

Herbs Make Scents

THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
VOLUME XLVIII, NUMBER 12



SOUTH TEXAS UNIT
DECEMBER 2025

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December 2025 Calendar

Dec 1, Mon. Due Date

Herb Fair Expenses Submit requests for reimbursement along with receipts to **Maria Treviño** by Dec. 1st.

Dec 9, Tues. 10:00 am - 1:00 PM
STU Members only

Day Meeting “*The History of Mulled Spices*” and a Make-and-Take Workshop presented by **Donna Wheeler**. Program and potluck luncheon at the home of **Cynthia Card**. **RSVP** by email or text to Cynthia Card **by December 2**.

Dec 13, Sat. 9:00 am - noon

Kolter Garden Workday 9710 Runnymede Dr., Houston, TX 77096

Dec 14, Sun. 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
STU Members and their guests

Holiday Potluck Gathering at the home of **Maria Treviño**
RSVP here: maria@burger.com

January 2026 Calendar

Jan 10, Sat. 9:00 am - noon

Kolter Garden Workday 9710 Runnymede Dr., Houston, TX 77096

Jan 13, Tues. 11:00 am
STU Members and their guests

Day Meeting Adventure Luncheon at ChòpnBlòk (<https://chopnblok.co/>) West African cuisine located in Montrose at 507 Westheimer Rd. This is a self-pay event. <https://maps.app.goo.gl/wN3AWWhBuC8qwzCH7> The initial reservation is for 12, but need to have a final count by January 8. Please **RSVP** to bccurtis5@comcast.net by January 8.

Jan 17, Sat. 9:00 am

Westbury Garden Workday 12581 Dunlap St., Houston, TX 77035

Jan 17, Sat. 11:00 am - noon
Public invited

Lagniappe: “*The Vibrant Flavors of Indian Cuisine - A Shopping and Dining Adventure with Chef Karuna*.” This is a self-pay event (STU members receive discount).

Jan 21, Wed. 6:15 pm
Free and Open to the Public

Evening Meeting “*Food with Benefits - Natural Aphrodisiacs*” presented by Angela and Chris Roth. Location: Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion, 1500 Hermann Dr. Houston, TX 77004. Doors open at 6:15 pm, with potluck meal and program at 7:00 pm.

Special newsletter deadline in December is the 13th, and is strictly enforced (January co-editor Linda Alderman)



12/4 Lena Herce

12/15 Lorena Jaramillo

12/21 Debbie Gordon

12/31 Laura Boston



Chairman's Corner

Happy Holidays everyone!

No matter what your family celebrates, make sure you capture those recipes!! Too many delightful dishes get lost when loved ones forget to write things down. Better yet, take a video of your family making that dish, so you have the wonderful voices, AND the recipes and images for years to come.

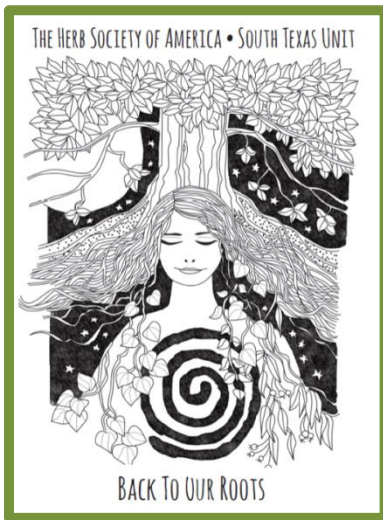
We have had a wonderful 2025---thinking about all the Positive Herb Society events and those of you who volunteered beautifully! Any suggestions on what new things you would like to learn or what previous programs you would enjoy again can be shared with Karen Cottingham and Ro Jones. We are excited to have new members join us AND get our existing members even more involved.

Our United States are celebrating 250 years next year....I bet we can really delve into more history of herbal use and see what helped our ancestors then and what could help us going forward. Whether it is a shrub or fermented veggies, keep your curiosity bubbling!

January's evening meeting will feature a fun and inspiring program by my husband Chris and me. Looking forward to sharing, "Aphrodisiacs throughout the Ages".

Angela





Back to Our Roots at the Westbury Garden

Westbury Workdays
Saturday, January 17 at 9 am

Many thanks to the service organization **The National League of Young Men** for sending these three amazing young men to help us create the new herb bed at Westbury. Thanks also to the coordinator for the group, **Brittany Weisser** and our

chair, **Angela Roth** for their help in arranging for such awesome workers.



It took these three young men just two hours to remove spent plants and weeds, haul many wheelbarrows full of garden soil, add soil amendments and plant flowers and herbs.

We were able to plant rosemary, oregano and several varieties of thyme thanks to having a few leftover plants from Herb Fair. We are still harvesting holy basil and blue pea. The newly planted calendula is also ready to harvest.

We will not have any official workdays in December; however, I will be watering and harvesting as time allows. I encourage each of you to get back to your roots and visit the newly renovated herb bed during the holidays. You will be glad you did.

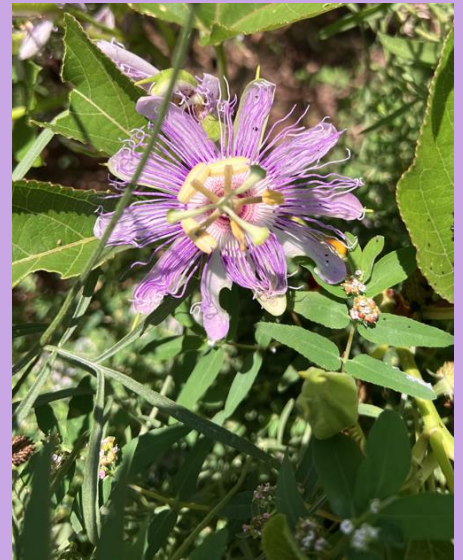


Julie

Herbs Make Scents – December

Kolter Elementary Garden

Angela Roth



The 2nd Saturday
of the month at
Kolter Elementary
Garden is a great
place to enjoy the
outdoors and have
fun!

Work days are
9 am - Noon

December 13
January 10



December Events

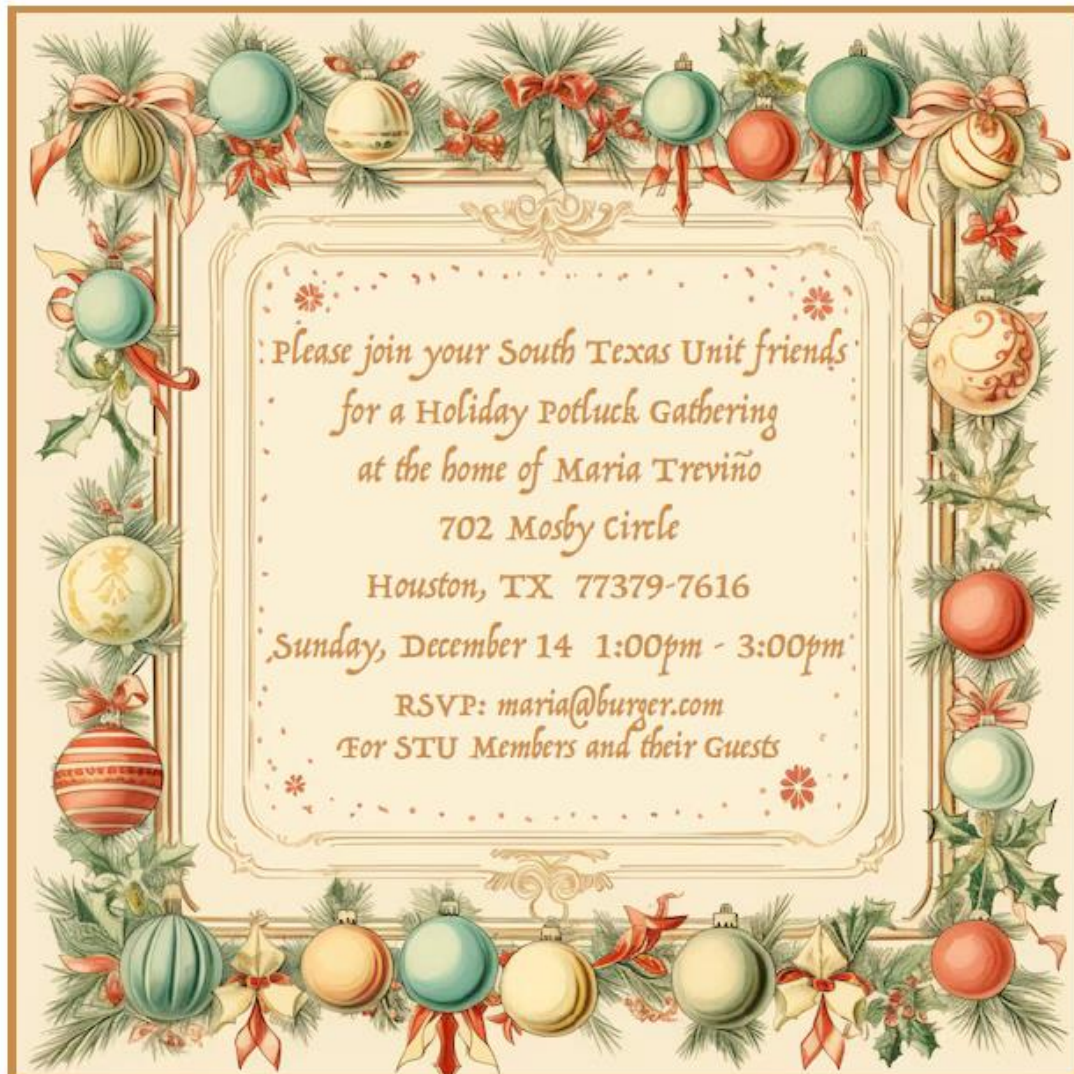


Day Meeting

The History of Mulled Spices AND a Make-and-Take Workshop

10:00 am - Tues. Dec 9 - at the home of Cynthia Card

RSVP by text or email to Cynthia by December 2





Coming in January



Day Meeting

Luncheon at *ChòpnBlòk* - African cuisine located in Montrose at 507 Westheimer Rd.

Please RSVP to bccurtis5@comcast.net by January 8.

January Lagniappe: "The Vibrant Flavors of Indian Cuisine - A Shopping and Dining Adventure with Chef Karuna"

INDIAN GROCERY STORE TOUR

A delightful experience that will be both educational and fun. One hour tour led by Karuna Diedericks followed by optional lunch at a local vegetarian restaurant. Lunch not included in the tour fee.

Saturday, January 17, 2026 11am-12pm

Vishala Grocery
5815 Hillicroft St
Houston, TX 77036



TOUR FEE: \$35
QUESTIONS? TEXT/CALL KARUNA 281-546-9698
WWW.CULINARYVEDA.COM

STU Members receive a \$10 Discount
RSVP with Karuna 281-546-9698



Coming Soon!
January 21
Evening Meeting
"Food with Benefits"
Presented by:
Angela & Chris Roth





Oh, what fun we had in November!

NOVEMBER LAGNIAPPE "IN A FERMENT WITH SCOTTY"



Here's how it went: Saturday Evening - Select the Vegetables
Sunday - Chop, Flavor and Brine Later Sunday - Job Well Done!
Monday Morning - Looks Like the Good Bacteria are Happy!



November STU Lagniappe In Search of the Best Borscht in Houston



EdCon Registration now open!



Reserve your spot now for
The Herb Society of America
Educational Conference,
"It's Spicier in Texas",
San Antonio, Texas,
April 15 - 17, 2026.

*HSA Members - Register early
and receive a discount*

[Register Here](#)





"Pumpkins and Spice: Global Cuisine with a Fall Favorite" was the Day Meeting program on November 11th. The following is a list of some interesting tidbits about pumpkins.

1. The word "pumpkin" originates from "peopon," which means "large melon" in Greek. It then evolved to "pompon" in French and "pumpion" in Britain. The Americans later changed it to "pumpkin," the name we still use today. An alternate explanation for the derivation of the word is the Massachusetts word *pôhpukun*, meaning 'grows forth round' and would likely have been used by the Wampanoag people (who speak the Wôpanâak dialect of Massachusetts) when introducing pumpkins to English Pilgrims at Plymouth. The English word squash is also derived from a Massachusetts word, *askôotash*.
2. Six of the seven continents can grow pumpkin. Only Antarctica cannot grow them.
3. Every year, almost 25 million tons of pumpkins are grown worldwide. One country holds the crown of "Pumpkin King": China. China produces over 9 million tons of it worldwide each year. India comes in 2nd place, with 5 million tons, and Ukraine takes the 3rd ranking for making a million tons annually. Together, China and India grow more than 60% of the world's pumpkins.
4. Pumpkins are a common sight during the autumn season. Every year, the US produces 1 million tons of pumpkin. 80 percent of this crop (around 800 million pumpkins) are ripe for picking in one single month of the year - October. Illinois grows 95% of pumpkins used for processing. Morton, Illinois call itself the Pumpkin Capital of the World.
5. Libby's uses a proprietary strain called the Dickinson pumpkin. Dickinson pumpkins are tan with smooth skin and have a flesh that is less watery and stringy. This variety is not the same as the typical "jack-o'-lantern" pumpkin and is known for having a more flavorful, sweeter flesh that is better suited for baking and cooking. The company grows these pumpkins in a specific region of Illinois and emphasizes that the canned product is 100% pure pumpkin, with no other ingredients added.
6. Most canned pumpkin you'll find in your local grocery store (including Libby's and Nestle) is made with the Dickinson pumpkin. But it's common for some canned pumpkin brands to mix other types of winter squash, like butternut or hubbard, with the Dickinson pumpkin. It all gets confusing because the terms squash and pumpkin aren't very well differentiated by the USDA. Just look at how they define canned pumpkin: "The canned product prepared from clean, sound, properly matured, golden-fleshed, firm-shelled, sweet varieties of either pumpkins or squashes by washing, stemming, cutting, steaming, and reducing to a pulp." That leaves a lot of room for some companies to use a variety of squash and still legally call the product 100 percent canned pumpkin.
7. Over 45 different varieties of pumpkin exist. They range in color including orange, red, yellow and green, and they boast names like Hooligan, Cotton Candy, and Orange Smoothie.
8. Technically a fruit, the pumpkin is a winter squash in the family Cucurbitaceae which includes cucumbers and melons.
9. Each pumpkin has about 500 seeds. They take between 90 and 120 days to grow.
10. Every single part of a pumpkin is edible: the skin, leaves, flowers, pulp, seeds, and stems.
11. Interestingly, pumpkins are 90-92% percent water.
12. Naturally low in energy density, pumpkins are an excellent source of potassium, vitamin A and beta-carotene, the powerful antioxidant that gives orange vegetables and fruits their color. They also have more fiber than kale, more potassium than bananas, and are full of heart-healthy magnesium and iron.
13. Scientists believe that pumpkins originated in North America about 9000 years ago. The oldest pumpkin seeds have been found in Mexico and date back to somewhere between 7000-5550 B.C.E.



14. Pumpkins (along with other forms of squash) were a historically important food staple among Native Americans. They would grow the squash along river banks next to maize and beans, a planting technique that was called the “Three Sisters Method,” which allowed the three crops to sustain each other. Corn served as the trellis upon which the beans could climb; beans were nourished by the sunlight and kept the corn stalks stable on windy days, while also nourishing their soil; and pumpkins sheltered the corn’s shallow roots and prevented weeds from taking hold.
15. Pumpkins were used in pies during the colonial era of the United States, according to the Library of Congress. An early landowner in 1655 wrote that English colonists “like pumpkins very much and use them also in pies, and know how to make a beverage from them.” Pumpkin pies were being made in England at the time, but they usually consisted of layers of sliced — sometimes fried — pumpkin, according to the Library of Congress. By 1796, pumpkin pie had evolved to resemble today’s version.
16. The first recipe book written and published in America, “American Cookery” featured two recipes for “pompkin” pudding, which was baked in a pie crust. Instead of sliced pumpkin, the filling was made with stewed and strained pumpkin, eggs, sugar and cream or milk. The pies were flavored with ginger, mace, nutmeg and allspice.
17. In 1934 McCormick & Company introduced its pumpkin pie spice, just a few years after canned pumpkin first appeared on shelves. The company viewed the spice blend as a more convenient way for consumers to make a perfectly seasoned pie without buying individual jars of each spice needed to capture that perfect seasonal essence. McCormick’s Pumpkin Pie Spice is a combination of ground cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, and allspice and sulfiting agents.*
18. Starbucks first introduced the pumpkin spice latte in 2003.
19. The practice of carving Jack-O’-Lanterns was brought to America by Irish immigrants. In their homeland, the Irish used to carve Jack-O’-Lanterns out of potatoes or turnips, but upon arrival in America, they began to use pumpkins instead because they were far easier to carve. The tradition of the “Jack-O’-Lantern” stems from an Irish legend about a man named Stingy Jack who was a somewhat unpleasant character famous for playing tricks on people.
20. In Ukraine, “to give someone a pumpkin” is a traditional way of saying “no” to a marriage proposal. A “yes” is accompanied by a loaf of bread. Long ago, when a man came to ask for a girl’s hand, she would politely hand him a pumpkin, a symbolic but unmistakable way to turn him down. These days, the phrase is used more broadly to mean rejecting something or someone - not just in love!

***Copycat recipe for McCormick’s Pumpkin Pie Spice blend (without the sulfites)**

[Biting at the Bits - Homemade-pumpkin-pie-spice copycat recipe](#)

Ingredients

3 tablespoons ground cinnamon
1 tablespoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon nutmeg
¼ teaspoon allspice

Whisk together ground cinnamon, ground ginger, ground nutmeg, and ground allspice in a small bowl. Transfer pumpkin spice to an airtight container and store in a cool, dark place away from sunlight.



Gratitude for another successful Herb Fair!

To summarize the 52nd annual Herb Fair, I can only say, “Thank You!” It was an incredible show of flexibility, creativity, passion, generosity, and community support as we shared herbal knowledge and delight. Despite some logistical challenges with venue construction and parking limitations, we welcomed over 400 people to our event and sold more than \$17,000 in products – from jellies and teas to cocktail infusion kits, catnip pouches, and so much more. We had a great debrief session on Zoom before Thanksgiving and have great ideas for improving the event next year!

Mark your calendars now for **Saturday, November 7th, 2026 – the 53rd HSA-STU Herb Fair.** THANK YOU to all of the Committee Chairs, Volunteers, Guests, and Outreach Supporters who helped to make the event a success. The impact will be seen in the educational programs, garden workshops, monthly meetings, and garden grants organized by the South Texas Unit of the Herb Society of America. We appreciate your contributions and ideas – and I look forward to engaging with you all in the coming year!

Stephanie Calloway, Herb Fair Chair, HSA-STU Secretary

2025 Herbal Experience



Beryl knocked a fence down -
Our Herb Fair guests turned
the pieces into art!

Discount for STU Members !



Did you know...STU Members receive a 15% discount on Southwest Fertilizer purchases, including a wide assortment of organic gardening essentials, high-quality garden tools, lawn equipment, and bird seed & supplies. And someone will help carry your purchases to your car! HSA Membership card required for discount.

<https://www.southwestfertilizer.com/about>
5828 Bissonnet Houston, TX



Ways to make your Home SMELL like the Holidays!

- Simmer a pot of cinnamon and apples or make baked apples
- Place rosemary and/or sage in decorative bowls around the house
- Make scented candles using essential oils like pine, clove and orange
- Make and place around the house scented pomanders made from oranges, cloves and other spices
- Use a diffuser with essential oil blends like frankincense, myrrh, and balsam fir
- Bake holiday treats like gingerbread cookies, apple pie or other foods using spices like cinnamon, nutmeg, and allspice to conjure a holiday aroma
- Hang fresh greenery such as garlands or wreaths around your home
- Add potpourri to bowls with scents like cranberry, and peppermint.



Using Holiday SPICES in your Cooking!

- Add a teaspoon of nutmeg to your mashed potatoes
- Try mulling cider or wine with cloves, cinnamon sticks, orange slices, and star anise
- Sprinkle gingerbread spice mix on your favorite desserts, such as cheese cake or brownies
- Use allspice in savory dishes like chili or stew

Happy Holidays!

Compiled by Linda Alderman



The Herb Society of America
South Texas Unit
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Houston, TX 77265-6515



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

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

Whom Do I Contact?

2025-26 STU Officers

Chair: Angela Roth

Co-Vice Chairs: *Karen Cottingham*
Ro Jones

Secretary: *Stephanie Calloway*

Treasurer: *Maria Treviño*

Standing Committees

Day Meeting Chair: *Benée Curtis*

Membership: *Janice Freeman*

- Member Concerns: *Donna Wheeler*

Publications

- Newsletter: *Linda Alderman*
Janice Freeman
- Website: *Benée Curtis*
- Social Media: *Virginia Camerlo*

Herb Fair: *Stephanie Calloway*

Grants & Scholarships: *Lucinda Kontos*

Speakers Bureau: *Virginia Camerlo*