

# Herbs Make Scents

THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA  
VOLUME XLVIII NUMBER 6



SOUTH TEXAS UNIT  
JUNE 2025

Co-Editors Linda Alderman ([ewalderman@comcast.net](mailto:ewalderman@comcast.net)) & Janice Freeman ([janicehfreeman@comcast.net](mailto:janicehfreeman@comcast.net))

## June 2025 Calendar

June 6, Fri. 9:00 am

**Westbury Garden Workday** 12581 Dunlap Street, Houston, TX 77035

June 8, Sat. 9:00 am – 12 noon

**Kolter Elementary Garden Workday** 9710 Runnymede Dr., Houston, TX 77096.  
Grassroom will be open.

June 10, Tues. 9:30 – 2 pm

**Day Meeting** Field Trip to tour the Chappell Hill Lavender Farm in Brenham (2250 Dillard Rd., 77833). We will carpool from Houston out to Brenham (meet at 9:30 am) or meet at the Farm at 11 am. Please RSVP to **Benée Curtis** ([bccurtis5@comcast.net](mailto:bccurtis5@comcast.net)) by June 7. Bring a picnic lunch to enjoy out at the farm.

June 18, Wed. 6:15 pm  
**Open to the public**

**Evening Meeting** "Secrets to Successful Container Gardening" presented by **Stephanie Gray**, County Extension Agent - Horticulture (Commercial/Green Industry), Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Location: Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion, 1500 Hermann Dr. Houston, TX 77004. Doors open at 6:15 pm, with potluck meal and program at 7:00 pm.

June 28, Sat. 3:30 - 6:30 pm  
**Open to the public**

**Lagniappe:** "Mocktails and Mysteries - Enjoy an Herbal Cocktail/ Mocktail at the LIT BookBar" 611 Jackson St. Suite B, Richmond, TX, 77469. More information at: <https://www.litbookbar.com/> Hosted by **STU Member Stephanie Calloway**; RSVP here: [karen.herbssociety@gmail.com](mailto:karen.herbssociety@gmail.com) This is a self-pay event. Refer to page 9.

## July 2025 Calendar

July 1

**Membership Renewals Due** - Refer to page 3.

July 8

**No Day Meeting in July**

**Note:** A planning meeting for 2025-2026 meetings will be held August 12.

July 12, Sat. 9:00 am – 12 noon

**Kolter Elementary Garden Workday** at 9710 Runnymede Dr., Houston, TX 77096

July 15

**Membership Volunteer Hours are Due** – Refer to page 3.

July 18

**No Evening Meeting in July**

July 19, Sat. 9:00 am

**Westbury Garden Workday** 12581 Dunlap Street, Houston, TX 77035

July 20, Sun. 1:00 pm  
**STU Members and Guests**

**Lagniappe:** "Street Food From Around the World," A Sunday Summer Brunch at the *Traveler's Cart*, 1401 Montrose Blvd. More information at <https://travelerscart.com/> This self-pay event is for STU Members and their guests only. Please RSVP here: [karen.herbssociety@gmail.com](mailto:karen.herbssociety@gmail.com) Refer to page 10.

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



Jeffery Hamilton on Unsplash

## Happy Birthday!

6/10 Humberto Figueroa

6/11 Sara Diaz

6/26 Mary Sacilowski



## CHAIRMAN CORNER



HSA-STU Community, I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to better know so many of you and so many aspects of our South Texas Unit

over the past two years. This experience has helped me grow in the garden, in front audience and behind a computer screen (as we've carried over the virtual board meetings that started mid pandemic). For those who don't know me, the biggest area of growth in my life over the last year was the birth of my own little sprout! I'm excited to raise a boy who values getting dirty and growing things.

Thank you all for helping make the last two years such a memorable success. I am honored to have this organization and so many of you friends in my life. Enjoy these photos, snapshots of the joy and community STU has brought during my term as Unit Chair.

With gratitude, Dena Gaydos



***Congratulations to Our 2025 -2026  
New Officers!***

Angela Roth, Unit Chair  
Karen Cottingham and Ro Jones, Unit Co-Vice Chairs  
Stephanie Calloway, Unit Secretary  
Maria Treviño, Unit Treasurer



## MEMBER REMINDERS & Due Dates

### □ **Membership Renewal – July 1**

Maria Treviño, Treasurer

The South Texas Unit membership renewals are **due July 1**. Our goal is to collect as many of the dues as possible by July 30<sup>th</sup> to remit the majority of the member dues in one payment to national.

As treasurer, I will be emailing you an “invoice” from Square for your dues. The primary purpose is to give you quick access to pay dues. The invoice will have a PAY NOW button that will allow you to enter your credit card information and finalize the renewal process. You will also be able to go to the STU website and pay as usual.

If you want to mail a check you can. The mailing address is:

South Texas Unit  
P.O. Box 6515  
Houston, TX 77265-6515

### □ **VOLUNTEER HOURS – July 15**

Janice Freeman, Membership Chair

Collecting volunteer hours is an important expectation for each HSA unit! We are asked by HSA to submit a sum of our member’s hours each year. It’s that time of year to report your volunteer hours (July 1, 2024 through the end of this month, June 30, 2025). Volunteer hours are **due July 15<sup>th</sup>**. Send to **Janice Freeman** at [janicehfreeman@comcast.net](mailto:janicehfreeman@comcast.net)

What counts as voluntary hours? STU Guidelines for Reporting Hours and Donations are in the STU “green” **Directory**, page 25, and on the **STU Website**. Make it simple; I only need an estimate of your volunteer hours. I am frequently asked if *attending a unit meeting* counts as volunteer hours. Based on the two references cited, the answer is “no”. If you have a question regarding volunteer hours please contact me. Thank you members for all you do!

### □ **The HSA FUZZY BUTTS OBSERVATION – May 15 to June 15**

From **May 15 through June 15**, HSA's Native Herb Committee encourages members to learn more about the hardest workers in our gardens - the bees (and other pollinators). Read more about this fun event by reviewing the HSA May 15<sup>th</sup> email, *Membership Moment. The Observation Form and the Bee Identification Resource can be found on HSA website/new-events/fuzzy-butts-bee-count-2025*.



Christian Cagni: Unsplash.com

[https://www.herbsociety.org/news-events/fuzzy-butts-bee-count-2025.html?blm\\_aid=946176](https://www.herbsociety.org/news-events/fuzzy-butts-bee-count-2025.html?blm_aid=946176)





- **SAVE THE DATES – April 15-17, 2026 for *It's Spicier in Texas*, The Herb Society of America's 2026 Educational Conference San Antonio, TX**

## **Announcing our June Evening Meeting**



***“Secrets to Successful Container Gardening”***

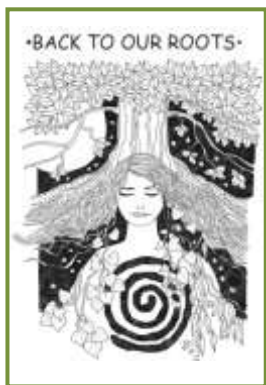
***Presented by:  
Stephanie Gray  
County Extension Agent  
Texas A&M AgriLife***



## Back to our Roots at Westbury Garden

Julie Fordes

**Westbury Workdays:** Friday June 6<sup>th</sup> 9:00 am  
Saturday July 19<sup>th</sup> 9:00 am



### Our To Do List

Our next scheduled workday in the garden is **Friday, June 6**. We will have lots to do. Our chamomile and calendula are beginning to suffer from the 90 degree temperatures we are having lately, so we will pull them out, clean up the bed and decide what goes in there next. We will also take out some of the dill and fennel. If you could use these herbs for cooking, let me know. I don't plan to

save these except for the fennel seeds (possible digestive or tea ingredient). (possible digestive or tea ingredient). We will also be removing volunteers of blue pea, yarrow, and self-heal and potting them in 4-inch pots to give to members. At this point, we are looking for volunteers from our tulsi (holy basil) plants in the cleared spaces. The hot weather should bring them out.

### Herbs of Promise Program

**Krystal Maxwell**, the Botany and Horticulture Chair of our National organization has reached out to all Units about the upcoming **Herbs of Promise** program. This program involves growing trial plants in Unit maintained gardens, recording data on the plants and growing conditions, and reporting them back to her. I have indicated to her that we are interested in finding out more about the program and will let you all know the details. I will commit to the program **only if we have more members who will participate**. This is something our Unit would benefit from; we just need a commitment from a few more members. Reach out to me if you can help with this great opportunity.

### Self-Heal

I just want to share a bit about the herb self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*). This is a new herb for many of us and I would like to start testing recipes with it this summer. Two years ago, I planted some in the garden near the blue peas and it went to seed immediately and died. It has come back after its dormancy and I hope to gather enough to use in some test recipes. Self-heal is a perennial that loves sunlight, some afternoon shade and moist soil. Its purple flowers attract bees and butterflies, and it is the larval host for the clouded sulphur butterfly. All parts are edible raw or cooked and it may be used topically (salve) or internally (tea). It is full of Vitamins C and K, thiamine and tannins which reduce swelling and have an astringent (drying) effect. Do **NOT** use self-heal if you are pregnant or breast feeding.

### Wetting Our Plants

Same old story about sharing the pleasure of the watering of the garden. It needs it, no one signs up and **Debbie Lancaster** and I do it.

**Is it too hard? Is it too hot? Is it too far?**  
**Is the Sign Up Genius just a bad idea?**

**Give me some feedback, or better yet, click this button!**

[I can water the garden](#)



Remember to grow the listed herbs, harvest, dry and store in a labelled bag. Save for Herb Events.



<input type="checkbox"/> Bay Leaf	<input type="checkbox"/> Doublemint Madalene Hill	<input type="checkbox"/> Rose Petal
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Butterfly Pea	<input type="checkbox"/> Lemon Balm	<input type="checkbox"/> Roselle
<input type="checkbox"/> Basil (Holy)	<input type="checkbox"/> Lemongrass	<input type="checkbox"/> Sage
<input type="checkbox"/> Calendula	<input type="checkbox"/> Lemon Verbena	<input type="checkbox"/> Spearmint
<input type="checkbox"/> Chamomile	<input type="checkbox"/> Mexican Mint Marigold	<input type="checkbox"/> Thyme
<input type="checkbox"/> Comfrey	<input type="checkbox"/> Peppermint	<input type="checkbox"/> Yarrow

## Herb Fair Preparations Begin

Stephanie Calloway, Herb Fair Chair

With Herb Day in the rear-view mirror, we are ramping up preparations for the 52nd Annual Herb Fair. (Fun fact: 52 is my favorite number!) This year's Herb Fair will again take place on the first Saturday in November - **Saturday, November 1st, 9:00am-2:00pm.**

I am still gathering commitments from last year's Committee Chairs, but do want to highlight that we will have some chair positions opening up this year. Please reach out to me if you can help in the following areas:

- Tea Blends (curating our menu, gathering herbs from members, coordinating volunteers to put together blends)
- Pre-Orders (coordinating orders and sales to be available for Early Bird attendees)
- Twice Found Resale shop (gathering books/garden-related items ahead of the fair, coordinating volunteers for set-up/selling, distribute donations after fair)
- Set-up/Take-down (coordinate volunteers for Friday set-up and Saturday take down)

More to come in the next newsletter!



[imgbin.com](https://imgbin.com)

## Summer Solstice June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025



[imgbin.com](https://imgbin.com)



## Day Meeting

Benée Curtis

The May meeting was a fantastic program presented by **Ro Jones** on Saffron. The following is an abbreviated version of her very comprehensive presentation. Her full presentation can be accessed here:

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAGk236tRCU/qAXk\\_AW8VS9szm2Ac2SQvg/view?utm\\_content=DAGk236tRCU&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=uniquelinks&utlId=hf67263914e#1](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGk236tRCU/qAXk_AW8VS9szm2Ac2SQvg/view?utm_content=DAGk236tRCU&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=uniquelinks&utlId=hf67263914e#1)

### Saffron: The Gold of Spices

**Saffron** (Saffron crocus, autumn crocus, zafran) *Crocus sativus* Iridaceae family

Parts used: flowers stigmas (aka threads)

Energetics: astringent, warming, drying

There is much speculation as to the origin of Saffron. It likely descends from the wild species *Crocus cartwrightianus*, native to Crete. It has been used as an aromatic seasoning, fragrance, dye, and herb and has been cultivated for more than 3,600 years! Native to the Mediterranean and Middle East, saffron began its worldwide migration with Persian traders, who introduced it to Italy and Spain to the west, as well as to their Asian neighbors to the east. The English word “saffron” may derive from the Arabic *za-feran* (which has similar-sounding iterations in medieval French and Spanish). Greeks and Romans referred to it as *krokos* and *karkom*.

Saffron is one of the most expensive herbs in the world. It is known throughout the world as a precious, expensive spice, easily bringing \$500 or more per pound. It takes nearly 150 flowers to produce a single gram of dried saffron threads.

Saffron is a perennial herb, growing up to 12 feet. It thrives in hot, dry areas and loves full sun. It should be planted in midsummer. It prefers well-watered, well-drained clay soils with plenty of compost. The flowers bloom in autumn.

The saffron crocus is sterile and can only be propagated by corm multiplication, and the few threads in each flower require hand picking. Corms are similar to bulbs, but produce small cormlets or offsets around the base. New shoots grow from the top of the corm, and roots grow from the bottom. Bulbs grow from a central shoot inside. Other corms include gladiolus and taro.

Commercially grown saffron mostly comes from the region between Spain and India, with the vast majority grown in Iran.

### Three ways to differentiate Fake and Real Saffron

Fake: Entirely red without any other color throughout

Real: Deep red with orange or yellow tips

Fake: Totally dissolves in water, making it orange

Real: Slowly releases reddish-golden color





Fake: Strands are fragile and break easily when pinched

Real Strands are dry but flexible when pinched.

Saffron is featured in many regional dishes.

Persian (Iranian) – Tahdig, Sholeh zard, Fesenjam

Indian – Biryani, Kheer, Kesar doodh

Moroccan and North African – Tagines, Couscous, ras el hanout

Spanish – Paella

Italian – Risotto alla Milanese

French – Bouillabaisse

### **Saffron Latte**

- 1 cup milk of your choice
  - 5 organic saffron threads
  - 1 tsp. water
  - 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract or seeds from 1/8 of a vanilla bean
  - 1 tsp. honey or maple syrup (optional, for sweetness)
  - A pinch of cinnamon or cardamom (optional, for warmth)
1. Crush the Saffron: Start by placing your saffron threads in a mortar and pestle. Gently crush the threads until they break down into a powder. This helps release their flavor and bold hue.
  2. Prepare the Saffron Water: Add water to saffron powder and let sit for a few minutes.
  3. Warm the Milk: In a small saucepan, bring the milk to a boil and then turn off the heat and let milk sit until it is warm. You want it warm, not boiling.
  4. Infuse the Saffron: Once the milk is warm, stir in the saffron water. Let the saffron infuse in the milk for about 5-7 minutes, stirring occasionally. The milk will take on a beautiful golden hue.
  5. Add the Vanilla and Sweetener: Stir in the vanilla extract or scrape the seeds from a vanilla bean into the milk. Sweeten to taste with honey or maple syrup. If you want an extra touch of warmth, sprinkle in a pinch of cinnamon or cardamom.
  6. Serve and Enjoy: Pour the saffron latte into your mug of choice, take a deep breath, and enjoy!

### **Caution:**

Pregnant and nursing women should limit their consumption.

Do not give medicinal amounts to children.

Take caution when using anticoagulant medications or with blood coagulation disorders.

**Resources/Bibliography** cited in the full presentation in the link at the start of this article. ■







## **Announcing our June Lagniappe**

### ***“Mocktails and Mysteries”***

***Enjoy an Herbal Mocktail/Cocktail  
at the LIT Bookbar in Richmond, TX***



***A New Concept in Bookstores - Enjoy an  
Herbal Beverage while you Browse***

**Hosted by STU Member Stephanie Calloway**

**Drop in any time between 3:30 and 6:30 pm**

**RSVP here: [karen.herbssociety@gmail.com](mailto:karen.herbssociety@gmail.com)**

**So we can reserve a table**

***All book- and herb-lovers welcome!***



**Announcing Our July Lagniappe  
“Street Food from Around the World”**

***A Sunday Summer Lunch at the  
Traveler’s Cart on Montrose Bouvelard***



**Enjoy global cuisine in the relaxed atmosphere of the Traveler’s Cart. Choose street food favorites from more than 25 countries, from Jamaican jerk pork ribs to Vietnamese cumin lamb dumplings or an Egyptian ancient grain salad in a mint-lemon vinaigrette.**

**Check out the menu here: [https://  
www.travelerscart.com/menus/#all-day-menu-copy](https://www.travelerscart.com/menus/#all-day-menu-copy)  
Breakfast items also available.**

**RSVP here: [karen.herbsociety@gmail.com](mailto:karen.herbsociety@gmail.com)  
so we can reserve a table**





The Herb Society of America  
South Texas Unit  
P.O. Box 6515  
Houston, TX 77265-6515

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

Information obtained through your association with The South Texas Unit of The Herb Society of America is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. Everyone, especially women who are pregnant or nursing and persons with known medical conditions, should consult their licensed healthcare provider before taking any herbal product.

While authors or speakers may cite how they personally use herbs and may quote scientific, ethnographic, folkloric, or historic literature, the material presented does not represent a recommendation or an endorsement of any particular medical or health treatment.



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.