

The Herb Society of America- South Texas Unit Annual Report 2020-2021

Chairman's Report

I have focused on creating opportunities for members to maintain contact during COVID. I have also used this time to update the Scholarship requirements, By-laws and Volunteer Hours Reporting Guidelines. I have attended Unit Chair meetings sponsored by National to keep abreast of what other units are doing.

Member Outreach

- Member share Zoom about mid-May 2020
- Member Gift Bags June 2020
- Member plant give away and meeting at McGovern Garden June 2020
- Member field trip to Bhakti Farms-October 2020Monthly
- Full Moon Ramble- Casual conversation and sharing started Feb. 2021]
- Bobby Jucker - Breads Gift pack Nov. 2020

Garden Related

- Two Herbal Demonstrations at the Houston Botanical Gardens, fall 2020
- Two meetings with representatives of McGovern Gardens to discuss volunteering in Herb Garden
- Distributed Chamomile seedlings for members to grow in their gardens, Jan. 2021
- Planting Palooza with City of Bellaire, April 2021 - Special Educational Video produced featuring 4 members' gardens
- Herb Gardening and Herbal Education at the Westbury Community Garden, started in March 2021. Now weekly opportunities.
- Volunteer Garden Work Day at Garden Oaks Elementary School

Special

- Launched fundraising via participating in Amazon

Julie Fordes, Unit Chair

Treasurer's Report

During the past year, I completed the administrative and business tasks required as Treasurer to support

the South Texas Unit. These tasks included submission of the membership reports and dues payments to The Herb Society of America and the filing the required reports for the IRS and Texas State Sales Tax.

Payments to maintain STU business were made to the US Post Office Box and Big Tex Storage.

Meeting

and Event insurance was paid through The Herb Society of America. Due to Covid-19 STU events, Herb

Day and Herb Fair were cancelled before any pre-payments were made. The contract and payment to

Cherie Flores Pavilion for the STU meetings was delayed due to the facility being closed and no in-person meetings were held in 2020.

This year all income collected was from Membership Dues and Investment Dividends. Expenditures paid

included those noted above and approved donations for scholarships, gardens and the National Herb Garden Intern fund. All income and expenses are summarized in the financial report for 2020-2021. A draft budget for the 2021-2022 was prepared, presented to the Board for their input, review and approval, and is now presented to the Unit membership for input, review, and approval. Reports prepared during the year included the Membership and Dues Report, Quarterly Financial Reports and the Annual Financial Report.

As Treasurer, I monitored daily transactions, reviewed and reconciled monthly statements from Chase Checking Account and the quarterly statements from Vanguard Investment Funds.

As Treasurer, I shared membership data with membership chair. I collected the mail delivered to our Unit's PO Box and processed/transmitted mail to appropriate persons.

Overview Status and Trends:

The STU currently has a satisfactory financial status, especially in light of the lack of revenue from the two fundraisers, Herb Day and Herb Fair. To date, the 2021 general operating expenses exceed income

by \$2358. STU has \$148,957 in the combined bank and investment accounts.

In 2021, one scholarship was awarded, and three scholarships have been budgeted for the 2021-22 year

in anticipation of a good return from Herb Day. Current economic trends and meeting expectations will have an impact on our Unit's fundraising and activities. The expectation of offering the STU events promises for better outlook; however, careful monitoring of planned spending will be needed.

Maria Trevino, Treasurer

Membership

During the 2020-2021 year we gained 10 new members:

Carolina B., Noreen H., Lucinda K., Deborah L., Gayle M., Laura M., Lindsey P., Angela R., Faith S., Catherine W.

Our current membership enrollment is 65.

Active 49

Joint (1) 2

Life 5 Total voting members: 56 Majority: 29; 2/3's: 37

Meeting quorum: 12 (20%=11.2)

Sustaining 6

Affiliate 3

We have added a Google Forms application to the website to make the online membership application process more streamlined.

We have also added a Members Information section to the website, with protected access to an online Member's Directory.

We will be working towards an online method for submitting hours, and will be adding up and submitting them to National in August 2021.

We did not have a New Members Orientation in 2020, but are working towards creating a PowerPoint Presentation to share virtually with this population.

Dena Yanowski, Membership Chair

Publications

The South Texas Unit newsletter, *Herbs Make Scents* is a monthly publication distributed to an on-line audience of 1204 subscribers. In addition we have 5 off-line mail readers. Two editors share responsibilities of composing the monthly newsletter and distributing it through the communication platform, MailChimp. The primary author submits monthly articles and additional articles are submitted by voluntary authors throughout the year. Several new sections added to the newsletter are: Pearls for the Pandemic Announcements, Stay At Home Recipes, Member Spotlight and Herb of the Month.

Member and Guest E-Mail Marketing Engagement May 2018 – May 2021

(Words in **bold** are defined on pages 3)

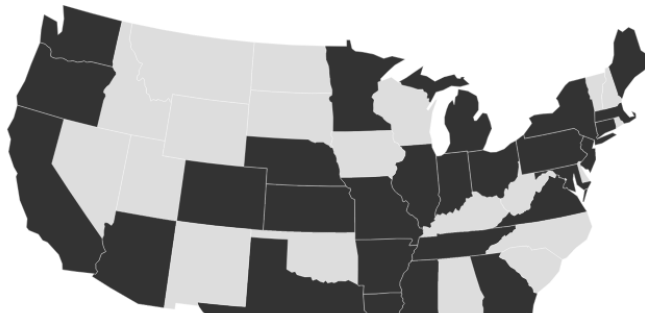
- Audience of 1,390 **CONTACTS** and 1,204 **SUBSCRIBERS**
- Average subscribe rate is 600%. The average unsubscribe rate is less than 0.1%
- Messages are sent to IP addresses throughout USA
- Messages are sent to IP addresses in 2 countries
- 99% of messages sent are delivered successfully
- **E-Mail Marketing Rate** 31% **OPENS** and 6.5% **CLICKS**
- **E-Mail Marketing Levels** are 50% **OFTEN**, 8% **SOMETIME** and 41% **RARELY**
- **OPEN** rate is consistently above the industry “Open” rates.
- Greater than 50 Messages have been distributed using MailChimp (past 12 months). Each newsletter distributed includes a MailChimp message cover page. Other MailChimp message announcements were also created and published.
- 5 Members have been trained to use MailChimp; 2 are active
- Interested guests can **SUBSCRIBE** to receive newsletters and Herb Fair and Herb Day notifications from the STU website

Data Source: MailChimp

Member E-Mail Marketing Engagement May 2018 – May 2021

- Audience of 73 **CONTACTS** and 61 **SUBSCRIBERS**
- **E-Mail Marketing Rate** 80% **OPENS** and 20% **CLICKS**
- **E-Mail Marketing Levels:** 93% **OFTEN**, 0% **SOMETIMES** and 7% **RARELY**

Our Subscribers are Located Beyond Texas Borders
(States in black represent location of **SUBSCRIBER** IP addresses)



Janice Freeman, Publications

Programs

The Year of Living Virtually

Switching to virtual meetings was easier than we thought and allowed us to reach so many more people. Here are the topics we explored:

September 16, 2020 ***What Could be More Lemony than Lemons? Lemon-Scented Herbs!***
Moderated by Karen Cottingham

October 21, 2020 ***Comfort Food from Your Herb Garden - Herbal Harvest Soups and Breads***
Moderated by Karen Cottingham

November 18, 2020 ***Makin' a List, Checkin' it Twice! - Inspired Herbal Gifts for the Holidays (Or Anytime!)***
Moderated by Karen Cottingham

December 16, 2020 ***Herbal Treats with a Sweet or Savory Twist - Zoom-Share your Favorites in our Virtual Herbal Cookie Exchange***
Moderated by Karen Cottingham

January 20, 2021 ***Good Nature vs. Nature Bad - Scientifically Proven Herbal Immune Support***
Presented by Mark "Merriwether" Vorderbruggen, PhD

February 17, 2021 ***Valentine Desserts and the Flowers of Love***
Presented by Bee, The Flower Chef (Cancelled due to Weather)

March 17, 2021 ***Herbal Ways of Ireland - Springtime Herbs of the Druids, the Fairies, and the Saints***
Presented by Irish Storyteller Jane McDaniel

April 21, 2021 ***Hold the Phone! Tips for Photographing Native Plants and Wildlife with Your Smartphone***
Presented by Lauren Simpson, creator of St. Julian's Crossing Wildlife Habitat

May 19, 2021 **Annual Meeting**

June 16, 2021 ***Josephine: The Empress Gardened***
Presented by Lesley Parness, Garden Historian

July 21, 2021 ***We're Celebrating Valentine's Day in July! Join Us for Floral Snacks, Desserts and Drinks***

Presented by Bee, The Flower Chef

Zoom Meetings were so popular that even after we resume in-person meetings we will offer occasional virtual events.

Submitted by **Karen Cottingham**, Vice-Chair