

Herbs Make Scents

THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
VOLUME XLI, NUMBER 3



SOUTH TEXAS UNIT
MARCH 2018

Interim Editor – Janice Freeman (janicehfreeman@comcast.net)

March 2018 Calendar

- Mar 6, Tues. at 7 p.m.** **Board meeting** at the home of **Sally Luna**.
- Mar 13, Tues. at 10 a.m.** **Day meeting** is at the home of **Janice Dana**. The program, “*Lemony Herbs*”, is presented by **Beth Murphy**. **Bring a dish to share**. Guests should **RSVP** by calling **Janice** at **713-669-1457**.
- Mar 21, 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 Cheryl Israel**. The program is “*The Bitter Herbs of Passover*”, presented by **Jean Fefer, PhD** and Master Gardener. **Bring your plate and napkin and a dish to share**.

April 2018 Calendar

- Apr 10, Tues. at 7 p.m.** **Day meeting** is at the home of **Jane Littell**. The program will be devoted to planning and hands-on activities related to Herb Day Symposium. **Bring a dish to share**. Guests should **RSVP** by leaving a text or voice message at **281-702-3751**.
- Apr 18, Tues. at 10 a.m.** **Evening Meeting** is at the Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion in Hermann Park (1500 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77004). **Hosts are Nita Rowe and Sally Luna**. The program is “*Provence, Herbs and the British Writer Lawrence Durrell*”, presented by **Merrienne Timko**. **Bring your plate and napkin and a dish to share**.
- Apr 27, Fri.** **Set-up for the Herb Day Symposium** at St. Paul’s United Methodist Church, Fondren Hall (5501 Main Street, Houston, TX 77004). **Contact Herb Day Chair Dena Yanowski regarding how you would like to help this year!** (denayanowski@gmail.com)
- Apr 28, Sat. 8:45 a.m.-3:00 p.m.** **Herb Day Symposium** *Herbs, Hives, and Honey*

Newsletter deadline: the 25th of every month

Get Well Wishes to:
Richard Stuff
Cathy Livingston
Jeanie Dunnihoo



**Happy
Birthday!**

Vivian
Scallan

Dena
Yankowski

Linda
Alderman

Lois Jean
Howard

Joan
Jordan

Beth
Murphy

Susan
Wood



Chairman's Corner

Greetings,

Spring has sprung – or so it feels on this dreary February morning as I sit here writing, with temperatures in the upper 70's and the azaleas are bursting into bloom. The days are growing longer and frequent rains have encouraged the weeds as well as our preferred plants to sprout. Damp soil makes for easy pulling however. Thursday mornings you'll find me doing just that at the Japanese Gardens in Hermann Park. I try to make it a priority to save those few hours for me, when I can let myself in the employee gate, pick up tools at the shed and find a spot to work. The shade and water features are such a joy during the hot months and the fellow volunteers are friends now.

A big THANK YOU to **Linda & Steven van Heeckeran, Janice & Bill Dana and Mike Jensvold** who helped me empty the storage space, then they re-built the shelving, and we hauled everything back in. Whew!

I received a packet in the mail from Deborah Boutelier, HSA past president and Chair of GreenBridges, one of HSA's signature programs ([GreenBridges and Native Herbs Conservation](#)). This educational program helps to create opportunities for the safe passage of plants and pollinators and to avoid habitat fragmentation that disrupts their environment. You may remember our November evening meeting with Barbara Keller-Willy, Founder and Director of Monarch Gateway. These two women seem to have the same idea! Watch for more information about creating green corridors in our city and community.

In February I registered on-line and listened to a webinar from the HSA's Plant Collections Program via my laptop (you can use your phone also). It was so easy to do and I saw some beautiful pictures of a salvia collection and other specimens while listening to the conversation. Anne Barnes and Audrey Driscoll of New Orleans introduced the audience to the concept of a Living Plant Collection as well as some history on Herbariums. I saw several collections held by HSA members and hosts discussed the benefits and difficulties of maintaining a collection. Madalene Hill was mentioned several times; in reference to her gardens and namesake rosemary. Anne and Audrey urged everyone to take time and explore the New York Botanical Gardens when attending the Annual Meeting of Members in June.

In closing, a quote from Wendell Berry, "*The earth is what we all have in common.*"
Donna Yakowski, Unit Chair



By Janice Stuff

Treasure's Report

Welcome new members, **Nicole Buergers and Janet Ruffin!**

Please update your STU Directory.

Nicole Buergers
1615 Branard
Houston, Tx 77006
281-845-4069 (work)
678-613-5786 (cell)
nbuergers@gmail.com

Janet Ruffin
1015 Memorial Village Drive
Houston, TX 77024
713-668-2428 (home)
281-851-2434 (cell)
Create2710@att.net



*It's time to prepare for
HERB DAY Symposium 2018*

*Call out for volunteer
opportunities*

Thanks to all who attended the most recent Herb Day planning meeting early in the week. This event is collectively OURS and we'll need many hands, hearts, and hard work to get it everything ready for the event April 28th. If you were not able to attend, or don't have your name attached to a subcommittee we still need lots of help. In particular we will need assistance with:

Publicity: If you have any connections to other local garden or women's groups please pass along their contact information or better yet, take it upon yourself to spread the word about our event. We will have flyers available to email, print, and pass out in the coming week. Please contact **Dena Yanowski** or **Julie Fordes**.

Plants: If you have anything special growing in your garden, we'd love you to start small starter plants and donate them to our Herb Day plant sale. Contact **Dena Yanowski**, **Jeanie Dunnihoo**, or **Donna Fay Hilliard** so we can keep a running tally.

Decorations: If you have anything specifically bee-related you'd like to donate for our center pieces or to decorate the refreshment table with, contact **Shirley Mills**.

Door prizes: If you have a connection with a local garden or herbal store, **Donna Wheeler** (soon to be member) is in charge of collecting door prizes and your connections could make her job easier.

Folders: I am still looking for someone to help organize and "chair" the Folders subcommittee. This job would include housing the folders each attendant receives upon registration, collecting papers from other event sub-committee chairs, and photo coping said papers the week prior to the event. The folders will be stuffed by members at set up Friday April 27.

Demos: We're also looking for a member to chair the "Demo" tables. We have multiple HSA members and community members who are interested in setting up demo tables along the back wall. This simple subcommittee chair position role would be to organize said members during Friday set up and during the event on Saturday.

In case your calendar is not already marked:
Herbs, Hives, and Honey
April 28, 2018
Fondren Hall
St. Paul's United Methodist Church
5501 Main St. Houston, TX 77004
8:45 am – 3:00 pm

Watch for more emails announcing Herb Day planning meetings prior to the event.

Our flyer will be emailed out upon completion within the next week or so.

Thank you for all your support and hard work thus far; looking forward to another amazing event this spring!!

Thanks, Dena



*Herbs, Hives,
and Honey*



April 28th



About our meetings...

Day Meeting Report

By Linda Alderman

The day group met on February 13th at the home of **Tamara Gruber**. Always the most gracious of hostesses, she welcomed 17 members and 3 guests! Nonplussed by having 20 guests in her home, she started the morning by offering coffee and King's cake to all. Yum! **Lois Jean Howard** conducted a brief meeting, had the guests introduce themselves, and reminded us that **Richard (Janice) Stuff** and **Cathy Livingston** were both recovering today. Get well wishes go out to both of them!

We enjoyed a fantastic program about Herbal Liqueurs presented by **Jacqui Highton!** Because they are related, Jacqui began the program with a brief explanation of what constitutes a liqueur, cordial, or bitter. Basically, the differences lie in the amount of alcohol and sweetening agent in each. Jacqui went on to break the program down into 3 parts, history of alcohol/liqueurs, how to make herbal liqueurs, and uses of liqueurs for other than drinking. Who knew?!?!

Jacqui emphasized making liqueurs is rather easy. Just 3 simple steps!

- 1) *Steep* the herbs, spices, and/or nuts and seeds in an alcohol base (vodka is most commonly used)
- 2) *Sweeten* this base with a sugar syrup
- 3) Bottle and *age* this for up to a couple months (If you can wait!)



We enjoyed a brief question and answer session at the close of Jacqui's presentation. There was much enthusiasm from the audience and a promise of recipes Jacqui would love to share with those interested in getting started. Just send her an email!

Membership & Meeting Report

By Albert Ramos

The rain was occasionally torrential during the day; but heavy weather couldn't keep 21 members and 20 guests from our February 21, 2018 evening meeting, *In Search of Hoppiness*. In our second discussion featuring the 2018 Herb of the Year, *Humulus lupulus*, **Holler Brewing Co.** co-owner **Kathryn Holler** gave a brilliant and engaging presentation on the use of hops in craft brewing. Kathryn's knowledge and delight in craft brewing runs deeper and broader than just lagers and mash. As a Certified Cicerone, she is also a go-to beer scholar. Cicerones are experts in beer styles, beer flavor and evaluation, beer ingredients and the brewing process, and the art of pairing beer with food.

Kathryn also reminded us that she is a retired schoolteacher. She distributed handouts on the anatomy of the hops cone while murmuring something about a pop-quiz before the end of the talk. But she was only kidding! Instead, we got to follow our noses and smell the several varieties of hops that she provided as a "show-and-tell" for each table.

Aromas of the different hops were remarkably varied. Some were citrus-like or grassy; others were fruity, earthy, or resinous. Kathryn said there's even a variety of hops with a "catty" aroma that is pleasant in beer; but, probably wisely, she didn't bring us a sample to smell. If you visit the Holler Brewing Co. taproom at 2206 Edwards St., you can continue the education of your senses.

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About our meetings...

Membership & Meeting Report

By Albert Ramos

Cont'd.

Go see how the same hops from the “show-and-tell” are transformed as the bittering and flavoring agents of thoughtfully crafted beer. Or, as Kathryn would probably say, “Compare and contrast . . .”

Andi Leger and **Lois Jean Howard** were the creative hostesses for tonight’s event. The decorations were perfect with each table being graced with foxtail ferns and dried millet arranged in beer bottles or six-pack cartons. Thank you, ladies. If you’re wondering what these arrangements have to do with a talk on hops and beer, there is such a thing as millet beer, which is served in calabash gourds in several regions of Africa. Great job with the flowers, Andi!

As always, the pot luck was excellent. Special recognition goes to **Elizabeth Grandich** for the popular hops beverages she brought (Fiesta grocery store, she said). **Donna Yanowski’s** honey-drenched cake was a crowd favorite, as was **Nicole Buerger’s** beehive-shaped goat cheese *brie* with honey. **Julie Fordes’** contributions also caused expressions of delight. She brought two excellent cheeses drizzled with Nicole’s bee2bee honey - what a delectable treat! Finally, **Linda van Heeckeren’s** vegetable salad with honey vinaigrette was one of those “have you got the recipe?” dishes. Fortunately, Linda came prepared with copies of the recipes. Thank you, Linda!

We are also grateful that **Jeanie Dunnihoo** was at tonight’s meeting. Not only was it great to see Jeanie, but she thoughtfully donated all tonight’s door prizes: 5 potted herb plants and a home-brewing kit! Members **Dena Yanowski**, **Julie Fordes**, and **Nicole Buergers** were happy to take home their rosemary, onion chives, and garlic chives, respectively. Two guests took home another rosemary and a catnip plant. Fittingly (since she brought the hops beverages to the potluck), **Elizabeth Grandich** was thrilled to win the home brewing kit!

Finally, two of tonight’s guests have attended three or more meetings and became eligible for membership. They have completed their membership applications and may well be admitted to membership by the time you read this. Our mission is to promote the knowledge, use, and enjoyment of herbs; so invite your herbal-loving friends to our meetings. The more we share, the more members and support we can gain. Our next meeting will be held March 21, 2018 and will focus on *The Bitter Herbs of Passover*, presented by **Jean Fefer, PhD**, a retired professor of chemistry and a Master Gardener. Don’t miss this unique opportunity to better understand the herbal symbols of Passover. ■

THE 23RD ANNUAL
HERBAL FORUM
AT ROUND TOP
“THE SPICY WORLD OF GINGERS”
Ginger - Our Herb for 2018

The 23rd Annual
Herb Society of America, Pioneer Unit
“Thyme Well Spent” Gift Shop
and
Plant Sale
-Accepting Credit Cards, Cash & Checks-
Friday, March 16, 2018
9am to 5pm
and
Saturday, March 17, 2018
8am to 5pm
Located on the grounds of The Round Top Festival Institute at
248 Jaster Road, just north of Round Top off Hwy. 237
For further information on these events go to www.herbsocietypioneer.org
or look us up on Facebook at Pioneer Unit Herb Society of America



What's Coming Up...

A Bee in My Bonnet

by Karen Cottingham

A recurrent thought has been buzzing around in my head lately and is trying to get loose. You might even say I have a "bee in my bonnet".

This quaint expression is one of dozens of idiomatic tributes to the industrious and energetic honey bee. Having a bee in one's bonnet means "to think or talk about something all the time and to believe it is important". Sometimes the expression implies a fixation that is eccentric, or even a little bit crazy; but, for me, it's the sense of feeling "excited, interested, and enthusiastic"- maybe even "passionate" about something.

The bee in *my* bonnet is humming with all the exciting news of our upcoming **Herb Day Symposium, Herbs, Hives and Honey!** Speakers and their topics have been finalized, and I can't resist giving you a peek at the delights in store for you.

Our own bona fide BFF (Bee Friend Forever), **Susan Wood**, will skillfully guide you through the selection and care of **Bee Happy Herbs**. Many of the most attractive herbs for bees thrive in our challenging climate, and an excellent selection will be available for purchase in our **Herbal Marketplace**. Remember - if the bees are happy, we're all happy.

Beekeeper and new HSA-STU member **Nicole Buegers** will shine a provocative light on the commercial honey industry in her program, **Don't Be Fooled by Funny Honey – Know your Beekeeper**. You'll never be fooled again, and you can even go home with the real thing - authentic, intensely herbal, hyper-local honey from Nicole's own beehives. Come early for the best selection.

If you love creating delicious food (or just enjoy eating it!), you won't want to miss **Sweet, Savory, and Tart – Honey and Herb Compositions from UrbanCHEF**.

The professionals from UrbanCHEF Cooking School will share their expertise with the versatile golden nectar. Before you know it, you'll be famous for your own herbal honey masterpieces. This is way better than watching the cooking channel!

And finally, what's old and new at the same time? If you said "mead", you're awesome! Mead is the oldest known fermented beverage and the latest ancient brew to be rediscovered and re-imagined! **Maria Corsi**, culinary archivist and medieval history scholar, will take us to Valhalla in her program, **Ambrosia from the Bees – The Sweet History of Honey Wine**. And if you've ever wondered where the "honeymoon" custom originated, you won't have to wonder anymore.

With all this Herb Day excitement, you can see why there's a *bee in my bonnet!*

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What's Coming Up...

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Now, on to another old-fashioned way to use the word “bee”. As used in “spelling bee” or “sewing bee”, the word “bee” means a “social gathering to carry out a cooperative task or, less frequently, to hold competitions”. Americans have held spinning bees, corn-husking bees, barn-raising bees and logging bees. There were stump-clearing bees, apple-paring bees and cellar-digging bees. Just about any communal work gathering could be called a “bee”. If someone needed help, they would “call a bee” and help would arrive.

Historically, “bees” served vital functions, especially on the American frontier. Major jobs, such as clearing a field of timber or stitching a wedding quilt, always required many hands to complete. Neighbors working together on these projects had a rare opportunity to socialize, exchange news, and then enjoy the lively entertainment and refreshments which followed.

Sometimes, “bees” could even protect communities from oppression. When Britain imposed high taxes on textile goods shipped to America, the colonists promptly organized “spinning bees” so no family was forced to buy the expensive imported goods.

What is it about these communal work gatherings that caused them to be called “bees”? Most people would probably answer that these cooperative efforts reminded folks of the social behavior of bees in the hive.

Etymologists, however, generally favor the explanation that “bee” in the sense of a “gathering” comes from the Old English word “bene”, meaning “prayer or favor”. As time passed, “bene” became “bee” which came to mean families coming together to do a favor for a neighboring family in need.

As members of the HSA-STU, we, too, have plenty of opportunities to enjoy working together in order to accomplish a common goal – **the success of Herb Day**, for example. And remember, a successful Herb Day means we can help students in need of scholarship assistance to complete their education and really make a difference in their lives.

Let's take a lesson from our pioneer predecessors and think of our **Herbs, Hives and Honey** workshops as a series of “bees”. While not as dramatic (thank goodness!) as a stump-clearing bee, everyone should be able to attend a “bee” or two. You can choose from a **catnip bag-stuffing bee**, a **program-assembling bee**, a **beeswax wrap bee**, a **refreshment-preparation bee**, an **email or photocopying bee** – or, if you want, you can call your own “bee”. Just don't wait until the last minute! We need everyone to take an active role over the next two months for **Herb Day 2018** to be the best ever. Contact our **Herb Day Chair Dena Yanowski** (denayanowski@gmail.com) to volunteer. You'll “bee” glad you did! ■

The Bitter Herbs of Passover
By Karen Cottingham

Passover, which begins on March 31 this year, is a seven day Jewish celebration of freedom. It commemorates the release of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt more than 3,300 years ago. Since that time, Jewish families have gathered together for the Passover *seder* meal to remember and reflect on the bitterness of enslavement and the sweet gift of freedom.

During the *seder* meal, the release of the Hebrew slaves is remembered through prayers, storytelling, and music along with the use of ritual objects and the consumption of symbolic food.

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It's the power of symbolic food in traditional celebrations that I find fascinating.

Consider the *matzah*, the unleavened bread which is famously associated with Passover. Eating *matzah* is a symbolic re-enactment of the Hebrew slaves' flight from Egypt. According to the story in Exodus, they left in such haste there was no time to let their bread rise. The deliberate consumption of unleavened bread throughout the Passover period reminds Jews to reflect on the hardships and then the liberation of the Hebrew slaves.

Another element of the *seder* meal, *charoset*, is a mixture of fruit and nuts that symbolizes the mortar used by the slaves to construct buildings for their oppressors.

Even foods and herbs on the table that non-Jews might think of as incidental or ordinary, such as parsley, are intensely meaningful. When parsley is dipped in salt water at the *seder*, it symbolically holds represents the tears the Israelites shed while enslaved.

The traditional *seder* plate also includes a bitter herb to symbolize the bitterness of slavery and oppression. Horseradish root is frequently offered as the bitter herb along with Romaine lettuce. Many of us who garden have harvested enough over-mature Romaine from our gardens to be familiar with its extremely bitter taste, but why is a horseradish root on a *seder* plate? Isn't horseradish *pungent* rather than bitter? Not to mention that neither horseradish nor Romaine lettuce grew in Egypt during the time of Exodus and that escaping slaves would not have had time to dig up a horseradish root even if one happened to be growing there. What is going on here?

Just in time for Passover and the March HSA-STU evening meeting, **Jean Fefer, PhD**, a retired Professor of Chemistry, expert on Biblical plants, and very active Master Gardener and gardening lecturer, will explore the perplexing appearance of horseradish on the *seder* plate in her March 21, 2018 program, ***The Bitter Herbs of Passover***. For those who have never been to a *seder* meal, I especially urge you to take this opportunity to learn about one of the most important celebrations in the Jewish faith. There are universal lessons to be learned by people of all faiths and cultures in the contemplation of oppression and freedom.

We will have *seder* plates on each table with all of the traditional symbolic foods, and HSA-STU member **Bobby Jucker** will provide the most delicious *matzah* to ever come out of an oven! ■

Herb Society Volunteer Opportunity

Come staff a table at the Cockrell Butterfly Center Spring Plant Sale and Garden Festival on Saturday, April 14, 8am - 4pm at the Houston Museum of Natural Science.

This opportunity allows you to support the STU-HSA endeavors and meet a portion of your membership requirement. Contact **Donna Yanowski** for more information.

ANNUAL PLANT AND GIFT SALE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA PIONEER UNIT

DATES:

Friday, March 16, 2018 9 am – 5 pm

Saturday, March 17, 2018 8 am – 5 pm

Bring your wagons to Round Top on March 16 and 17 to the 23rd Annual Plant and Gift Sale of the Herb Society of America - Pioneer Unit.

Replace plants and refresh beds that were freeze-damaged from the great selection of bedding plants, herbs, shrubs, roses, succulents, and trees. You will find new varieties and old favorites in the Plant Sale, as well as lovely garden gifts and food items in the Thyme Well Spent Shop.

Credit cards, cash, and checks accepted. There is no admission fee. Proceeds from the sale are used to provide support for the gardens at Festival Hill as well as the Sensory Garden at Brenham Elementary.

LOCATION: Festival Hill Institute at 248 Jaster Road, just north of Round Top off Hwy 237

CONTACT INFORMATION: Find us on Facebook at Pioneer Unit Herb Society of America

CONTACT EMAIL: henryf@festivalhill.org

Website URL: www.herbsocietypioneer.org

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
P.O. Box 6515
Houston, TX 77265-6515

South Texas Unit Celebrates 50 years



1968 - 2018



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.



Find our Unit on the web at:
www.herbsociety-stu.org

Herbs Make Scents – March 2018