

Herbs Make Scents

THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
VOLUME XLV, NUMBER 9



SOUTH TEXAS UNIT
SEPTEMBER 2022

Co-Editors Linda Alderman (ewalderman@comcast.net) & Janice Freeman (janicefreeman@comcast.net)

September 2022 Calendar

Sept 1, Thurs. 6:30 pm
Sept 10, Sat. 10:00 am
Sept 13, Tues. 10:00 am

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

Full Moon Ramble (Zoom Gathering for Members Only) (Note the time change)

Day Meeting is a Craft Workshop for Herb Fair and Meeting/Program planning. Please bring your scissors, needle and thread and your own lunch, **at the home of Lois Jean Howard**. Contact **Janice Stuff** jestuff@pdq.net

Sept 15, Thurs. 7:00 pm
Sept 24, Sat. 8 am – 10:00 am
Sept 28, Wed. 7:00 pm
(Note the date change)

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

Pin Oak Garden Workday at 4601 Glenmont, Bellaire, TX 77401

Evening Meeting “Don’t Treat Your Soil like Dirt” will be presented by **Danny Wilson**, Creator of Farm Dirt Compost in Houston, TX, at the **Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion**, 1500 Hermann Dr, Houston, TX 77030. Doors open at 6:30 pm, program at 7:00 pm.
Free and open to the public.

Sept 29, Wed. 6:30 pm

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

October 2022 Calendar

Oct 2, Sun. 3 pm – 5:00 pm

October Lagniappe “The Magical World of Milk and Honey,” a cheese and honey tasting hosted by cheesemonger/beekeeper **Nicole Buegers**. Cost is \$30, reservations required. **RSVP to Karen Cottingham** at karen.redbrick@gmail.com. See details on page 2.

Oct 10, Mon. 7:00 pm
Oct 11, Tues. 10:00 am
Oct 13, Thurs. 6:30 pm
Oct 15, Sat. 10 am – 12 noon

Full Moon Ramble (Zoom Gathering for Members Only)

Day Meeting To Be Announced

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

Another October Lagniappe “A Trip to Danny Wilson’s Farm Dirt Compost.” Additional information on page 2. Questions? **Contact Karen Cottingham** at karen.redbrick@gmail.com

Oct 19, Wed. 6:30 pm
(Note change of location)

Evening Meeting “Day of the Dead” will be presented by **Liliana Cracraft, MPH, DrPh**. Join us at **Lott Hall**, formerly know as the Hermann Park Historic Club House, 6201 Hermann Park Dr., Houston, TX 77030. Doors open at 6:30 pm, program at 7:00 pm.
Free and open to the public.

Oct 22, Sat. 8 am – 10:00 am
Oct 27, Thurs. 6:30 pm

Pin Oak Garden Workday at 4601 Glenmont, Bellaire, TX 77401

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

Newsletter deadline: the 25th of every month is strictly enforced
(October Editor is Linda Alderman)



Happy Birthday!

9/02 Steven van Heeckeren
9/05 Pam Ushak
9/06 Kali Schiska
9/13 Chloe Rowles
9/14 Janice Freeman
9/15 Gayle McAdoo

Herbs for Zodiac - Virgo Sign

Caraway Dill
Mint Horehound
Marjoram



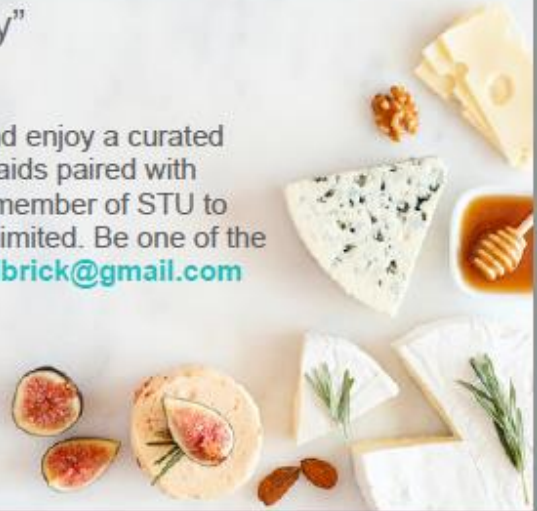
Two New STU Lagniappes for October Take Your Pick or Come to Both!

"The Magical World of Milk and Honey"

Sunday, October 2, 3:00 - 5:00pm

Join cheesemonger/beekeeper **Nicole Buegers** and enjoy a curated assortment of herbal cheeses from Houston Dairymaids paired with specially selected honeys. You do not have to be a member of STU to attend, but due to space constraints participation is limited. Be one of the first 28 to RSVP to **Karen Cottingham** at karen.redbrick@gmail.com to reserve your place.

Cost for the tasting is \$30, payable by cash, check, venmo or credit card (in person or online) - more details to follow once RSVP is received. Bring your own favorite beverage to this special event.



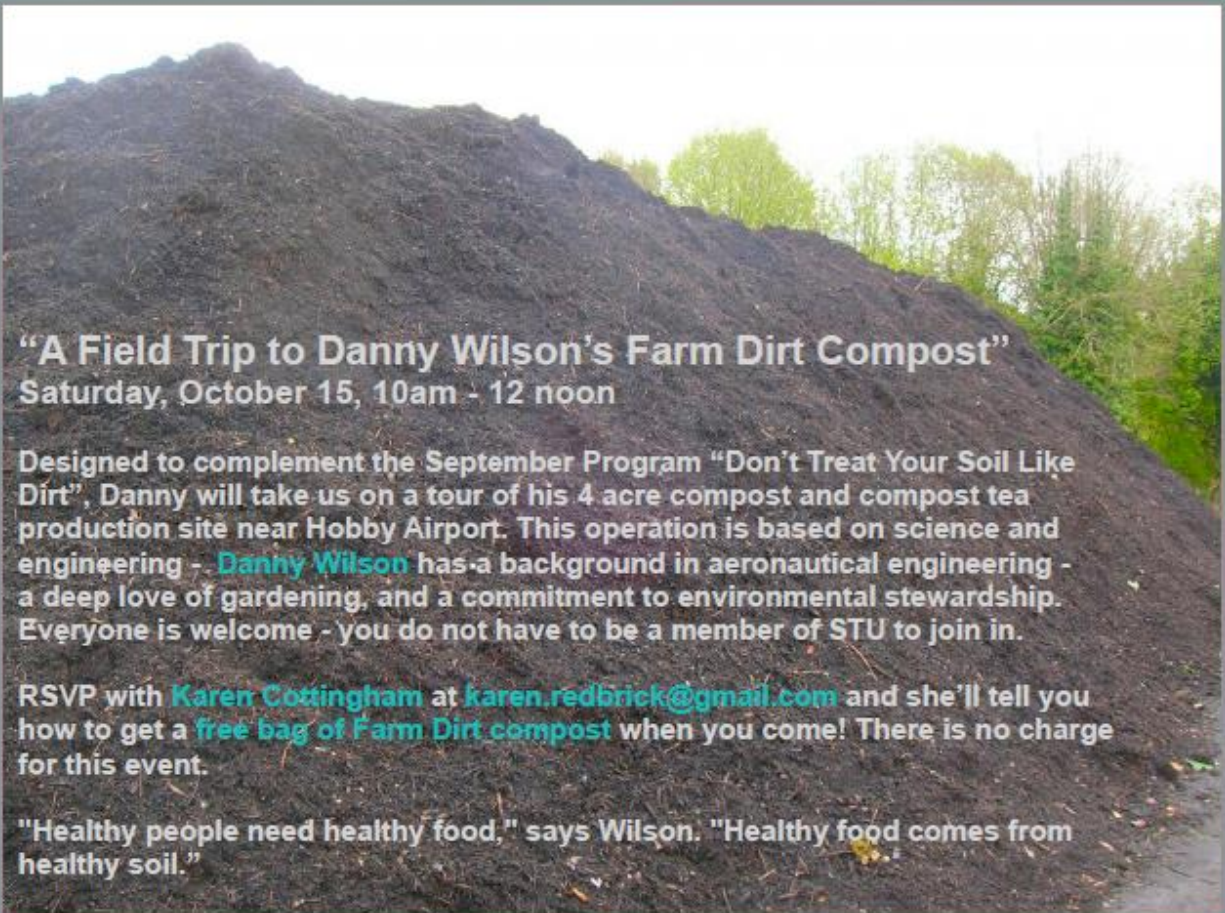
"A Field Trip to Danny Wilson's Farm Dirt Compost"

Saturday, October 15, 10am - 12 noon

Designed to complement the September Program "Don't Treat Your Soil Like Dirt", Danny will take us on a tour of his 4 acre compost and compost tea production site near Hobby Airport. This operation is based on science and engineering - **Danny Wilson** has a background in aeronautical engineering - a deep love of gardening, and a commitment to environmental stewardship. Everyone is welcome - you do not have to be a member of STU to join in.

RSVP with **Karen Cottingham** at karen.redbrick@gmail.com and she'll tell you how to get a **free bag of Farm Dirt compost** when you come! There is no charge for this event.

"Healthy people need healthy food," says Wilson. "Healthy food comes from healthy soil."





Chairman's Corner

Greetings!

First off, many thanks to **Maria Treviño** and **Carolyn Kosclskey** for working so diligently turning in our official list of paid members to HSA National for our Unit Renewal. At this writing, we are not quite finished with it and there is still time to renew your membership. We have also had a number of new members in the last two weeks, so these ladies have been extra busy!

We will be publishing a directory this fall. Until then, most of the new member's information is posted on the Member's section of the website. We also have posted the end of year Officer and Committee Chair reports and the current budget in the same section of the website. Thanks, **Benée Curtis**.

Our August Herb Fair Planning Meeting may have had a few glitches but was an overall success. We were able to inform many of the newer members about how we prepare for Herb Fair and what they can do to help. Meeting attendees all signed up for one or more work groups and we have chairs for almost all the committees. Pretty darn good for September 1! Kudos to **Catherine O'Brien** for all her hard work!

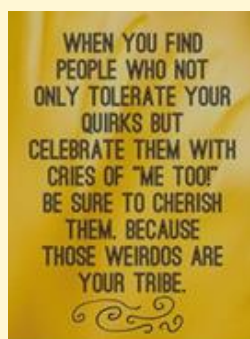
I had the pleasure of attending **Jeanie Dunnihoo's** virtual talk, Herbs 101, for the Harris County Master Gardeners Green Thumb Series recently. At the end of her talk she showed a picture of a group of gardeners working in the herb beds at Bear Creek Park sometime in the 1990's. When I heard her talk about how much working with this group of like-minded people inspired and affected her, I knew that she was talking about her tribe, her 'people.' I remembered joining the Herb Society and knowing I had found a group that automatically, effortlessly and organically made me feel one of them. I'm sure many of you have felt the same way. Who else can you talk to about the minutiae of plant varieties and herbal recipes? These are joyful discussions where everyone has an idea and everyone is excited for the next thing to happen. **Mary Nurre**, a relatively new member, exclaimed to me at one of the first Westbury Workdays, "**I've found my people!**"

According to *Psychology Today*, everyone needs a tribe. Sometimes you may have to create your own tribe and sometimes you stumble into it by accident. I feel that the Herb Society is my tribe, maybe not my only one, but yet, it has become very important to me. I know that I can say something nutty and (most of) you guys 'get me.' No explanation needed. Yes, everyone needs that kind of affirmation in their lives and STU gives me my daily dose of good vibes.

This fall, as we prepare for Herb Fair, I hope that we will all support and sustain our tribe with our time and talents; our knowledge and wisdom. As we gather in our fair workgroups, it is a great opportunity to get affirmation from your 'peeps.' Twenty-five-year member, **Shirley Mills**, says it best, "**We are just the herbies!**" I knew what she was talking about right away!

So, join in on an action-packed fall with your fellow herbies!

Julie Fordes
Unit Chair





**HOW'S YOUR SOIL'S HEALTH?
BURSTING WITH LIFE...OR NOT SO MUCH?**



HELP IS ON THE WAY!!!

**COME TO THE SEPTEMBER 28 HSA-STU
EVENING MEETING**

“DON'T TREAT YOUR SOIL LIKE DIRT”

**DANNY WILSON, CREATOR OF FARM DIRT COMPOST (NOW
OFFERING COMPOST TEA!) WILL SHOW YOU HOW TO
NURSE YOUR SICKLY SOIL BACK TO HEALTH**

**Join Us at the Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion
Doors Open 6:30pm, Snacks at 7:00, and Program to Follow**

Note the Change of Date



It's that Thyme of the Year!

HERB FAIR



Catherine O'Brien, Herb Fair 2022 Chair
Vibrio13@gmail.com or 281-467-1139

- Members kicked off Herb Fair 2022 *Embracing Herbal Traditions and Spreading Herbal Knowledge* at the August 17th meeting.
- Herb Fair** is scheduled for **Saturday, November 5, 9 am–2 pm at Southside Place Clubhouse, 3743 Garnet Street, Houston, TX 77005.**
- Block your calendars for set-up on **Friday, November 4, 8:30-noon** (or later). Bring your garage items on set-up day.
- Everyone is encouraged to bring dried herbs and clean glass jars in a box to the **September 28** meeting at Cherie Flores and **October 19** meeting at Lott Hall. *Tips on Harvesting, Drying & Storing Herbs* by Susan Wood can be found on our website under <Growing Herbs>.
- Look for the list of herbs that we need elsewhere in the newsletter. If you need dried herbs picked up, call **Julie Fordes**.
- Herbs that are needed by September 28 include lemon balm, chamomile, calendula, roses and passionflower.** They are needed early so we have thyme for the oils to infuse.
- You are also encouraged to bring your gently used gardening, environmental, outdoor books for adults and children to each meeting. This year we are having a book sale during Herb Fair.

Kudos to the following members who have agreed to chair committees:

Tea Blends	Julie Fordes	832-969-8349
Culinary Blends	Dena Yanowski	832-693-3630
Book Sale	Laura Boston	713-664-8112
Herbs and Plants	Janis Teas	713-865-3209
Herbal Gifts	Yvette Darnell and Faith Strunk	281-221-7670 713-382-7204
Jams and Jellies	Benée Curtis	713-663-6416
Vinegars	Linda Alderman	832-465-3620
Pre-Order Sales	Janice Stuff	713-516-5748
Set up and Take down	Rose Wherry	832-477-3301
Herbal Experience	Karen Cottingham	713-417-1119
Membership	Carolyn Kosclskey	281-419-1617
Cashier	Maria Treviño	281-467-1139
Kitchen/Breakroom	Mary Sacilowski	713-254-2268
Publicity	Virginia Camerlo	985-635-1655

If you haven't signed up for a committee or if you want to learn how to make the recipes that we sell, contact a committee chair and offer your thyme.

Workdays include:

Saturday, October 22, 9 am—noon: Tea Blends and Fragrances at 5531 Valkeith, Houston, TX 77096

Saturday, October 29, 9 am—noon: Culinary Blends at 5531 Valkeith, Houston, TX 77096



49th ANNUAL
HERB
FAIR

Saturday Nov. 5, 2022
9am - 2pm

Huge variety of HERB PLANTS
*Herbal Gifts, Books, Jellies,
Teas, and Culinary Blends*

Presented by
The Herb Society of America, South Texas Unit
www.herbsociety-stu.org
www.facebook.com/HerbSociety.SouthTexasUnit/

Southside Place Clubhouse
3743 Garnet Street, Houston, TX 77005



**WESTBURY COMMUNITY GARDEN
Herb Society Summer Schedule**



We are meeting on Thursday evenings @ 6:30 for the next couple of months. This is in addition to regular watering and harvesting.

September 1, 15, 29 and October 13, 27

ARE THE DATES FOR THE NEXT TWO MONTHS

In addition to your tools etc. bring a mug for tea. I'll bring hot water. Snacks will not be turned away.

Julie



Pin Oak Middle School Garden Workdays

Saturdays
September 24 and October 22
8:00 – 10:00 am

4601 Glenmont, Bellaire, TX 77401 is ½ block off Loop 610 West just south of the Home Depot and east of Houston Community College. Bring your gardening tools!

Questions? Contact Angela Roth at angelarothnews@gmail.com

If Saturday mornings don't work for you, contact Angela to let her know when you (and a couple of friends) would like to volunteer. Angela will give you a heads up of what needs to be done.

SparkleBox ©Copyright 2008. SparkleBox Teer for Enthusiasts (www.sparklebox.com)

Member Outreach Coordinator

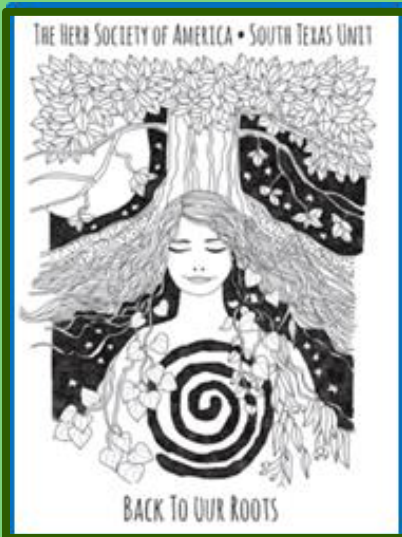
Donna Wheeler

Know of anyone who is ill, suffered a loss or could use some encouragement? Or is there someone who has received some good news and congratulations are in order?

If so, please contact Donna Wheeler at ddwheeler16@hotmail.com

New Members

Kay Challa
 Stephanie Calloway
 Janet Starr
 Steven van Heeckeren



Back to Our Roots

Julie Fordes

As I'm writing this, it's raining!!! I feel a bit of a reprieve on the temperature too! Makes me wish fall were here already. Our Westbury 'herb patch' needs harvesting just about every couple of days for butterfly pea and holy basil. If you can lend a hand by harvesting, drying and storing these, please let me know.

Many of the herbs on our list are ready to harvest now. In fact, if you **harvest now**, you may get enough growth on some plants for a **second cutting** in time to dry them for Herb Fair. Please add basil to your list of plants to harvest. Dena needs some for a seasoning blend, but a few of us were discouraging her from drying it; mentioning how it loses flavor

and becomes an unattractive color. After talking with my garden friend, and expert, **Beth Murphy**, I think we should give it a try. Some varieties of basil dry better than others. Beth air dries her herbs and doesn't use a dehydrator. Let's see if we can get a usable product for the seasoning blend.

Westbury Workdays are still on Thursday evenings at 6:30. Please check the calendar for the dates. As it begins to get dark earlier, we may need to change the day/time.

Don't forget to bring your dried herbs to the September 28 meeting!!!

The tea and culinary teams need to figure out how much of each ingredient they have available so they can estimate how much of each product they can make. If you can't make it to the meeting you can **bring your dried herbs to any STU event** or call me to make other arrangements. Sooner is better than later!

Dried Herbs needed for Teas and Blends

Basil	Oregano
Bay leaves	Passionflower
Blue Pea	Peppermint
Calendula flowers	Red-stemmed Apple Mint
Chamomile flowers	Rose Petals
Comfrey	Roselle
Lemon balm	Sage
Lemon verbena	Spearmint
Lemongrass	Stevia
Mexican mint marigold	Thyme



NEW!!! Organizing used glass jars! NEW!
Also bring any glass mason-like jars to the September 28 meeting so they can be reused for this year's fair.

Julie Fordes

Let's do a little bit for Mother Earth while we are at it...People have been giving me jars for a while and I have quite a collection. I need to move all the jars stored at my house to the Unit Storage space at Big Tex. I will also take all the jars that we may collect at the **September 28** meeting to the shed. This will be at least 5 boxes of assorted jars from my house and more from the meeting.

I will take an inventory of how many of each size are on hand and send it to the group, method is TBD. Then, anyone who needs jars can contact me or look at the list. After getting the right combinations and codes, they can pick up what they need at Big Tex. Sounds simple right? Let's see if we can make this system work.

Here are a few guidelines about donating your jars:

- All sizes of clean jars are accepted
- Bring tops only if they are in good shape
- Don't bring loose jars, group them by size in a container
- Strong bags with padding are acceptable but boxes are the best protection

If it can't be reduced, reused,
repaired, rebuilt, refurbished,
refinished, resold, recycled or
composted, then it should be
restricted, redesigned or removed
from production.

— Pete Seeger —



Membership Tips

Carolyn Kosclskey, Membership Chair

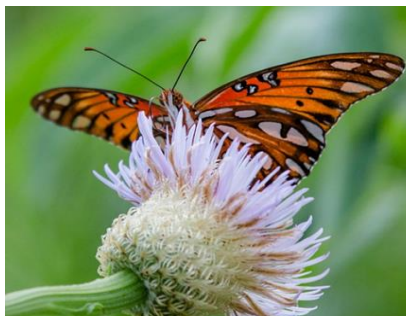
VOLUNTEER HOURS

i.e. listen up new members!

Many thanks to each of you who sent in your hours! As of August 15th there was a total of **6603.5 hours** submitted for the membership year July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. HSA requires recording volunteer hours for the membership year and submitting those at the end of August. Even though that is a great many hours it is under reported as not everyone turned in their hours, and we tend to not write those numbers down in a timely fashion, or know exactly what counts. Starting this month write your hours in the margin on your physical calendar or in your planner and highlight and circle them. If you're using a virtual calendar record your time in a bright and bold color, or for the more technical members use a spreadsheet. **Starting from last July 1 go back and record time spent at all meetings onsite or virtual, and any time spent preparing for those meetings including refreshments.** And yes, if you spend time at the Westbury Garden or Pin Oak Garden that time counts too. At the end of the year it's the total that you will send me, so it's not necessary you record the name of the event except for your own use. Feel free to email me if you have any questions about membership or volunteer hours.

Carolyn

stxu.membership@gmail.com



Houston Arboretum and Nature Center Fall/Winter Classes

Herb Society members might be interested in some of the upcoming classes. Here are some examples of the classes to be offered: Designing a Rain Garden, Native Plant Propagation, Gardening for Birds, Pumpkin Planters, DIY Candles, Wild Tea and Plantable Paper Making.

For more information, click on the link below:

[Houston Arboretum & Nature Center - Houston Arboretum & Nature Center](#)

October 7- 8 Fall Plant Sale, for information, click on the link below:

[Fall Plant Sale - Houston Arboretum & Nature Center Houston Arboretum & Nature Center](#)



**WHO HASN'T PAID THEIR DUES YET?
GET YOUR FINGER OFF THAT SNOOZE BUTTON!**



**DON'T LET ANY MORE
TIME SLIP AWAY!**

Everyone who renews their membership by September 15 will receive a special treat from Three Brothers Bakery!

So act now. Renew online or by contacting Maria Treviño at maria@burger.com

Congratulations to STU Members Maria Treviño, Susan Wood, Janice Stuff, and Karen Cottingham

Maria and Susan were invited to join the Finance & Operations Committee of The Herb Society of America

Janice was invited to join the *The Herbarist* Committee

Karen was invited to join the Education Advisory Committee, the EdCon & Annual Meeting Advisory Committee, and the Online/Webinar Committee

Give these hard-working members a well-deserved pat on the back!

Photo Credit: Unsplash



Highlights from the July HSA-STU “Something Extra” Lagniappe



**“Celebrating
The First Harvest
of Grain -
Lammas and
Lughnasadh
Traditions
Explained”**



A big THANK YOU to HSA-STU Member Bobby Jucker, who hosted the event at Three Brothers Bakery. And to the members and guests who participated - Congratulations on your wild and whimsical corn dollies! Your creative powers were really unleashed that day!



Program Chair Karen Cottingham explained the traditions of Lammas and Lughnasadh, demonstrated the art of making corn dollies, and even brought samples of the first harvest of grain - sent all the way from Washington State by her brother!



Mary Nurre contributed the photo of the Mermaid Corn Dolly on Blue Wicker. All others are by Karen Cottingham. Pictured above (previous page) are Bobby Jucker, Albert Ramos, Mary Nurre, Susan Wood, Janice Crockett, Jane Littell, Debbie Wheeler, Rose Wherry, Kathy Maines, Donald Burger, and on this page, Rose Wherry, with Mary Nurre and Yvette Darnell in the background, Bobby Jucker, and Lovie Harrison.



AT-HOME RECIPES



AT-HOME RECIPES
August 2022
By Carolyn Kosclskey



Moving from August into September we're transitioning into fall as the sun moves toward the equator with days becoming a little shorter and shadows a little longer. According to the calendar September 1 begins our "meteorological fall" even though our "astrological fall," also known as the autumnal equinox, does not occur until Thursday, September 22. In our area it doesn't at all look like fall because of the drought, and certainly doesn't feel like fall because of the heat. In Houston's zone 9 early September will be the last chance to get your tomatoes and pepper transplants in the ground. Now is the time to harvest your herbs, vegetables and fruits that survived this summer, using what you can in dishes, preserving by freezing or canning and sharing with family and friends.

Labor Day, which traditionally marks the end of summer and beginning of the school year, will be celebrated on Monday, September 5 this year. Many of us don't remember the origin of the first Labor Day in 1894 and that it paid tribute to the contributions and achievements of American workers. This year much of our nation may choose or not choose to celebrate this 3-day weekend at home with family in a more traditional way grilling burgers and "dogs" outdoors with sides of potato salad and baked beans, concluding with desserts of ice cream and cake. For those choosing to make every bite count and moving toward a more plant-based menu, there are great choices for this holiday while incorporating any herbs from your garden that survived this summer.

If you missed the meeting on Sunday afternoon, August 7 at member Bobby Jucker's **Three Brothers Bakery** <https://3brothersbakery.com/locations-hours/washington-avenue/> you missed a great meeting. There were many members and guests in attendance bringing a variety of appetizers and beverages enjoyed by all. There have been requests for the roasted red pepper dip appetizer brought by past unit chair Donna Yanowski, who requested that it be shared in the At-Home Recipe section.



Herbs Make Scents 2022



MUHAMMARA DIP Roasted Red Pepper Dip

I don't remember where I found this recipe, or a similar one, but it was several years ago. Our family enjoys Middle Eastern food and except for several of the spices and pomegranate molasses, I usually have most of the ingredients in the pantry or fridge. I have roasted fresh red bell peppers over the gas burners in the house (I take the fire alarm down!), put them in a paper bag and later scrape off the charred skin. When removing the skin, I find it easier to cut off the pepper tops and bottoms and work with flat pieces. The roasted red peppers in a jar are almost always in my pantry and work just as well too.

2 roasted red peppers, charred with skins removed (or jarred) cut into strips
3 tablespoons olive oil
¾ cup walnuts, roughly chopped
1 clove garlic, roughly chopped
2 ½ tablespoons tomato paste
¾ cup breadcrumbs
2 tablespoons pomegranate molasses
1 teaspoon Aleppo pepper
½ teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon sumac
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper

Put everything into the bowl of a large food processor and blend into a smooth consistency, stirring down sides as necessary. Serve at room temperature with pita bread or pita chips.

From the files of Donna Yanowski

APRICOT NUT BREAD

Several years ago I learned that apricots are one of my Dad's favorite fruits and since I had a surplus of dried apricots for snacks stored in my freezer, I was aiming to please him with a surprise treat for his September birthday. I found this recipe and pared it down to make 2 small loaves instead of 4, and adapted it to our tastes (adding aniseed, nutmeg, and pineapple). Each slice gently warmed in the microwave, whether you top it off with vanilla ice cream (another favorite) or not, is delicious and fresh. The original recipe may be found at food.com.

Ingredients

1¼ cup flour
1/3 cup sugar
1¾ teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 ½ tablespoon butter, melted
¼ cup orange juice
1 egg, beaten
½ cup chopped nuts (optional)
¾ cup dried apricot, chopped into small pieces



- 1 teaspoon ground aniseed (to your taste)
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg (to your taste)
- ½ cup + 2 tablespoons crushed pineapple

Preheat oven to 350°F. Generously grease and lightly flour two small loaf pans. In a small saucepan, warm the apricots in water until soft: drain, cool and chop into small soft pieces. In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt; mix well. Stir in melted butter, orange juice, and egg; mix well. Fold in apricots, and nuts. Spoon into prepared loaf pans. Bake 55 minutes, or until a tooth pick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool on rack 15 minutes before removing from pan, then let cool completely. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap. Freezes well.

From the files of Janice Freeman

HERB FAIR POTATO-ONION SOUP

1990s Favorites from the STU Herb Fair

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 4 large potatoes (about 2 lbs.), peeled
and cut into quarters | 1 teaspoon herb salt |
| 1 cup water | ½ teaspoon Herb Soup Mix |
| 1 large onion or 2 leeks, chopped fine | ½ teaspoon garlic salt |
| 4 tablespoons butter (1/2 stick) | 2 chicken bouillon cubes |
| Parsley, chives, chopped fine for garnish | 3 quarts milk |

Boil potatoes in water until done. Mash well and mix with the water. Sauté onions or leeks in butter until well done but not browned. Put the onions in a blender or processor with some of the milk and blend until smooth. Add to the potatoes. Add seasonings and remaining milk; heat, garnish and serve. The potato-onion mixture can be made ahead and refrigerated. When ready to serve, add milk then heat.

Herb Soup Mix

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 bay leaf | 3 cloves |
| 2 teaspoons dried thyme | ½ teaspoon peppercorn |
| 2 teaspoons dried marjoram | 3 teaspoons dried parsley |
| 3 tablespoons dried lovage | 1 teaspoon dried savory |

Grind together all ingredients and store in an air-tight container. This mix may be used in meatloaf, hamburger and stews, and to season vegetables.

From South Texas Unit Herbal Harvest Collection (1995), page 147.

According to the calendar fall officially arrives in September, but in our Gulf Coast area most of us associate October with fall. By now many of us have already reacquainted ourselves with our ovens and are starting to notice a fall vibe in the look on our favorite websites and in magazines. There are quite a few member birthdays in October which means a great opportunity for sharing your favorite fall recipe with our readers.




Rosemary is for Remembrance
 In Loving Memory
Gwen Barclay
 December 31, 1938
 August 15, 2022
 Member HSA-STU 1972 - 2015
 Past Chair STU 1979 - 1981
 Rosemary Circle Honoree
 Certificate of
 Achievement 1996
 Gertrude B. Foster Award for
 Excellence in Literature 2005
 She Will Be Missed



Gwen at Festival Hill ca. 1996

Gwendolyn Ann Barclay

December 31, 1938 - August 15, 2022

Gwen Barclay, Life Member of The Herb Society of America, passed Monday, August 15th at 84 years of age. Gwen was celebrating 50 years with The Society this year and was able to attend 2 recent meetings of the Pioneer Unit. She was South Texas Unit Chair from 1979-81 before moving to Round Top, Texas where she was a founding member of the Pioneer Unit and 2nd Unit Chair. I visited her at the May and June Pioneer Unit meetings where she was in excellent spirits.

Gwen was the reason she and mom Madalene Hill moved to Round Top when she accepted the position of Director of Food Services for James Dick’s Festival Institute. I remember Madalene telling me that when Jimmy hired Gwen she came along as lagniappe. Together they were a force of nature that forever changed Festival Hill to an herbal as well as musical destination. Gwen was director of food services from 1992 to 2006 while Madalene created her dream gardens. Much credit goes to James Dick for his foresight to bring the duo to Round Top where he promised them a home for life in the Menke House.

As her daughter Kathryn Barclay told me “The last 8 years were very difficult for mother, but the last 8 months were good.” Gwen started suffering seizures about 20 years ago which led to her retirement from food service at Festival Hill. The seizures became more frequent and severe after July 12th of this year. No cure for her condition could be found which is why Gwen donated her body to medical research. A private family only funeral service will be held. At this writing Kathryn hopes to have a “Celebration of Life” to remember Gwen by serving some of her favorite recipes for friends to enjoy. Details are pending.

In addition to Gwen’s Golden Sage status, she received the Herb Society of America’s Certificate of Achievement in 1996 and the Gertrude B. Foster Award for Excellence in Herbal Literature in 2005 (along with Madalene Hill) for *Southern Herb Growing* published in 1987. HSA Director Laura Lee Martin told me an article about Gwen is in the works for our next national newsletter. Here’s a link to *The Houston Chronicle* to access a tribute article about Gwen. about Hilltop Herb Farm is where Gwen’s creativity with herbs blossomed.

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/food-culture/article/Gwen-Barclay-a-trailblazing-Houston-chef-and-17398165.php>. Those of us who were lucky enough to attend the Saturday night dinners will never forget it. If you were not in attendance, you might enjoy reading about the ambiance of dining in a green house full of fragrant herbs and enjoying unusual cuisine from around the world featuring those herbs.

Susan Gail Wood



While Strolling Through the Park One Day... Lustrous Clusters of Beautyberry Caught My Eye

Karen Cottingham

Imagine you're walking into the same Hermann Park entrance that leads to the Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion. Keep going to the end of the covered walkway, and then turn left toward the pine grove. After a few more steps, you will come across one of the most spectacular horticultural wonders of the season - densely packed clumps of glistening magenta orbs adorning the branches of otherwise rather uninspiring shrubs.

It's not just their color that is so eye-poppingly remarkable - it's the glittery combination of metallic lustre and satiny sheen that caught my eye. Not to mention the curious arrangement of the clusters along the stems, encircling them at intervals like bumpy neon tomatoes on a skewer.

This botanical wonder is *Callicarpa americana*, also known as beautyberry. The name that Linnaeus gave the plant is essentially the same as its common name, coming from the Greek words for beautiful, *kalos*, and fruit, or *karpos*. Callicarpa, or "beautiful fruit", is generally acclaimed as a fitting name for this flashy plant, but to me, the color is a jarring tension between beauty and garishness. Somehow, it seems uncomfortably unnatural for a berry to resemble the neon sign of a coffee shop; yet, even so, they're strangely captivating.



Photo Credits: Neon LED, not available; Hermann Park beautyberry by Karen Cottingham

They're loud, yet alluring. Garish without doubt, yet weirdly beautiful. And definitely worth a trip to the park to see this plant that so unabashedly does its own thing.

To appreciate these strange berries at their best, I strongly recommend that you go in the late afternoon, when the sun's rays shine directly on their glossy surfaces. For a few moments, the berries



glow like jewels in candlelight; one can even perceive a slight iridescence reminiscent of the nacre of pearls.

(Note: Just for the record, the fruits on beautyberry are actually “drupes” rather than “berries”. A drupe contains one to several seeds that are each enclosed within a hard endocarp. Berries, on the other hand, contain numerous seeds that are *not* enclosed in a hard endocarp. However, most writers refer to the fruits of *Callicarpa* as “berries”, and for simplicity, I will follow that tradition.)



**The lustrous sheen of Hermann Park beautyberries reflecting the late afternoon sun
Photo credit: Karen Cottingham (Note: I have not been able to identify what appear to be granules on the surface of the berries. They may simply be debris from the “shaggy” surface of the stem, which can be seen above.)**

The closest I can come to describing this electric color is to compare it to “lustre”, the shimmering iridescent surface on glazed pottery created by an ancient decorative technique.

The process, developed in the 9th century in what is now Iraq, involves painting either copper or silver onto already glazed vessels and then re-firing at a lower temperature to create a lustrous, metallic shine. As the silver or copper ions react with the glaze, thin layers of nanoparticles are created. But because this process is not quite perfect, the layers are not quite perfectly aligned. As light passes through these misaligned layers, its reflection is slightly distorted, which results in the characteristic opulent iridescence. The color is also shifted toward the red portion of the spectrum. It's the synergy between the layers of metal, the distortion of the reflected light, and the red shift that results in the vibrant metallic glow.



“Lustreware” was one of the most sought-after styles of glaze on china sets during the 19th and early-20th centuries, particularly in England. The charming "play fellow" cat pattern seen below can be found on children's tea sets, plates, bowls, cups, mugs and dinnerware in general.



Note the similarity in the color of an English Pink Lustre dish from the 1820s and the beautyberry in Hermann Park. The metallic sheen is much more apparent when viewed directly. Photo credits: Debra Clifford Antiques and Karen Cottingham

Armed with this information, I was hoping to find a chemical analysis of the berries that showed the presence of copper, or an electron micrograph revealing a physical source of the glow, but surprisingly, very little research to analyze this extraordinary color has actually been performed. The fruits of only one species, *Callicarpa dichotoma*, a beautyberry native to China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, have thus far been evaluated. Three major anthocyanins (peonidin derivatives) were identified, which despite being present at only modest levels, create an intense purple coloration. Extracts from this particular beautyberry may eventually be developed as natural food colorants.

It may seem laughably counterintuitive, but extracts from the vibrantly hued *Callicarpa* fruits are also among the key ingredients of cosmeceuticals designed to reduce skin pigmentation. This is a huge bonanza in both the botanical and business worlds. Overall, the sale of skin lightening products, whether for medical reasons or in the pursuit of culturally defined “beauty,” is projected to reach US\$31 billion by 2024.

Skin hyperpigmentation is a medical disorder in which overproduction of melanin causes patches of skin to become darker in color than the normal surrounding skin. This may occur following prolonged



sun exposure, as a consequence of inflammation, or due to certain hormonal exposures or imbalances.

A separate *perceived* “skin hyperpigmentation disorder” is a cultural rather than medical phenomenon. Particularly in Asian countries, a lighter skin tone is associated with attractiveness, marital prospects, job prospects, social status, and earning potential. The desire for “whiteness” is so great that a World Health Organization survey found that nearly 40 percent of women in China, Malaysia, the Philippines, and South Korea regularly use products for lightening their skin. There is a skin lightening product or procedure for everyone and every budget - from powders and creams to bleaching agents; from laser treatments and chemical peels to intravenous infusions of melanin-reducing substances.

The obsession with lighter skin is not new, nor is it limited to Asian cultures. It’s even not a topic I expected to become interested in, but that’s where beautyberry led me!

An extract from the fruit of *Callicarpa japonica* is a key ingredient in a line of Japanese skin lightening cosmeceuticals called Tatcha. This extract is rich in carnosol, which inhibits a key enzyme in the melanin synthetic pathway, thereby reducing melanin production. According to the manufacturers, the extract also stabilizes Vitamin C, another skin lightening agent.



A woodblock print “Appearing as if Having Been on a Stroll, Behavior of a Lady of the Meiji period”, 1888, by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi. On the right is a beautyberry-based skin lightening product by Tatcha.



This woodblock print, by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, illustrates the association of pale skin with ideal feminine beauty. It is unusual, however, in that the woman is dressed in Western clothes complete with bustle, buttons, bow tie, and parasol, which further emphasizes the cultural preference for “whiteness”.

Throughout the centuries Asian art is replete with portrayals of ideal beauty - empresses and concubines alike are depicted with light, or even white, skin. This cultural obsession with pale skin continues unabated and is most clearly seen today in the Asian movie and music industry.

In addition to being useful as cosmeceuticals, various beautyberries are known to have other pharmacologic properties.

Of the 190 or so *Callicarpa* species worldwide, the majority are native to southeast Asia. Ancient Chinese manuscripts, as well as recently published books on herbal medicine, describe the traditional preparation of leaves, branches, roots, and fruits of local species for the treatment of inflammation, rheumatism, fractures, amenorrhea, tuberculosis, and various bleeding disorders. Modern pharmacological researchers have identified specific compounds from these preparations that do, in fact, have anti-inflammatory, hemostatic, neuroprotective, antitubercular, antioxidant, antimicrobial, and analgesic effects.

In North America, the Alabama, Choctaw, Creek, Koasati, Seminole, and other Native American tribes also relied on the American beautyberry, *Callicarpa americana*, for various medicinal purposes. Leaves, branches and roots were boiled for use in sweat baths to treat malarial fevers and rheumatism. Astringent tea from the roots and berries was often used for sore throats and gastrointestinal ailments. Other preparations were used for dizziness, fluid retention, and to calm crying babies.

Dr Cassandra Quave is an ethnobotanist who studies the healing practices of indigenous people to uncover promising candidates for new drugs. When she noticed that the American beautyberry was an important medicinal plant for Native Americans, she and her lab associates decided to investigate. They found that an extract of the leaves of *Callicarpa americana* had a strong antibacterial effect on *Cutibacterium acnes*, the bacterium causing acne. Since *C. acnes* is becoming resistant to many antibiotics, *C. americana* leaf extract may prove to be a significant advance in the treatment of acne.

Growing bacterial resistance to antibiotics is a significant concern in modern healthcare. One pathway to addressing this problem is to combine antibiotic therapy with additional compounds that can interfere with the ways bacteria shield themselves from the antibiotics. In other words, the additional compounds might make the bacteria once again susceptible to antibiotics. Additional work on *Callicarpa americana* leaf extracts demonstrated exactly this - an enhanced ability of antibiotics to treat antibiotic-resistant staph bacteria.

Other researchers have demonstrated anti-fungal, anti-viral, and anti-inflammatory effects of various preparations of several *Callicarpa* species. Research on cancer and memory impairment is also taking place.

And the folk practice of rubbing crushed beautyberry leaves on the skin to repel insects has also been borne out by science. Historically, farmers and ranchers in Texas applied the berries and leaves to



cattle and horses in order to repel flies, and folks in the Mississippi hill country would cut the leafy branches, crush the leaves, and then place the branches between the harness and the horse to keep deerflies, horseflies, and mosquitoes away.

Four chemicals isolated from callicarpa have been shown to act as insect repellents: borneol, callicarpenal, intermedol and spathulenol. It may be for this reason that deer are frequently observed to rest in stands of beautyberry.

The use of callicarpenal has been patented by the USDA's agricultural research service as a mosquito repellent. Until this is developed, you might consider planting beautyberry near your patio, or try rubbing the leaves on your skin.



If you have access to beautyberry shrubs, you might try tasting them or even making beautyberry jelly or syrup. Most people find the taste of the fresh berries rather bitter and astringent, but the popularity of beautyberry jelly testifies otherwise.

The photo on the left is from <https://wingingitonthehomestead.com/how-to-make-beautyberry-jelly/>, which includes instructions for making the jelly.

Mark Vorderbruggen perfectly captures the experience of “beautyberry magic” in the following essay “The Taste of Beauty, the Taste of Magic”, which appeared September 29, 2017 in *Charm East Texas* magazine:

The dark purple color of the berries seems to strike fear in the caveman part of many people's (especially moms') brains. It seems almost unnatural and dangerous, like the radioactive goo that creates monsters and zombies in sci-fi movies. Something that color can't be good to eat! Well, to be perfectly honest, if you eat them raw, their taste ranges from insipid to somewhat medicinal. I've yet to find a person whose first reaction to these berries is “Yum, give me more!” Everyone seems quite content to leave these fruits for the forest animals. That's because they don't know about beautyberry magic.

Fairy tales are filled with magical transformations, usually from something plain into something beautiful. Beautyberries are real-world magic. Something happens to them when they are cooked down into a syrup, jelly or wine. What was bland suddenly becomes exotic and stunning. Amazing flavors appear that weren't in the raw fruit, with the results reminding me of



a mix of rose petals and champagne. If there's magic in this world, then the effect of cooking and condensing down beautyberries is the best proof.

Beautyberry jelly is by far the easiest way to cast this spell. Grab any blackberry jelly recipe you can find and just replace the amount of blackberries with beautyberry fruit. You'll probably have to add about 10 percent more pectin to ensure it jells up properly; otherwise, you'll likely end up with beautyberry syrup. But that's not a bad thing, either, especially when you pour the syrup over an ice cream sandwich. That's downright decadent ... and absolutely wonderful. The jelly ranges in color from light lavender to dark magenta, depending on the ripeness of the berries and how long it's cooked.

And if you're looking for something really elegant, try this recipe for Beautyberry Pannacotta created by Anita Jaisinghani, creator of Pondicheri Café, who was recently inspired by the brilliant purple hue of the wild beautyberries near Navasota.

"Combined with roasted corn and cinnamon," she says, "their flavor in this panna cotta is haunting, mild yet delicious." More of that beautyberry magic.



Photo credit: Ajna Jai (<https://www.india1948.com/blog/beautyberry-panna-cotta>)

Ingredients

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons beautyberries	2 teaspoons unflavored gelatin
2 ears of corn	Pinch salt
1 cup heavy cream	
1 cup milk	
¼ cup maple syrup	
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon	



Instructions

1. Remove the berries from the stems and rinse them thoroughly. Drain and set aside.
2. Roast the ears of corn over an open gas fire or outdoor grill. Remove the kernels, reserving the cobs -- it should amount to roughly 1 ½ cups.
3. Combine the cream, milk, maple syrup, corn kernels & cobs and cinnamon and bring to a boil. Turn heat off, let the mixture rest for 2-3 minutes.
4. Then discard the corn cobs and whisk in the gelatin powder. Cool for another 10-12 minutes until just warm to the touch but not hot.
5. Combine the mixture with one cup drained beautyberries and purée in a blender until smooth.
6. Strain and pour into six 3- to 4- ounce serving cups or bowls.
7. Chill for 4-6 hours or overnight until set. Top with the reserved beautyberries.

Or if you just want to enjoy beautyberries for their unique color and form, here are some final inspirations:



The vibrant violet hue of beautyberry pairs well with orange and blue (Photo credits: Unknown)

The time to enjoy beautyberries is *now!*

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