

Herbs Make Scents



THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
VOLUME XLIII, NUMBER 1

SOUTH TEXAS UNIT
JANUARY 2020

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January 2020 Calendar

Jan 14, Tues. at 10 a.m.

Day Meeting is at the home of **Janice Dana**. The program, "*Musings on Herbs*", will be presented by **Lois Jean Howard**. All members are welcome. Please RSVP to Janice at 713-669-1457. **Bring a dish to share.**

Jan 15, Wed. at 6:30 p.m.

Evening Meeting is at the Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion in Hermann Park (1500 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77004). **Hosts** are **Yvette Darnell** and **Lana Fehrle**. The program, "*Ayurvedic Herbs for Vitality and Healthy Brain Function*" will be presented by **Karuna Diedericks**, Ayurvedic Practitioner and Certified Food for Life Instructor. **Bring your plate, cutlery, napkin and a dish to share.**

February 2020 Calendar

Feb 11, Tues. at 10 a.m.

Day Meeting is at the home of **Tamara Gruber**. The program, "*My New Passion-Begonias*" will be presented by **Gloria Hunter**. Call Tamara to **RSVP** at 713-665-0675. **Please bring a dish to share.**

Feb 19, Wed. at 6:30 p.m.

Evening Meeting is at the Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion in Hermann Park (1500 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77004). **Hosts** are **Robert Jucker** and **TBD**. The program, "*Old World Secrets of Skin Care*" will be presented by **Vlada Z. Mitchell**, owner of Enchanted Formulae, Apothecary Grade Skin Care. **Bring your plate, cutlery, napkin and a dish to share.**

Newsletter deadline: the 25th of every month
(February co-editor Linda Alderman)



Rosemary for Remembrance

Vivian Scallan – see tribute inside



1/6 Donna Wheeler



Happy New Year!

We are still looking for two **Herb Fair** volunteers. We need someone to serve as a **Chair for fragrances** and **Chair for social media**.

Contact Donna Wheeler if you have any questions or are interested in serving in either of these positions.

ddwheeler16@hotmail.com
713 – 203 - 0249



Chairman's Corner



"January is the quietest month in the garden. ... But just because it looks quiet doesn't mean that nothing is happening. The soil, open to the sky, absorbs the pure rainfall while microorganisms convert tilled-under fodder into usable nutrients for the next crop of plants. The feasting earthworms tunnel along, aerating the soil and preparing it to welcome the seeds and bare roots to come."

- Rosalie Muller Wright, Editor of *Sunset*

I love the idea of things going on inside, out of sight but extremely important for growth. Here in Texas, this may apply more to people than plants. It is a **great** time for many plants and herbs. Winter gardening was new to this upstate New York girl, and it's taken almost all of my 40 years in Houston to wrap my head around this notion.

Winter here provides in equal measures a chance for us to curl up with hot tea and a good book and a chance to get out in the garden on crisp, sunny days... a perfect balance in my opinion.

Julie Fordes
Unit Chair



The HERB SOCIETY of AMERICA

Service Pins for STU Members

The following STU Members have received pins from National commemorating multiple years of membership. Julie will pass out the pins at the next round of meetings. Congratulate them when you see them!

15 Years

Elayne Kouzounis
Martha Burg

25 Years

Christine Ankney

30 Year

Janis Teas
Sally Luna
Kathy McDaniel
Linda Alderman
Cathy Livingston

40 Years

Joan Jordan





Grow what we need, use what we grow!

Julie Fordes

It's time to gear up for tea and herb blends to sell at Herb Day! There are a few things that are growing now that should be harvested and dried for blends. In my garden the **lemon balm** and **oregano** are going crazy and need a big trim! **Rosemary** and most of the **mints** look great. My **lemon verbena** is looking lush. All five of these herbs can be dried and stored till needed in April. If you put the dried herbs in a air tight container in a dark, cool place they will be fine until then. Don't forget to label it with type of herb and date!

It is also time to harvest citrus. I plan to get the gorgeous-smelling zest from my sour orange tree shortly. Both orange and lemon zest are some of the most useful ingredients for blends. If those who can harvest and share will, we won't have to purchase zest.

I hope you have started your calendula...

New this month is "**Ask the Expert**". Members will be able to get questions about herb growing and gardening answered by a variety of our garden sages. Beth Murphy will start us off. Initially, we will have cards on the tables at meetings for you to write questions and concerns about your garden. Beth will respond directly to you by email. We may even start printing it in the newsletter.



Calendula

On our website <http://www.herbsociety-stu.org/> we feature South Texas member **Beth Murphy's** "Monthly To-Do List"





Remembering Vivian Scallan 1928 - 1919

Vivian Scallan, member of the South Texas Herb Society since 1990 passed away recently. Vivian became a Rosemary Circle honoree in 2015. Being an avid gardener she was also a member of the Rose Society and Plumeria Society; in her own garden she maintained and shared her many plants especially gingers. She was a tireless volunteer working many hours in the South Texas Unit's Fragrant Herb Garden at Hermann Park. A significant contribution Vivian made to the South Texas Unit was the crafting of beautiful wreaths to be sold at Herb Fair and Herb Days, described next by member Shirley Mills.

As a new member joining the South Texas Herb Society, Shirley was immediately welcomed by Vivian who helped her to join in the flow and fun of the unit's herbal crafts, gardening and knowledge. Shirley and Vivian quickly found themselves learning and working many hours together making beautiful herb wreaths. Herbal wreath crafting involves a team who are growing and collecting the plant material, drying specimens, creating bundles, and final assembly into a unique wreath. Vivian and Shirley both had the creative and artistic talent required to assemble pleasing and beautifully balanced wreaths. Together they held teaching wreath workshops for other members. During the 1990 era herbal wreaths were highly valued, and high numbers were sold at Herb Fairs and Herb Days, a valued income source. Shirley's other personal remembrances of Vivian include the memory of her as a nurturing person who practiced unconditional love and acceptance to all. Another memory is Vivian's unselfish participation in the recovery of unsold food products to be used in meals programs of St. Paul's Church mission for the homeless population, and finally Vivian always had in her care several rescue dogs, often her companions as she drove around Houston. In closing Shirley said, "I will definitely miss Vivian and I will cherish our friendship, memories and encounters."



Vivian at Herb Fair 1996

---Other tributes to Vivian from STU members---

She was a kind and loving friend. -J.T.

She was a wonderful person. -C.L.

She loved her yard and when we had our garden... who was working all the time, but Vivian. She will be missed.

-M.B.

I was just thinking about Vivian the other day. She used to bring a granddaughter to help us at Herb Fair. Should have guessed something was wrong when we didn't see her this year. We will miss her. -S.W.

... But what an overwhelming number of people she touched. She was such a lovely lady, so unassuming and humble in attitude. Truly, one of life's good people. -J.H.

She was the consummate friend, herbalist, teacher and Gardener who taught us all. May she Rest in Peace and continue to inspire us by her spirit and example. -S.L.

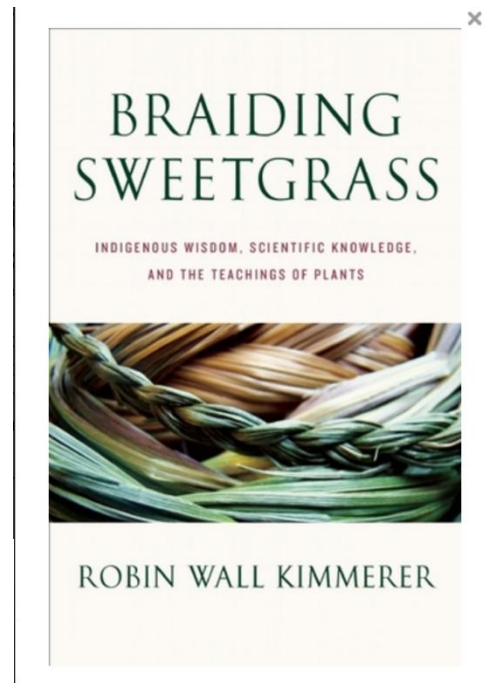
I will remember Vivian for her herbal wisdom, warmth, and genuine friendliness. -J.S.

Contributed by Shirley Mills and Janice Stuff



BOOK C O R N E R

A new column in the newsletter! If you have suggestions for books others might like, use this month's example for a model, and submit your suggestions to Julie Fordes. Fordes.julie@gmail.com
She will be sure to send them to the appropriate person for submission in the following newsletter(s).



This is one of the best books I have ever read!

--Julie Fordes

As a botanist, Robin Wall Kimmerer has been trained to ask questions of nature with the tools of science. As a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, she embraces the notion that plants and animals are our oldest teachers. In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Kimmerer brings these lenses of knowledge together to show that the awakening of a wider ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world.



Charleston 2020 - HSA Annual Meeting of Members

ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS & EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

Charleston, SC

APRIL 16-17, 2020 | NORTH CHARLESTON MARRIOTT HOTEL



Book your room early and start making plans to attend HSA's 2020 Annual Meeting of Members. The North Charleston Marriott is located just 20 minutes from historic Charleston and the plantations. This hotel offers complimentary shuttle service to and from Charleston International Airport and complimentary onsite parking.

A special room rate of \$148.00 plus tax per night has been arranged for HSA members. Call 800-228-9290 and mention "Herb Society of America – 2020 Annual Mtg of Members." Or click on the link below to make your online reservation. This rate is valid until March 24, 2020. Rooms fill fast so don't delay!

[North Charleston Marriott Group Rate](#)

Annual Meeting registration will open mid-December. In the meantime, keep checking out the 2020 Charleston Annual Meeting page to stay up-to-date. [Charleston 2020 Info](#)

Save the date for Charleston! Our 2020 Annual Meeting of Members will be in gorgeous Charleston, South Carolina. History buffs, foodies, and garden lovers alike will want to use the annual meeting as an excuse to visit historic Charleston. Although we have a couple of special things brewing for you we are on an alternate year which means that this will be a one day event. The event will kick off on Thursday, April 16th with a preconference reception giving you an opportunity to socialize with members from across the country.

On Friday the HSA Annual Meeting of Members leads off the business activities where you will hear updates from the Board of Directors and have opportunities to take advantage of committee meetings to further learn about the activities of The Society. Of course, the day wouldn't be complete without fascinating speakers who will share with you the deep culture of Charleston and the low country.

The 2020 Annual Meeting of Members coincides with the **Spring Festival of Houses and Gardens**. Running from March 13 – April 18, 2020, this premier event offers attendees rare access into some of Charleston's finest properties and gardens during the historic district's peak garden season.

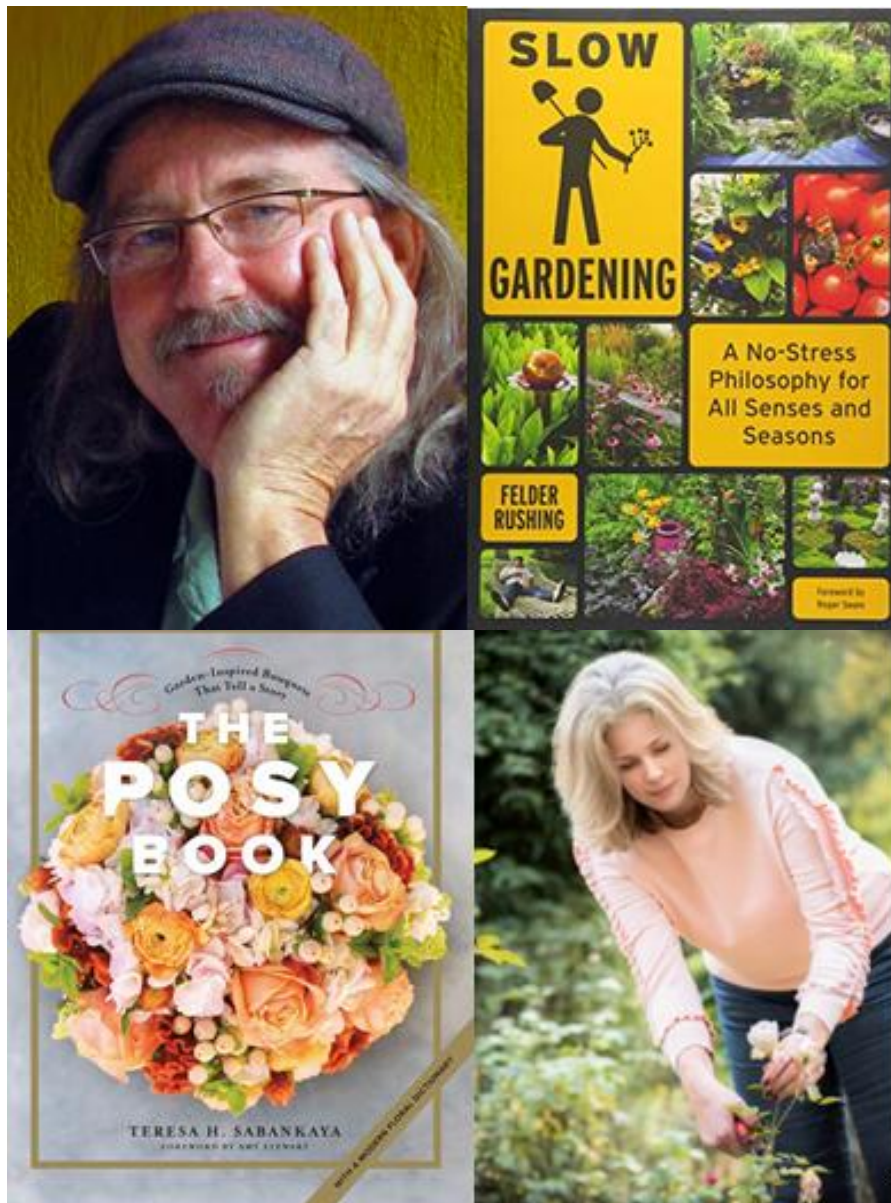
Tickets sell out early. If your plans include taking advantage of this opportunity purchase your tickets today!

[2020 Spring Festival Tickets](#)

Herb Day 2020

Herb Day Speakers Confirmed!

Felder Rushing and Teresa Sabankaya
Herb Day April 25, 2020



*We have a fabulous line-up for Herb Day and we're just getting started!!
More details will follow - We just wanted to share the excitement!*



What's Coming Up!

OVER THE MOON FOR MOON MILK
Karen Cottingham

Then ho! for that fair land, we're off for that rare land,
That beautiful Land of Nod.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox *The Beautiful Land of Nod* (1892)



The Land of Nod, left, is a charming children's bedtime poem written and illustrated in 1916 by Margaret Evans Price. The lovely Sleeping Beauty illustration on the right is actually a Victorian Advertising Trade Card. And in the center - gorgeous Golden Milk, an ancient Ayurvedic remedy for sleeplessness

People say what's new is old and what's old is new again. I think that's basically true, but it's actually a bit more complicated than that. What I am sure about is *this*: What's new today - even if it's also old - is sure to be a hit on Pinterest and Instagram!

I've been reading about moon milk - the new-old rising star of "self-care" beverages on social media. For a bedtime drink of warm milk prepared with relaxing herbs, moon milk is surprisingly trendy among internet "influencers". And despite its the excited promotion by health-and-wellness food-bloggers, moon milk is not entirely a new idea. In fact, it's kind of an old idea dressed up in fancy new clothes. After all, for thousands of years people have been drifting off to dreamland with their warm, spiced milk - it just hasn't been nearly as elegant!

The idea of drinking a bedtime mug of warm milk brings to mind the America of Norman Rockwell - mothers in aprons, fathers in work clothes, and children in flannel pajamas drinking their cups of milk.

And Golden Milk, that Ayurvedic mixture of warm milk and turmeric (*Curcuma longa*), has been consumed in ordinary households in India for generations. Long before stirring fancy herb blends into colorful night-time toddies became popular, Ayurvedic practitioners were steeping medicinal herbs in hot milk to create nourishing, relaxing, and therapeutic beverages.



In today's world, these nourishing and relaxing "self-care" beverages on health and wellness websites are ultra-trendy on social media - especially if they are styled beautifully, contain "superfoods" and "adaptogens" from non-Western traditions, and promise relief to the stressed and sleepless. Moon milk checks all the boxes.

I'm sure you've seen these frothy, pastel beverages before. Some of them, with their lovely floral embellishments, are actually works of culinary art.



This lovely Rose Cardamom Moon Milk from [tinylagunakitchen](#) is truly magical. After just a sip, you'll dance with the dream-fairies!

I admit that I've been quite captivated by the rainbow of colors, the inventiveness of the embellishments, and the promise of the health-giving ingredients in moon milks. At a certain point, though, I started to wonder. How would I actually drink a beverage with so many rosebuds floating on top? What exactly are these mysterious herbs and adaptogens? And how important is it, really, for me to drink pink, blue, purple, or green milk? I knew I needed to get back to basics.



Turmeric milk from India is the oldest “recipe” for a therapeutic warm milk and dates back some four thousand years. Also called Golden Milk, or *Haldi Doodh* in the Hindi language, milk infused with grated turmeric is anti-inflammatory, calming, and comforting. It’s the perfect hot drink if you catch a cold, have joint pains, or just want to relax before bedtime. The basic recipe can be individualized in a variety of ways - by adding dates, for example, for flavor, nutrition, and sweetness, or by adding other beneficial Ayurvedic spices or adaptogens. Adding a pinch of either nutmeg or *ashwagandha* is said to enhance the sleep-inducing effect. But how much to add? And how much is too much? Is it safe? And what are adaptogens anyway?

If you’re like me, the Ayurvedic approach to health, well-being, and balance is intriguing but way too mysterious. I would love to learn how to safely apply some Ayurvedic principles to improve my own health and vitality - but how? Nutmeg in my milk is one thing, but *ashwagandha* or *astragalus* is another.

Fortunately, we have two wonderful speakers scheduled for early 2020 programs who are Ayurvedic practitioners and can clear away some of the mystery. For our January 15, 2020 HSA-STU meeting, **Karuna Diedericks** will present ***Ayurvedic Herbs for Vitality and Healthy Brain Function*** - such a timely topic considering our aging population. Two months later we’ll hear from **Asal Shokati** about the ancient Zoroastrian celebration of the vernal equinox called *Norooz*. Asal’s program, ***The Seven Seens of Health, a Norooz Tradition*** is scheduled for March 15. Both Karuna and Asal have been very helpful to me as I wrote this article, patiently answering my many questions. Both women are expert in the preparation of Ayurvedic sleep tonics, although they don’t call them “moon milks”.

No matter what you call it, though, drinking a cup of hot, spiced milk at bedtime is soothing, nurturing, and nourishing - especially if you have your own perfect cup!



A Japanese ceramic Whistle Mug from the 1950s, a sweet illustration from a child’s book, and a lovely selection of pastel moon milks add up to a dreamy bedtime...

Since we have our own tradition of drinking warm milk here in the Western World, it shouldn’t be hard to adjust to Ayurvedic milk-based beverages. There are just a few suggestions to make it easier.



When preparing your moon milk, heat the milk to a full boil. Milk becomes much more digestible after having been boiled since the milk sugar called lactose is broken down by heat. Also, the therapeutic, flavorful, and aromatic constituents of herbs and spices such as turmeric and cardamom are much more effectively released in hot liquids.

Coconut, nut, and seed milks are delicious and nutritious options for those who avoid dairy. But remember that turmeric is not well absorbed without fat, so the fat content of the type of milk you choose affects its absorption. Full-fat cow's milk is perfect; but if you are using a plant-based milk, add a small amount of coconut oil, almond oil, or ghee. A little black pepper will also enhance the absorption of turmeric into your body.

If you haven't yet acquired the taste for turmeric, add flavorings that you enjoy. Vanilla, cardamom, and saffron are all particularly good in Golden Milk.



Cardamom (*Elettaria cardamomum*), lower left, is called "The Queen of Spices" in Ayurveda and is pictured with vanilla bean and saffron. These three spices are as precious as jewels.

If you wish to add a sweetener, a Medjool date, with its added nutrition and complex caramel flavor, is a good choice.

Of course, Golden Milk wouldn't be Golden Milk without turmeric. Turmeric is highly valued in India, both for its anti-inflammatory effects and for its religious significance in the Hindu faith. "Black turmeric" (*Curcuma caesia*), pictured below in the center, is a rare but fascinating curcuma that also has



longstanding ethnobotanical value in Ayurvedic medicine. Its indiscriminate harvest for superstitious as well as medicinal purposes has caused a precarious decline in its population.



The many colors of turmeric - "Black turmeric" (*Curcuma caesia*), pictured in the center row, was listed as an endangered species by the Indian Agricultural Department in 2016.

And yes, there is a reason these gorgeous blue and lavender rhizomes are called "black turmeric". For centuries these particular turmeric have been so integral for the sacred ceremonies honoring the Hindu Goddess Kali that they eventually became known as *Kali Haldi*. In the Bengali language, *kali* means "black" or "dark" (Kali is the Dark Goddess) and *haldi* is the word for "turmeric". Black turmeric, then, or *Kali Haldi*, is the turmeric that is ritually associated with "The Dark Goddess". It comes in a lovely array of blues and purples, but never in black!

Turmeric is very easy to grow in Houston's tropical climate. I just harvested my first crop after essentially ignoring it all summer, and I understand that local grower **Ed Naspinski** is growing the very rare black turmeric at his Rain Song Farm in Magnolia, Texas. Black turmeric is highly desirable as its curcumin content is the highest of all curcuma species.



Not all moon milks, though, even contain turmeric. Golden Milk is the oldest, the most famous, and the prototype moon milk, but there are many others that contain herbs and spices other than turmeric. Some of these equally fascinating herbs are pictured below:



Upper right: Butterfly pea flower (*Clitoria terneata*) is from (Paxton's) Magazine of Botany and Register Vol. 7 (1840).

Bottom right: *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*).

Bottom left: A 1783 watercolor painting of *Astragalus massiliensis*.

Top left: And even rabbits need to sleep sometime - just not now! These busy bunnies are from a 1920s storybook.

Withania somnifera, commonly known as *ashwagandha*, is a plant in the Solanaceae, or nightshade family. As suggested by its Latin name, *somnifera*, it has been used as a sleep aid for centuries. In Sanskrit, *ashwagandha* means “the smell of the horse” – due, no doubt, to its strong aroma, but also to its reputation for imparting strength and virility! *Ashwagandha* is one of the most common adaptogenic ingredients in the moon milk recipes I reviewed.

In Ayurvedic medicine, *ashwagandha* is a *rasayana*, a rejuvenator that restores health and wellbeing and promotes longevity. It has been used for centuries to alleviate stress, anxiety, and fatigue and is regarded as a general all-purpose tonic. We will hear much more about *ashwagandha* in our January program.



Astragalus is another herb that some people add to moon milk to increase their stamina, strength, and vitality. *Astragalus membranaceus* is better known in Traditional Chinese Medicine, having been used medicinally in China for at least 2,000 years.



Three charming sleepy-time images by New Zealand artist Ida Rentoul Outhwaite (1988 - 1960) flank a spoonful of powdered ashwagandha and a duo of "Once in a Blue Moon" butterfly pea flower moon milks.

Butterfly pea flower (*Clitoria terneata*) is known as *aparajita* in Ayurvedic systems of medicine and is occasionally recommended as a relaxant. The blue flower is very rich in the antioxidant anthocyanin. Since anthocyanin imparts a lovely blue tint to milk-based beverages, butterfly pea flower is frequently added to make moon milk especially beautiful. *Clitoria* is an attractive climbing vine that is easily grown in our tropical climate. Its flower is the popular ingredient in herbal tea blends that is responsible for the dramatic color change with the addition of acid.

I am intentionally leaving the discussion of how to use these herbs to the experts, and this would be a good place to remind you that it is the policy of The Herb Society of America not to advise or recommend herbs for medicinal or health use. The information in this article is intended for educational purposes only and should not be considered as a recommendation or an endorsement of any particular medical or health treatment. Please be careful if you are considering herbal remedies, especially if you are pregnant, trying to become pregnant, or are breast-feeding. Many herbs are dangerous if taken indiscriminately, in conjunction with certain medications, or by people with certain medical conditions. Always consult an expert before taking herbal preparations.



With that said, let's look at some of the other ingredients - not necessarily Ayurvedic - that some people are adding to their moon milk. For starters, many people add adaptogenic mushrooms, particularly reishi, chaga, and Lion's Mane.



Clockwise, from top left: This lithograph of colorful fungi is from a German Botanical Atlas published c. 1890; followed by shimmering beetroot powder, an assortment of moon milks to please all "palettes", and vibrant forest green spirulina

If color is what you're after, you can really go "all in"! Here are some of the most interesting suggestions I saw:

For the pinkest drink ever, powdered beetroot is a beautiful option. *Pitaya* (dragonfruit) is also intensely pink and available in powdered form, and I saw a tart cherry juice moon milk that was lovely. Be aware, though, that not all fruit juices can be added to milk without it curdling.

For a "true blue" moon milk, butterfly pea flower has the benefit of a neutral taste; but blue spirulina gives the most dramatic color.

A lovely shade of green can definitely be created by the addition of matcha, but you'll have to see if it keeps you up or puts you to sleep. Powdered moringa and green spirulina are decidedly green add-ins - if you like their taste.



And this is my favorite – you can add purple swirls to your milk right in the cup with just a quick stir-in of a blend containing dehydrated purple carrot! You'll think you stirred your milk with a magic wand! Purple carrot moon milk is positively cosmic! (That's a botanical joke!)



Pick your favorite color and coloring product - beetroot powder pink (Moon Juice), purple carrot lavender (Nutra Organics), or spirulina blue (Moon Juice).

Other ingredients in this blend include chamomile flowers, lavender buds, passionflower aerals, Himayalan sea salt, and several adaptogens, including *ashwagandha* and reishi mushrooms. It also includes vanilla and Peruvian mesquite, which goes to show that the sky's the limit for what to put in your moon milk. And, with that, I will leave it to you to select the perfect embellishment to crown your own moon milk creations!

I hope you are all planning to attend our **January 15, 2020** HSA-STU meeting to see what **Karuna Diedericks**, as an experienced Ayurvedic practitioner, has to say about the moon milk “phenomenon” and how it relates to more traditional Ayurvedic milk-based beverages.

Karuna will be speaking on the very important topic of how best to maintain our cognitive function, particularly as we age. I look forward to her program on ***Ayurvedic Herbs for Vitality and Healthy Brain Function*** and hope to see you there. It's time that we in the Western world take a serious look at other approaches to healthy aging, particularly those that minimize or delay the development of cognitive impairment.

And as an added attraction, Karuna has graciously agreed to share her own personally blended sleep tonic with us. One of her recipe's three main ingredients is *shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*), along with cardamom and ashwagandha. The word *shatavari* means "a woman with one thousand husbands". I wonder what that means. If you come, you can find out!

The South Texas Unit of The Herb Society of America is dedicated to sharing “The Use and Delight of Herbs” and welcomes all interested guests to our meetings. There is no charge to attend. We meet in the **Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion in Hermann Park, 1500 Hermann Drive**. You may enter the Pavilion's free parking lot where Crawford Street T-intersects with Hermann Drive.

Hostesses and others interested in setting up the tables and displays can start arriving at 6:00 pm. Other members and guests will gather at 6:30 pm; the potluck dinner will start around 7:00 pm, and the program will begin a half-hour later.

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
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Find our Unit on the web at:
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.

