. If, on the other hand, your love relationship is combative, you might select a flower which conveys "victory through battle and conquest".
- h. Sometimes, though, it's best to forgive and forget and signal a "return to happiness". The same flower is also associated with Victorian feminine values like chastity, motherhood, sweetness, and purity.
- i. The person choosing this Valentine flower is making this vow - "I'll Always Be True". It may not be the showiest flower, but it's sweet, and it symbolizes modesty, love, faithfulness, and watchfulness.
- j. If your love is exuberant and unrestrained, why be delicate? Declare your passion with all the drama it deserves with this spring flower.
- k. In the Language of Flowers, this blossom means "forever thine", a lovely statement of the eternal love and commitment of married couples.
- l. These dainty flowers symbolize true love, remembrance, and memories. They would be a good choice for suitors hoping not to be forgotten, but might also suggest an authentic love brimming with memories.

Have fun and Good Luck to all!



## STAY-AT-HOME RECIPES



*Carolyn Kosclskey*

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 hope that an end to the Pandemic may be in the not too distant future, along with new beginnings. By now New Year's resolutions have either been embraced or fallen by the wayside and there is a link below giving 9 helpful ways to salvage your good habits. We are also reminded of the new Dietary Guidelines for Americans theme of making "every bite count" with nutrient-dense foods and beverages, selecting a variety of foods from each group and portion control.

There are many holidays this month that may be used as inspiration for meal plans beginning with Groundhog day on the 2nd, followed by the American Heart Association National Wear Red Day on the 5<sup>th</sup>. The 13<sup>th</sup> is the beginning of the Chinese Lunar New Year, and

then a celebration of President's Day (originally established in 1880 as George Washington's birthday) on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Shrove Tuesday/Mardi Gras is on the 16th, the next day being Ash Wednesday. February 26<sup>th</sup> is the Chinese Lantern Festival and ending the month is the full Snow Moon on the last Saturday. This is the Chinese lunar year of the ox and I think we would all agree that neither the ox nor groundhog lend themselves to menu inspiration for most of us. However, the "lucky colors" green, yellow and white, may be an inspiration for incorporating vegetables and fruits of those colors into our menus. 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. Pancakes are often associated with Mardi Gras and did you know that the whole mix can be baked in a 9 X13 like a cake and served as portions allowing the cook to eat with the rest of the family!

One of the most celebrated days of 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 is an abundance of recipes in cookbooks and on the internet for its use in beverages, salads and desserts. Recipes begin on the next page.

The March Stay-At-Home Recipe 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](mailto:therecipeladycollection@gmail.com)



## French Strawberry Glaze Pie *From the kitchen of Janice Dana*

### Filling:

9-inch pie shell baked (home made or purchased)

1 quart strawberries,

Wash and hull strawberries setting aside ½ cup of the choicest berries and quartering or halving remainder, depending on size

Simmer together for 3 minutes until tender

2/3 cup water

1 cup strawberries, quartered/halved

Mix together

1 cup sugar

3 tablespoons corn starch

1/3 cup water

Stir until smooth and add to the simmering mixture, boil 1 minute.

Mix in rest of berries. Pour in a baked pie shell and arrange saved berries on top in a pleasing manner.

Refrigerate until firm, about two hours or overnight. Serve with whipped cream.

*This recipe is from my mom in the 1960s. We grew strawberry bumper crops some years. I remember hulling them to freeze and was eating and hulling until I was sick! The choice berries should be arranged on the top to look like a 'magazine' pie.*

*Janice*

Also in the 1960s there was a popular dessert that involved angel food cake and strawberries. With a serrated knife remove the top 2-inch layer of a chilled angel food cake and place top down on wax paper. Cut two concentric circles within the cake leaving a narrow wall and making sure to not cut all the way through. Remove the cake from within the circles leaving a cavity. Fill with a mixture of hulled and quartered strawberries mixed with a glaze or whipped topping. Place the top back on the cake and ice the entire top and sides of cake with whipped topping and chill. Before serving fill the hollow of the cake with fresh strawberries. This recipe used Dream Whip (1957) which pre-dated Cool Whip (1967).

## FROZEN STRAWBERRY DESSERT

*Handwritten recipe from a Mississippi teacher in the 1990s*

Angel food cake, home made or store bought

1 quart frozen sugar-free strawberry yogurt

Container of frozen strawberries

Set the frozen strawberries and yogurt aside to thaw and become soft. In a large bowl tear the angel food cake into small pieces. Once the frozen yogurt has become soft gently stir into the angel food cake pieces. When melted stir in the strawberries and their juice so that the cake soaks up both the melted yogurt and strawberry juice. Once mixed spoon or pour into a 9 X 13 dish, or two 8 X 8 dishes, and freeze. Remove from the freezer 15 to 30 minutes before serving. Note: If unable to find frozen yogurt substitute strawberry or vanilla ice cream, sherbet or Greek yogurt.

*There are many popular recipes that include strawberries and angel food cake as ingredients. This particular recipe was popular at many garden club and book club meetings because it served a large group. The original handwritten recipe was given to me in the 1990s by my sister in Mississippi from a teacher co-worker.*





**Salvage Your Health Resolutions With These Nine Simple Moves:**

<https://www.fastcompany.com/90595499/salvage-your-health-resolutions-with-these-9-simple-moves>

**Jenny Doan's Strawberry Pie Recipe:** <https://blog.missouriquiltco.com/its-jennys-birthday-and-she-wants-to-share-fun-ways-to-celebrate-your-summer-birthday-too-lets-party>

**Chocolate Rosemary Sauce:** <https://food52.com/recipes/22731-chocolate-rosemary-sauce>



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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South Texas Unit  
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Find our Unit on the web at:  
[www.herbsociety-stu.org](http://www.herbsociety-stu.org)



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.

