

# Herbs Make Scents

THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA  
VOLUME XXXIX, NUMBER 3



SOUTH TEXAS UNIT  
MARCH 2016

Editor –Linda Alderman ewalderman@comcast.net

## March 2016 Calendar

- Mar 8** - Tues. - 10 a.m. **Day Meeting** at the home of Thelma Rowe, 5151 Buffalo Speedway (Brookdale Senior Living), 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: “*Fifty Shades of Blue: Our Un-Dyeing Passion for Indigo, Part 1*”, presented by the HSA-STU Indigo Study Group” **Bring your plate, napkin and a dish to share.**

## April 2016 Calendar

- April 12** - Tues. - 10 a.m. **Day Meeting at TBD.** 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 Benee 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. **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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3/1 Susan Wood  
3/10 Vivian Scallan  
3/11 Joan Jordan  
3/16 Beth Murphy  
3/23 Lois Jean Howard  
3/28 Linda Alderman

## Members’ Concerns

Jeanie Dunnihoo - Illness

## Rosemary for Remembrance

Dave Mason – Former Member





## Chairman's Corner

There is every reason to believe that this year's Herb Day, Saturday, April 23, 2016, will be most memorable and enjoyable. This year we will celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the ever so interesting, late Victorian wonder woman, Beatrix Potter, with an escape to a place she dearly loved, the beautiful Lake District of England. Ms. Potter was a consummate naturalist, gardener, artist, conservationist, author and estate agent for the National Trust. She was widely recognized for breeding and raising sheep.

Helen Mann will give the opening presentation. We know Helen as a panelist on *Manor of Speaking*, a Channel 8 production that airs weekly after Downton Abbey. Ms. Mann is former vice-consul for Great Britain here in Houston. She will discuss the Lake District's impact on Ms. Potter's life, her writings, and Potter's sway on the Lake District that exists today. Mann's presentation will include information about local foods and recipes.

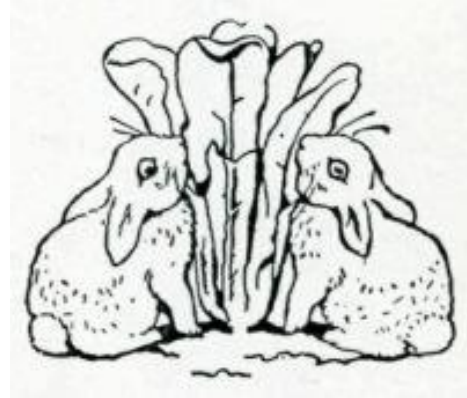
The second speaker is Linda Lain, a former president of The Herb Society of America and former chair of the South Texas Unit. Linda is a long-time Beatrix Potter enthusiast and devotee. Her talk will include a biographical sketch of Potter and her publications. Linda will talk about the people who really inspired the characters in Potter's books. The proceeds from her children's stories made the purchase of Hill Top Farm and her pursuit of gardening possible.

The third speaker is the well-known and widely respected horticulturist, Henry Flowers, Director of Gardens at Festival Hill in Round Top, Texas. Henry will speak about Beatrix Potter's garden, Hill Top, with a focus on the plants she mentioned in her books and horticultural tips on how to grow them in Texas.

The morning repast and luncheon menu will feature Lake District cuisine. We are so excited that a soon-to-be member, Andi Leger (proprietor of French Fig Catering), will be providing lunch. Traditionally members prepare food for the morning repast...Practice making scones! See a recipe from the Lake District provided by Linda Lain.

Sally Luna, Unit Chair

**Herb Day Special Announcement – Invite everyone you meet!**



“A day with Beatrix Potter” is going to be a wonderful event with great speakers, food and shopping. Share it with every one you know. Treat a friend, bring a quest. You will be happy that you did. This will be a day to remember.

The lovely large room at Saint Paul's church on Main Street will accommodate 150 people. Let us fill it. Last year we had 91 in attendance. In the past we had to turn people away because the Garden Center was small. Spread the word. Take flyers to every meeting you attend. This is a grand event that you will be proud to share.





### About Our Meetings . . .

Love was in the air for the February meeting of the HSA-STU! First, we *loved* having 24 members in attendance - this included our 3 new members: **Sara Diaz, Mary Sacilowski, and Dena Yanowski.** Second, we also welcomed 12 guests, 7 of whom visited us for the first time. What a sweet Valentine this meeting was for us!

Speaking of “sweet”, what could be sweeter than the decorations done by our hostesses, **Nutti Doodeheefver** and **Martha Burg**? Valentine-themed centerpieces tastefully adorned each table along with a Valentine card for each place setting. That’s sweeter than chocolate! Thank you, Nutti and Martha. You really made the group feel special this evening.

To add to the delight of tonight’s meeting, **Janis Teas** brought more of her delicious kumquat marmalade to share. What a treat! It’s wonderful when our members share their talents and “fruits of their labor”! Thank you for your kind generosity, Janis.

It is often said that the way to the heart is through the stomach, and tonight we learned about the role artisanal vinegars can play in our food and drink. Stroll through a few of Houston’s gourmet and ethnic grocery stores and you will find vinegars from every culinary tradition: rice vinegar from Japan, malt vinegar from England, wine vinegar from France, sherry vinegar from Spain, and balsamic vinegar from Italy. You’d even find fruit vinegars of every type from around the world, from everyday apples as well as from exotic figs, dates and quince. Vinegars can also be made from grains (rice, barley, oats, and corn) and from sweet syrups such as molasses, honey, and maple syrup.

For our February evening program, **David Eisner-Kleyle**, Director of Operations for *VOM-FASS USA*, focused on balsamic and fruit vinegars. *VOM FASS* is a German-based company that produces and imports fine artisanal vinegars, oils, and cordials. The word *balsamico*, from the Latin *balsamum*, means “balsam-like” in the sense of “restorative” or “curative”. Generations of vinegar-producing families in Modena, Italy perfected the process that gives us the balsamic vinegar we enjoy today. Trebbiano grapes are harvested at their peak ripeness, crushed and filtered. The juice is then boiled in large copper cauldrons suspended over wood fires. The concentrated juice is

inoculated with yeast and “active” vinegar from another barrel. Then it ferments for years, extracting flavor from a series of barrels of different woods and becoming rich and viscous through gradual evaporation.

Exposure to normal temperature fluctuations is crucial to this process, so the casks are housed in unheated buildings. The natural cycles of freezing and thawing alternately clarify and ferment the liquid, resulting in the best quality balsamic vinegar.

Members and guests had the opportunity to sample six elegant vinaigrettes provided by **Brian Moorhead**, owner of the *VOM FASS* shop in the Rice Village. We were also treated to a sampling of fruit vinegar-based aperitifs. **Karen Cottingham** and guest (*soon to be member*) **Andi Leger** collaborated to produce four refreshing, effervescent shrubs - not the plant, but a drink! Look up “shrub” and you will find its origins in the Arabic word *sharaba*, meaning “to drink”. Accounts differ on the history of the shrub beverage, but they generally trace its beginnings to 18<sup>th</sup> century England and America.

Fruits were frequently combined with vinegars to preserve excess harvest for the winter, and the fruit vinegar was found to improve the flavor of cheap liquor. Smugglers sometimes resorted to hiding contraband liquor in the sea to avoid detection and taxes. Unfortunately, this usually led to salt water seeping into the barrels. But, thankfully, the addition of fruit vinegars rescued the otherwise undrinkable salty spirits!

A close relative of shrub is *switchel*, a ginger-molasses-vinegar beverage that originated in the Caribbean. Shrubs and switchels lend themselves to experimentation with herbs and spices and various combinations of fruits. This sounds more healthy and appealing to me than diet sodas!

If you are inclined to learn more about shrubs and switchels, don’t miss Amy Stewart’s blog, *The Drunken Botanist*. She describes her enthusiastic sampling of a “crazy-cool case of drinking vinegars” made from such unusual ingredients as basil, artichoke, fennel, kale, and beets, to name just a few.

As you can tell from reading this report, the February meeting was great fun! Don’t miss next month’s meeting with its intriguing program on indigo, *Fifty Shades of Blue*.

-Karen Cottingham and Albert Ramos



February 2016 HSA-STU Meeting Quiz  
*The Valentine Edition*  
By Karen Cottingham & Albert Ramos

To cap off a lovely evening of Valentines and vinegar, members and guests enjoyed *The Valentine Edition* of the monthly door-prize questions. This month's theme was "the herbs, flowers, and folklore of love" and was solved in a collaborative activity by each table. The table consisting of **Janis Teas, Donna Faye Hilliard, Nita Rowe,** and guests **Julie Fordes, Debbie Biehl,** and **Sarah Phillips** answered the most questions correctly and received delicious tea cakes generously provided by **The Path of Tea** on West Alabama. How many questions can you answer without looking at the answers below? Good luck!

1. The Duchess of Cambridge (Kate Middleton) used "The Language of Flowers" to select flowers and herbs for her bridal bouquet. She wanted her bouquet to symbolize love, marriage, fidelity, and happiness. Name any one of the flowers or herbs the Duchess selected to represent these qualities.
2. The *Smell and Taste Treatment and Research Foundation* studied the effect of scent on male arousal. Which scent was the most effective?
  - A. Oriental spice blend
  - B. Cinnamon bun fragrance
  - C. Vanilla
  - D. Pumpkin pie-lavender blend
3. In Hindu wedding ceremonies, a golden paste made of this member of the ginger family is applied to the bride and groom's skin. It signifies purification and serves as a blessing for fertility and prosperity. What is this herb?
4. It is estimated that Americans spent \$350 million on chocolate for Valentine's Day this year. Is chocolate really an aphrodisiac?
5. St. Valentine's Day originally commemorated the life and death of two early Christian martyrs. The modern association with romance began in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century when Geoffrey Chaucer, author of *The Canterbury Tales*, wrote a popular poem. This poem was based on the widespread Medieval belief that \_\_\_\_\_ gathered each year on February 14 to choose their mates. Valentine's Day was forever after the day of love.

6. Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, was "born of the sea foam". Upon her emergence from the sea, which herb was draped around her neck? The Latin name of this herb means "dew of the sea" and for many centuries was used in wedding ceremonies.
7. In this song from 1959, a man who was always a "flop with chicks" took his troubles to a gypsy who prepared an elixir for him. What was the elixir? Hint - Look for the answer in these lyrics:

It smelled like turpentine and  
looked like Indian ink.

I held my nose, I closed my eyes,  
I took a drink.

I didn't know if it was day or night.

I started kissing everything in  
sight.

But when I kissed a cop down at  
Thirty-Fourth and Vine

He broke my little bottle of  
\_\_\_\_\_!

8. Because \_\_\_\_\_ is laden with berries even during the frozen winter, the Druids came to view this parasitic plant as a symbol of life-force and vitality. They gave it to both humans and animals with the hope of restoring fertility.
9. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Oberon claims that the juice from a certain common flowering plant will "on sleeping eyelids laid, ...make man or woman madly dote upon the next live creature that it sees". This plant is also called "heartsease", "heart's delight", "tickle-my-fancy", "Jack-jump-up-and-kiss-me", "come-and-cuddle-me", and "kiss-her-in-the-buttery". What is the name of this powerful plant?
10. Formerly widespread in the Appalachian and Ozark regions of the United States, this plant has been so over-harvested as an aphrodisiac that it is now protected as an endangered species. What is it?

Look for the answers near the end of the newsletter.



## About Our Meetings (Continued)

February 9th Day Meeting

Our day STU meeting was held at **Shirley Mills'** home. It was well attended with 19 present. During the business part of the meeting Martha Burg offered to chair our educational event, Herb Day, which will be held April 23rd at St Paul's United Methodist Church. Those attending the evening STU meeting are urged to also help with this event.

In addition to speakers, we will have a sale of herbal crafts, herb plants and books. The hours for the luncheon will be 9:00AM - 2:00PM. Please contact Martha Burg so she can inform you where help is needed. Following the above discussion **Janice Stuff** presented an interesting program about the many varieties of Bleeding Heart plant and vine---see the summary on the last page.

-Thelma Rowe

This recipe was sent as a suggestion for Herb Day refreshments by **Linda Lain, speaker for Herb day.**

### Scones

Here is a scone recipe which most Cumbrians (the Lake District) use – with very slight variations. I'm sure it would be used at Castle Cottage!

- 8 ounces self-rising flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 ½ ounces fat (butter, margarine or lard)
- 1 Tablespoon sugar
- Milk (to make a soft dough)
- 2 Tablespoons Currants or Sultanas
- One egg (beat and put aside a tablespoon for the tops)

These quantities may be increased according to number of scones you want to make.

Mix flour & salt in a basin, and rub in fat. Mix sugar and currants into flour.

Stir in with a knife beaten egg and milk to make a soft dough. (Handle lightly – do not over-knead). Roll out to thickness of ½ inch and cut into rounds with scone-cutter (2-1/2 inch cutter should make 14 scones).

Place on greased baking sheet, and brush over tops with broken egg.

Bake in hot oven (425-450F) for about 10 minutes.

## New Member Moment



**Sara Diaz** is a serious gardener. Previously affiliated with The Rose Society, she now “wishes to be more practical” and grows herbs, vegetables and tropical fruits. Sara has studied organic gardening and permaculture through Urban Harvest and is a regular at Houston Urban Gardeners meetings. Gardening is very relaxing for her after work. She has worked at the University of Houston for 20 years assisting students with medical, family, and emotional crises. Welcome to the HSA-STU, Sara!



**Mary Sacilowski** is another new member, and she came to us through her friend, **Lucia Bettler**. I still remember meeting Mary at the September 2015 evening

meeting. Her warm and inviting smile made me feel as if she were welcoming me to the meeting! One of Mary's special interests is worm composting, and this is very useful for her small herb garden. Mary also likes to cook and has taken several classes from Lucia. We're glad you're with us, Mary!



Pre-School

Let's also welcome **Dena Yanowski**. Dena is a pre-school teacher and would like to be involved with herbal educational programs for children. Like her mother, member **Donna Yanowski**,

Dena believes in helping others. She volunteers at the Hermann Park Family Garden and is indispensable in helping her mother with Houston Urban Gardeners. As a vegan, Dena relies on herbs for flavor and variety in her diet and has a small herb garden. She is also an expert fermenter. Welcome to the HSA-STU, Dena!





## Coming Up!!!!



### Remember Herbal Forum at Round Top!

Friday and Saturday, March 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>!

- Optional classes on Friday
- Plant Sale
- Presentations on Saturday including Lucia Bettler, David DeWitt, Henry Flowers, Linda Franze, Ann McCormick, Billi Parus and Trisha Shirey

### March Meeting Preview

Karen Cottigham

Are you ready for another herbal quiz? As a warm-up for our March 23, 2016 meeting, consider the following puzzler:

What do the following people have in common?

Princess Diana  
 Mahatma Gandhi  
 Duke Ellington  
 Yo-Yo Ma

Give up? ... What if I add Levi Strauss to the grouping?

*Answer: The lives of all these famous people were molded in some significant way by indigo, the endlessly fascinating subject of the March evening program.*

Come to the CHERIE FLORES GARDEN PAVILION in Hermann Park for *Fifty Shades of Blue: Our Un-Dyeing Passion for Indigo*, and bring a friend! **Note the date change from March 16 to March 23.** We've done this to avoid Spring Break traffic in the area.

### Answers to the quiz:

1. Lily of the Valley (return to happiness); Sweet William (gallantry); Hyacinth (constancy of love); Ivy (fidelity, marriage, friendship, and affection); and Myrtle (the emblem of marriage and love - the myrtle was from a shrub that Queen Victoria planted in 1845. The wedding bouquets of Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth both contained myrtle from this shrub)
2. Pumpkin pie-lavender blend
3. Turmeric
4. No
5. Birds
6. Rosemary
7. Love Potion No. 9
8. Mistletoe
9. Viola tricolor or Johnny-Jump-Up
10. American ginseng

A very special door prize of Balsam Vinegar Pearls donated by **Brian Moorhead** of VOM FASS was awarded to **Susan Wood** for knowing that it was Cleopatra who dissolved a pearl worth a fortune in a glass of vinegar and drank it down. If this didn't impress Marc Anthony, then nothing would!

A second gift of Balsam Vinegar Pearls was awarded to guest **Andi Leger** for her cheerful, professional, and generous assistance in preparing and serving the vinegar shrubs. Andi answered a late afternoon call for help with this as Karen Cottigham was wearing too many hats this evening. Thank you, Andi! Andi will also be catering our *Beatrix Potter* luncheon for **Herb Day 2016**.



**Indigo**



## The Herbs of China Bayles: Bleeding Heart Plants and the Bleeding Heart Vine

Janice Stuff

February 9, 2016

Bleeding Heart plants refer to group of plants with shaped flowers that dangle like living lockets when this old-fashioned plant is in bloom. The blooms resemble pink hearts with white/red drops of blood falling from the heart; blooms are suspended in rows from arching stems that curve over mounds of foliage. Bleeding hearts thrive in woodland conditions of dappled shade and moist soil made rich by rotting leaves.

The most common variety has a pink bloom, *Lamprocapnos spectabilis* or *Dicentra spectabilis*; however, other colors range from bright reds and crimsons, deep pink, white, yellow, etc.

There are two interesting plants related to bleeding heart: first Dutchman's breeches, *Dicentra cucullaria*, a plant that features deeply-cut, fern-like, grayish-green foliage and racemes of waxy, white (infrequently tinged with pink), yellow-tipped flowers shaped like pantaloons with the ankles upward (hence the common name). Next, squirrel corn, *Dicentra canadensis*, is a plant found throughout the NE and SE United States and in Canada. The rootstocks of squirrel corn have a yellow corn-on-the-cob appearance.

Although botanical guides cite that bleeding heart plants may be grown in shaded gardens in USDA Zones 3-9, there was little support from references and our discussion that these plants are suitable for the south Texas area. Again the habitats described for the bleeding heart plants include woodlands, meadows, alpine areas with gravely rich alluvial soils, and rocks.

Bleeding heart vine is a more appropriate plant for growing in the South Texas area. Elayne Kouzounis brought a lovely cutting of the vine from her garden. Bleeding heart vine is a twining evergreen shrub or vine. It usually blooms for several months and provides showy red flowers. The red variety of the vine, *Clerodendrum x speciosum*, *C. delectum*, may be grown in USDA Zones 8B-11.

Henry Flowers Commentary: I've found it too warm to grow true bleeding heart in our climate. I grew it years ago when I lived in north Georgia, but that was zone 6 and the soil was also acidic, which I believe it tends to prefer. The vining clerodendrums, known commonly as bleeding heart vines, do grow much better here. We've had the pure red form growing as Festival Hill for over 20 years. It usually freezes back, but comes back from the roots and blooms most prolifically in the fall. I definitely agree with your conclusion that it is a better plant for us!



*Lamprocapnos spectabilis*

### References

Bleeding Hearts, Corydalis, and Their Relatives, 2008. Magnus Liden, Mark C. Tebbitt, and Henrik Zetterlund. Published in association with Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Portland Ore: Timber Press.

Southern Shade, 2008. Jo Kellum. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Missouri Botanical Garden. Plant Finder: <http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder>

Henry Flowers, Festival Hill Garden Director, Round Top, Texas.

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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