

# Herbs Make Scents



THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA  
VOLUME XLIV, NUMBER 6

SOUTH TEXAS UNIT  
JUNE 2021

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## June 2021 Calendar

All in-person **Evening Meetings** are cancelled until further notice!!!!

June 8, Tue. at 10:00 am

**Day Meeting** is at the Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion in Hermann Park (1500 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77004). The program, to be announced, will be presented by **Pam Harris**. Please wear your mask and **bring your lunch**. Drinks will be provided.

June 16, Wed. at 7:00 pm

**Pearls for the Pandemic: Zoom Meeting** - "*Josephine: The Empress Gardened*" presented by **Lesley Parness**, retired **Superintendent of Horticultural Education**, Morris County (New Jersey) Park Commission, and the author of **The Garden Historian** column for **The Gardener News Magazine**. See details on page 5.

June 10-12

The Herb Society of America (Virtual) Educational Conference (EdCon)

June 24, Thur. at 7:00 pm

Full Moon Ramble – (Members Only)

## July 2021 Calendar

July 21, Wed. at 7:00 pm

**Pearls for the Pandemic: Zoom Meeting** - "*We're Celebrating Valentine's Day in July! Join Us for Floral Snacks, Desserts and Drinks*" presented by **Bee**, **The Flower Chef**, creator of **Flora Cocina - Bringing Creative, Plant-based, Flower-forward Food to Your Table**.

July 23, Fri. at 7:00 pm

Full Moon Ramble – (Members Only)

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

## June Birth Flower -

**Rose**, (genus *Rosa*), genus of some 100 species of perennial shrubs in the rose family (Rosaceae). Most rose species are native to Asia, with smaller numbers being native to North America and a few to Europe and northwest Africa. (Excerpt from the *Encyclopedia Britanica*)



**Happy Birthday!**

Sara Diaz 6/11  
Tamara Gruber 6/22  
Mary Sacilowski 6/26  
Catherine Wampler 6/11



# *Herbs Make Scents*

## Chairman's Corner

June 2021

Greetings!

Here are a few highlights from our Annual Meeting:

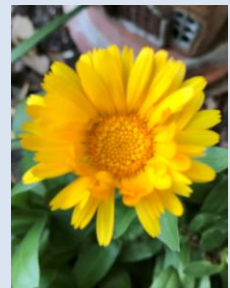
- We purchased a Cultivator Membership at Houston Botanic Garden for Unit use. This includes among other things, General Admission for ten per visit, 10% discount at The Garden Shop, and early registration for select Garden classes and events. We will let you know when the membership is active.
- Officers **Julie Fordes** and **Karen Cottingham** were re-elected to their offices and **Dena Yanowski** was elected Secretary. Thank you, **Mary Sacilowski** for your four years of service to our Unit as Secretary!
- We formalized the new chair position titled, Member Outreach Coordinator. **Donna Wheeler** has volunteered to serve as the first Member Outreach Coordinator.
- We approved honorarium funding for ten in-person meetings and 3-4 Zoom meetings in the next year.

Within the next couple of weeks, we will post the Annual Meeting Minutes and supporting documents and the Officer and Chair End-of-Year Reports on the Member Only portion of our website.

As we roll into summer, our programming will remain on Zoom for June and July. In August, we hope to have an in-person meeting at the Cherie Flores Pavilion for members only. We are in the planning stages for this meeting, so if you have something that you would like to see happen, contact **Julie Fordes** or **Karen Cottingham**.

That's it for now...

**Julie Fordes**  
Unit Chair





*Westbury Community Garden  
Volunteer Opportunity*



Photo provided by Julie Fordes

Julie Fordes

**This month, we will meet  
Tuesday evenings  
6:30 pm  
June 1, 8, 15 & 22  
12581 Dunlap,  
Houston, TX 77035**

**We will start each session in the garden, observing and working if needed. I plan to focus on lemon balm and holy basil this month.**

**June 1 – Lemon Balm: Culinary and Medicinal uses. I will share some recipes. Here is the link to Karen Cottingham’s wonderful article on lemon balm. I gave this link to the Westbury Gardeners, so we can have lots to talk about at our next WCG workday.**

**<http://nebula.wsimg.com/0889c8202ed0a68d948cf998481ff279?AccessKeyId=6F9F519569F203A87F03&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>**

**Lots of information here!**

**June 8 – We will make tea tonight. Bring your own mug or glass. We will certainly make lemon balm tea, and some others as well.**

**June 15 – Medicinal properties of Holy Basil (Tulsi). I will also have recipes to share.**

**June 22 – Comparing the four varieties of Holy Basil growing in the garden. Bring your mug again to sample holy basil tea.**

**COMFREY SALVE MAKING IS POSTPONED FOR A WHILE**

**If you are interested in having your very own comfrey plant, we have comfrey to spare! Let me know if you would like to give a new home to this wonderful, voracious plant!■**



**Comfrey**  
Photo provided by  
Karen Cottingham



## SUPPORT THE SOUTH TEXAS UNIT



You shop. Amazon gives.

An AmazonSmile account has been set up for the South Texas Unit. Be sure to sign up for [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) and select the South Texas unit as described below. Each quarter the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible items to our unit.

The shopping experience is the same as shopping through amazon.com with the added benefit the foundation will donate to our organization.

### Five Easy Steps to Support the South Texas Unit

1. Go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)
2. No account? Create one! Have an account? Sign in.
3. Select charitable organization. Found near the top of the [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) home page.
4. Type in Herb Society South Texas Unit and click Search. Once the name comes up hit Select.
5. Enjoy shopping!

Sunday, June 6, 2021 3-5 pm

### Sunday Concert at the Garden featuring

*Yelba and Latin Fire*

View the Houston Botanic Garden and enjoy the music!

Visit <https://hbg.org/events/sunday-concert-series-yelba-latin-fire-2021-06-06-15-00/>

**HOUSTON BOTANIC  
GARDEN**

**Did you know?**

Houston Botanic Garden is open daily 9 – 5 pm

May – August visit Twilight Tuesdays when the Gardens are open until 7 pm!



## Announcing Our June 16, 2021 Program “Josephine: The Empress Gardened” Presented by Lesley Parness

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82842562835>

<https://www.lesleyparness.com/>



**Empress Josephine - the creole “Rose of Martinique” – narrowly escaped the guillotine to become the great love of Napolean Bonaparte. While her husband was off on military campaigns, Josephine focused her energies on another passion – serious gardening. Her enthusiasm and (allowance, apparently) knew no bounds, as she filled a heated orangery with 300 pineapple plants and introduced 200 new plants to France! But her favorite flower was the rose. The French Navy, at war at the time, even searched foreign ships for any rose plants or seeds to add to her collection. By the time her roses were carefully documented by the artist and botanist Pierre-Joseph Redoute, it was the largest and most famous collection in the world. Join us on June 16 to learn more about this endlessly fascinating woman and her love for roses and gardening.**

*Herbs Make Scents June 2021*



## South Texas Unit Shout Out and Recognition!

### *Laura Mullen*

Laura Mullen, who joined the HSA-STU in 2020, was recently appointed to the Finance and Operations Committee of The Herb Society of America. Congratulations, Laura!

### *Nicole Buergers*

HSA-STU member Nicole Buergers was the featured beekeeper in **Emily Balter's** article "Houston is buzzing with local honey". The article, published in the Houston Chronicle Lifestyle Magazine, "The Page", outlines the life, habits and habitat of bees and honey production. Several beekeepers in the Houston metropolitan area are mentioned, but Nicole is the anchor expert and is quoted throughout the article. Fifteen photos by **Marie D. De Jesús**, Houston Chronicle / Staff photographer accompany the article.

[https://www.houstonchronicle.com/lifestyle/the-page/article/Houston-is-buzzing-with-local-honey-16139324.php?utm\\_campaign=CMS%20Sharing%20Tools%20\(Premium\)&utm\\_source=share-by-email&utm\\_medium=email](https://www.houstonchronicle.com/lifestyle/the-page/article/Houston-is-buzzing-with-local-honey-16139324.php?utm_campaign=CMS%20Sharing%20Tools%20(Premium)&utm_source=share-by-email&utm_medium=email)

### *South Texas Unit Officers*

**2021-2023**

*Julie Fordes, Chairperson*  
*Karen Cottingham, Vice Chair*  
*Dena Yanowski, Secretary*

**2020-2022**

*Maria Trevino, Treasurer*

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***(New) Chair Position***

*Member Outreach Coordinator,*  
*Donna Wheeler*

## HSA-STU Membership Dues Renewal Notice!

Maria Treviño, Treasurer

The Deadline for submitting your Membership Dues is August 1, 2021

### **For online Payment,**

Click this Link:

<https://hsa-south-texas-unit-248275.square.site/>

Under the word, "Dues", click on the Basil leaves picture and you will be directed to checkout.

There is a drop-down menu for the various membership categories.

OR

### **Mail a check to:**

South Texas Unit, HSA  
PO Box 6515,  
Houston Tx 77265

|                                 |                |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Regular Member</b>           | <b>\$67.50</b> |
| <b>Sustaining Member</b>        | <b>\$80.00</b> |
| <b>Joint Membership</b>         | <b>\$98.75</b> |
| <b>Affiliate or Life Member</b> | <b>\$12.50</b> |



**Karen Cottingham**  
Houston, TX

Member since 2011  
Board Member 2017  
Current Position:  
Board Member (Vice-Chair)



Responsible for Monthly Evening Programs, including selecting topics, engaging speakers, and publicizing each event; writing monthly Newsletter Articles; preparing material for MailChimp Reminders (**Janice Freeman** handles the technical aspects - thank you, Janice!); Herb Day Programming; Herb Fair Educational Demonstrations; and creation of the material for our Facebook page (thank you, **Benée Curtis** and **Cynthia Card** for your assistance). I have written articles for HSA national publications including Herbal Bytes and the HSA Fall Newsletter and will start writing for the HSA Blog this summer.

I have also written articles on behalf of the STU for The Southwest/ Village News newspaper and The Lazy Gardener and Friends Garden Newsletter. This June I will present a program "Herbs in the Headlines: Notable Women in the Plant Sciences" for the HSA Annual Meeting of Members & Educational Conference. Be sure to register!

Everywhere I go I sing the praises of the STU! I have given presentations on herbs at Bayou Bend Collection and Gardens, the Houston Museum of Natural Science, the Houston Botanic Garden, and the West University Public Library. One of my favorite activities is participating in the Colonial Days Educational Event at Poe Elementary School, where I have given hands-on programs on indigo dyeing and historical vinegar-based beverages for the fifth-graders. I am also looking forward to a new venture - teaching a class in "Growing Herbs for Use, Insight, and Delight" for Urban Harvest in October.

Part of this "Member Spotlight" assignment was to share a photo of myself and a photo of my garden. After making my selections, I was surprised to recognize how revealing they actually are! In my work life, I am precise and disciplined; in my private life, not so much! My garden is a haphazard crazy quilt of self-seeded as well as planted herbs in no particular order. It's a happy cacophony of colors and textures. Vegetables share space with herbs; sizes, shapes, and purpose are completely random, and even weeds are welcome. In this tiny section you can see arugula, basil, Mexican mint marigold, catnip, collards, hoja santa, onions, another basil, a Turkish herb from **Fatma Ozel**, fennel, and in the background, amaryllis and crinum lilies. Squash vines grow from the compost pile, and the trunk in the lower foreground is a papaya that appeared out of nowhere. A seed might have blown in on the wind, or perhaps was planted by a bird. It grew so tall that we harvested the fruits with an extendable tree trimmer!

It wouldn't be a complete garden without a resident cat, and I couldn't ask for a better companion than Sparky. She wandered in one day and decided to stay. Maybe it was the patch of catnip that made her feel at home.



Sparky and I are in our usual position under the magnolia tree. I think I spend more time sitting and observing in my garden than actually "working" - watching lizard acrobatics on the fennel, bees foraging in the borage, the changing of the seasons and the weather, and the life cycles of plants, insects, and butterflies.

The spiritual center of the garden is a magnificent ginkgo tree. Every autumn, when the leaves turn golden and fall like confetti, I search for rare heart-shaped ginkgo leaves like some people search for four-leaf clovers.

Do I have a favorite author? I love the nature poetry of Mary Oliver.

Do I have a favorite herb? It's always the one that is teaching me something new.

My "Garden Motto"? My garden is my classroom. ■



"It's a happy cacophony of colors and textures", Karen Cottingham



## BACK TO OUR ROOTS

*Julie Fordes*

Well, it's still raining here! When I finally get a chance to get out and see what's happening in the garden, I can barely remember the devastation of February's freeze! Things are green, lush and actually getting a bit overgrown! It's time to harvest those herbs that have produced so much bounty. Check the article on our website by **Susan Wood** if you have forgotten the harvesting and drying basics.

We harvested calendula and chamomile at the Westbury Garden this week. While we were working, we had a lovely talk with one of the Westbury Gardeners who was stressed out, and we sent her home with chamomile, calendula and comfrey to add to a relaxing bath. **Rose Wherry** met one of her neighbors who gardens at Westbury. We seem to be putting the community into Community Gardening!

Next month at Westbury, I would like to highlight lemon balm and holy basil. We will make lemon balm and holy basil tea at one of our sessions. I hope that you all can make it to the garden sometime soon.

I have papalo seeds to share. I will also have a dozen butterfly pea plants ready within the week. Contact me to get some. ■





## BOOK C O R N E R

If you have suggestions for books or other media members might like, submit your suggestions to Julie Fordes at [fordes.julie@gmail.com](mailto:fordes.julie@gmail.com)



The Herb Society of America has launched three Herbal Fiction Book Clubs that HSA members can join. Additional information is available by accessing the Welcome Members page on the HSA website.

- **1<sup>st</sup> Book Group** meets the second Tuesday of the month at, 2 pm EST - June 9 - *The Accidental Empress* (Sisi, #1) by **Allison Pataki**
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Book Group** meets 3rd Wednesdays of the month at 3pm EST
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Book Group** Meets 4th Wednesdays of the month at 7:30pm EST

Interested in books? How about writing for the Book Corner?  
Contact Julie Fordes to volunteer

## Have you registered?



For more information visit: [The Herb Society of America](http://www.herbsociety.org/grow/)  
www. [https://www.herbsociety.org/grow/](http://www.herbsociety.org/grow/)



## TEA BLENDS

Dry and Save These Herbs  
We will make our special tea blends to sell at  
our fundraising events

- Orange Peel
- Roselle (Hibiscus)
- Rosemary
- Lemon Balm    Lemongrass    Lemon Verbena
- Mexican Mint Marigold
- Oregano
- Holy Basil
- Spearmint and Peppermint
- Red-Stemmed Apple Mint
- Rose and Calendula Petals
- Chamomile Flowers

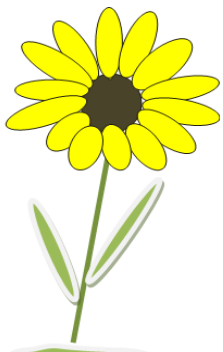
**Stevia – Recently added to the list**

<http://www.herbsociety-stu.org/harvesting--drying-and-storing-herbs.html>

*Welcome*

*South Texas Unit's*

*newest member*



*Nailah Mulla!*

Every Garden Needs a Protector  
Who's Keeping Watch in Yours?



Photo provided by Janice Freeman

The first Monarch Butterfly of spring,  
drying its wings after  
emerging from the chrysalis



## Herb of the Month: Green Tea



Photo Source: Morguefile.com

**Lindsey Pollock**

**Latin name:** *Camellia sinensis*

Green tea is harvested from the *Camellia sinensis* plant from which you can also create white, black and oolong tea. The tea plant grows well in parts of Texas (4-11 patio / 8-11 outdoors) and can make a beautiful hedge around your home. While the plant can become quite large reaching height/width of 10-15 ft in either direction, if you're harvesting tea, you'll want to keep it much shorter (around 3 – 4 ft) as you'll be plucking the new leaves for year tea each year. *Camellia sinensis* likes partial sun and does best in slightly acidic, sandier soil.

You can start your plant from seed or a clipping but note that you'll be waiting about 3 years before your plant will be ready to produce tea for you. If you'd like to brew a pot of tea more quickly, start with a more mature plant in your garden or patio pot. I found this link instructive in how to start and cultivate your own plants <https://www.wikihow.com/Grow-a-Tea-Plant>

Now that you're got your plant in order, what to do with it? As I mentioned earlier, the *Camellia sinensis* plant is the mother to numerous types of tea – green, white and oolong and even matcha green tea which was a surprise to me! What makes them different is not only when the leaves are harvested, but also the preparation of the leaves once picked. The link above also includes harvesting tips at the end of the post along with illustrations to help you step-by-step.

Matcha green tea has become very popular and has been heralded for its health benefits. For matcha green tea, the *Camellia sinensis* plants are shaded for the months before harvesting the leaves and is distinguished by grades:

- **Ceremonial grade** is a tea of a quality sufficient for its use in tea ceremonies and Buddhist temples. Usually ground into a powder by granite stone mills, it is expensive (\$100–140 for 100 g). Most people can't distinguish the difference between the grades, but it is important when specific uses are warranted. Flavors of the tea can vary from sweet to bitter with the most important characteristics being flavor, color, and texture. These must be considered as the making of koicha or "thick tea" is the form of tea that defines the sacred tea ceremony.
- **Premium grade** is made from young tea leaves from the top of the tea plant. Price is about \$50–80 for 100 g. This is your tea for daily consumption. The matcha is characterized by a fresh, subtle flavor, usually perfect for both new and everyday matcha drinkers.
- **Cooking/culinary grade** is the least expensive (\$15–40 for 100 g). Perfect for cooking, smoothies etc. It can be slightly bitter due to factors such as its production from leaves found lower on the plant, and the time of harvest, or the process. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matcha>



So why all the fuss about the health benefits of green tea? There are many sites on the internet extolling the health benefits of green tea.

Chinese and Indian healers have used green tea for centuries in remedies for everything from asthma, to inflammation, to diabetes, to weight loss, to cancer. In order to reap the optimal health benefits of green tea, it is recommended that a person drink 3 – 5 cups of green tea daily. Beware, however, as green tea does contain caffeine so if caffeine is an issue for you, try one cup first and see how you tolerate it! There are also commercially prepared decaffeinated green tea options for you. Remember that decaff does still contain trace amounts of caffeine so monitor your health and remember to drink plenty of water in addition to your tea of choice! Tannins are also present in green tea which can block the absorption of folic acid and iron. You may wish to consult your physician especially if you're pregnant or have issues with maintaining healthy levels of either of these nutrients.

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/how-much-green-tea-per-day>

Green tea can also be used for a host of other uses as its antioxidant properties are known to support overall oral health as well as provide soothing sunburn relief, hair rinse and skin toning. You can find some great DIY ideas at <https://www.femina.in/wellness/health/uses-of-green-tea-110936.html>

What's an herb without a good story to go along with it? Green tea folklore traces back to China as early as 2737 BC! The tales include wise men who had a leaf fall into their boiling water which became a delicious drink to the founder of Chan Buddhism who cut off his eyelids. The eyelids hit the ground and sprouted the roots of a wonderful tea plant. Another story centers around a farmer in about 1750, who was graced by an apparition at a run-down temple he was cleaning. The spirit instructed him to share the tea from a nearby cave with others. This he did by sharing the tea and cuttings with all his neighbors. The plant, known as the Iron Goddess of Mercy, still exists to this day and is considered a Chinese National Treasure!

Here are a few notable "superstitions"

Throwing used tea leaves on the fire is said to keep poverty away. Accidentally spilling tea leaves could bring good luck.

In Scotland it's considered bad luck to stir tea with anything other than a spoon – anything else is said to stir up trouble. Another variant discourages stirring at all for fear of stirring up bad luck or arguments with friends.

If you make your tea weaker than normal you are about to lose a friend. On the other hand If you make your tea stronger, you're about to gain one.

When at sea, English fishermen would never empty a pot of tea fully as this symbolized pouring away the fish they hoped to catch. Meanwhile their families back home wouldn't empty their teapots on the day the fisherman set sail for fear of causing the boat to sink.

If a man and a woman take turn turns pouring from the same teapot, they will have a baby together.



Bubbles at the edge of your teacup means romance and kisses while at the center means money. For more information and examples of superstitions, <https://adcochrane.wordpress.com/2019/01/09/tea-its-strange-history-and-curious-folklore/>

Of course there's always the matter of reading the tea leaves which is a much more complicated process and requires the skills of an expert. This practice exploded as the access to tea enveloped the world. "Reading the tea leaves" comes from tasseography, which is the practice of telling someone's fortune by "reading" a splotted or smeared substance.

<https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/57778/how-does-one-actually-read-tea-leaves>

While Britain is often thought of when it comes to tea time, the first teas were not available until Charles II married the Portuguese Catherine of Braganza, who introduced the concept of tea time to the court in 1662. British East India Trade Company began importing shortly thereafter and the rest is history! By 1750, tea had become the national drink in England. Today, the British drink 165 million cups of tea every day, but the largest per capita tea drinking nation is the Republic of Ireland, followed by Britain. Here in the states and especially Houston, access to and interest in tea is exploding from tea shops, to high tea services to bubble teas and more. Whatever you choose, know that the world of tea is filled with interesting history and uses to enrich your life and your garden. Enjoy! ■

It is the policy of The Herb Society of America not to advise or recommend herbs for medicinal or health use. This information is intended for educational purposes only and should not be considered as a recommendation or an endorsement of any particular medical or health treatment.

**Slow  
Down  
and ...**



Photo provided by Linda Alderman

**Savor  
the Day!**



## STAY-AT-HOME RECIPES



### STAY-AT-HOME RECIPES

June 2021

Carolyn Kosclskey

It's June for the second time since the pandemic, so different from a year ago. We can now more clearly see the much welcomed end of social distancing and mask wearing nearing along with CDC guidelines and advisories.\* Monday June 14 is Flag Day, established in 1916, a great opportunity to display Old Glory if you aren't already. To celebrate the day a suggested patriotic dish would be one using blueberries, strawberries and banana slices or other light color fruits such as pineapple or honeydew melons to represent the flag colors. Father's

Day follows on Sunday, June 20, and can be a special time celebrate a "dad" in your life with a meal prepared outdoors. Coincidentally Father's Day falls on the summer solstice, an annual astronomical phenomenon when the sun is at its farthest point north being the longest day of the year, the first day of summer in the Northern Hemisphere, and also the shortest night. So in the tradition of father's days past fire up the grill and consider kebobs of shrimp speared on a skewer with chunks of bell peppers, onions, mushrooms, pineapple and cherry tomatoes and toss on some ears of corn. Or if you're not up to grilling that day a rotisserie chicken makes for a good meal along with veggie and fruit sides.

### AVOCADO BLUEBERRY QUINOA SALAD

[www.ambitiouskitchen.com/avocado-blueberry-quinoa-salad](http://www.ambitiouskitchen.com/avocado-blueberry-quinoa-salad)

This *vegetarian* quinoa salad with a cilantro lime dressing is perfect for summer gatherings. Serves 4-6.

#### For the salad

- Quinoa (1 cup cooked in water, apple juice or chicken broth)
- 1 firm ripe avocado, sliced or diced
- 1 cup blueberries
- 1 cup sweet corn (preferably fresh off the cob)
- ½ cup finely diced red onion
- ½ cup feta
- ½ cup chopped pistachios, or nut of choice
- ½ cup diced cilantro

#### Cilantro Lime Dressing

- 1/3 cup packed cilantro leaves
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- ½ jalapeno, seeded (optional)
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- For garnishing cilantro, pistachios, feta and red onion



## Instructions

1. First, make your quinoa. Add liquid and quinoa to a medium pot and place over high heat; bring mixture to a boil, then cover, reduce heat to low and cook for exactly 15 minutes. After 15 minutes, remove pot from heat and fluff quinoa with a fork, then cover and allow quinoa to sit in the pot for 10 minutes.
2. While the quinoa is cooking, make your cilantro lime dressing by adding the ingredients to a blender: cilantro, olive oil, lime juice, jalapeño half and salt and pepper. Blend until smooth and set aside.
3. Once your quinoa is done, add it to a large bowl and stir in the blueberries, corn, red onion, feta, pistachios and cilantro adding avocados last.
4. Pour dressing over the quinoa salad and gently stir to combine. Garnish with extra cilantro, pistachios, feta and red onion if you'd like. Serve at room temp or cold. Salad will stay good for 3-5 days in the fridge.

**Recipe Notes:** Chicken or chickpeas may be added for an extra boost of protein. Salad may be stored in an airtight container in the fridge with or without the dressing for up to 4-5 days. The acidity from the lime juice will help the avocado stay fresh. Stored separately the dressing will stay good in a container in the fridge for up to one week.

## EAT A RAINBOW!

For all of us summer is theoretically here and the beginning of the season for many fresh vegetables, herbs and fruits from your own yard or a friend's, a local farmers market or your favorite grocery store. Of course the best of these will come from your own garden and should be harvested early in the day before warmed by the sun. In January U.S. News & World Reports released its annual assessment of the best of diet plans to help millions of Americans make diet-related New Year's resolutions and achieve their health goals. Again the Mediterranean Diet ranked No.1 in Best Overall Diet, Best Diets for Healthy Eating (tied), Easiest Diets to Follow, Best Diets for Diabetes (tied), Best Plant Based Diet and Best Heart-Healthy Diet (tied) <https://www.usnews.com/info/blogs/press-room/articles/2021-01-04/us-news-reveals-best-diet-rankings-for-2021>. The diet is about portion control, making good choices and eating more real good food, i.e. limiting red meat and avoiding processed and refined foods. Another part of it is sharing meals with other people and enjoying life. June would be a perfect time to try the Mediterranean Diet eating plan. Challenge yourself to have at least 3 colors of veggies on both your lunch and dinner plates. **EAT A RAINBOW!**

A popular seasonal fruit available in this area in June is blueberries. There are several blueberry farms north of Houston where you can go and pick organically grown, pesticide free fruit. Two recommended ones are Moorheads Blueberry Farm located between The Woodlands area I-45 North Freeway at Hwy. 242 and Kingwood Hwy. 59/69 (<https://www.moorheadsblueberryfarm.com/>). Oakview Blueberry Farm is located between Willis and Cleveland ([oakviewblueberryfarm.com/](http://oakviewblueberryfarm.com/)), about 20 miles east of Willis. Both of these farms will be opening after Memorial Day and each charge \$3.50 per pound. Heads-up restroom facilities not available at Oakview.

One of the most popular veggies from our area in June is the tomato. When they are in season and available, buy extras and freeze or can for next fall and winter.



## **SOUTHERN TOMATO PIE**

Tomato pie is a Southern dish primarily because The South is where so many wonderful tomatoes of many varieties are grown outdoors and available during the summer. This dish may be made in a 9" glass pie plate or in an 8" X 8" glass baking dish. The biggest challenge will be to prevent your piecrust from becoming soggy!

- 1 9" deep-dish refrigerated pie crust, or homemade
- 3-4 large tomatoes, use red, yellow and green if available
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or to taste
- ½ cup yellow or white onion chopped and caramelized
- 1-2 cloves chopped garlic, caramelize with onions, optional
- ¼ -½ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ package ranch dressing or dip mix
- 3-4 green onions, chopped
- ¼ cup fresh basil leaves, chiffonaded
- 1 cup shredded Parmesan cheese, divided
- 1 tsp. hot sauce, optional
- ½ cup bacon, cooked and crumbled, optional
- Sliced olives, optional

Spray pie dish and pre-bake pie crust per directions and allow to cool. Arrange tomatoes in a single layer on a lightly greased wire rack set on a large baking sheet. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake in preheated oven until wilted and slightly dried out, 40 to 45 minutes. Cool completely, about 1 hour. Another method is to place sliced tomatoes in a colander over a pan and allow to drain from 15 minutes to an hour. Tomatoes may also be blotted between paper towels.

In a bowl mix mayonnaise, ranch dressing, chopped basil, green onion, caramelized onion, caramelized garlic and ¾ cup of Parmesan cheese until blended. When the pie crust and baked tomatoes have cooled, sprinkle ¼ cup Parmesan cheese on bottom of crust and arrange tomatoes over cheese. Spread the remaining mayonnaise mixture over tomatoes covering all to edges of crust. Bake at 350° from 35 to 40 minutes. Allow to cool about 10 minutes before slicing. ■





## HOMEMADE SUGAR-FREE KETCHUP

[soapdelinews.com/2021/05/sugar-free-homemade-ketchup-recipe.html](http://soapdelinews.com/2021/05/sugar-free-homemade-ketchup-recipe.html)

This healthy homemade keto and low carb friendly condiment is naturally sweetened and made using fresh tomatoes. The challenge will be to simmer off as much liquid as possible to make it thick without adding thickeners. Total time to make: about 40 minutes. Makes 2 cups.

### Ingredients

2 lb. ripe tomatoes cored and chopped (no need to peel)  
1 medium yellow onion, peeled and diced  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
1/3 cup granulated monk fruit sweetener  
1/4 cup red wine vinegar  
1/2 teaspoon sea salt, fine ground  
1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika powder  
For more heat add chopped peppers to your taste

### Instructions

Heat a saucepan over medium heat and drizzle olive oil in the pan. Add chopped garlic or use a garlic press to make minced garlic. Heat while stirring until fragrant. Chop the onion and add it to the saucepan. Stir while heating until the onion is translucent. Chop tomatoes and add them to the saucepan with the garlic and onion. Simmer for 30 minutes or until it has reduced by half. If it's too watery, stir and keep heating until it's the desired consistency. It will thicken slightly as it cools. Use a stick blender to blend until smooth, or let cool and use a food processor or blender. Add more salt as needed.

Remove from heat and let the ketchup cool slightly. Pour into an airtight jar and store in the fridge for up to three weeks or in the freezer up to six months. Balsamic vinegar can also be substituted for the red wine vinegar.

Note: Other ingredients may be added to this recipe for added flavor or to thicken but may add extra carbs.

**Independence Day is on Sunday, July 4th and is the third of four patriotic holidays ending with Labor Day on September 6. "Remembered family recipes" for this holiday will be featured with various members invited to tell how they celebrated this fun holiday from years past.**

*\*The latest CDC information for vaccinated and unvaccinated people may be found here:*  
[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/participate-in-activities.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/participate-in-activities.html)



# When You Love Herbs...

Karen Cottingham

When you love herbs and want to share your knowledge and enthusiasm with others, there's always a way - even if you don't have an "official" garden to nurture and use for an outdoor classroom. Members of the South Texas Unit have had to be creative and persistent since the Fragrant Garden they had tended for decades in Hermann Park was replaced by other garden features during the Park renovation. That determination has paid off, as opportunities to share our love of herbs have been popping up all over.

When **Julie Fordes**, our Unit Chair, decided to share a garden plot at Westbury Community Garden, she had no idea what vigorous seeds for growth she was planting! Her initial plan was fairly modest - to grow herbs for her own enjoyment and for Unit projects. But she soon saw a wonderful opportunity to develop a shared-access plot into an herb garden for the benefit of all. Now, while Julie and STU member-volunteers keep the gardens neat and tidy, other Westbury gardeners wander by to chat and see what's new in the herb garden. New friends are made and tips and plants are exchanged. All of the Westbury gardeners are encouraged to harvest herbs for their own use, and there's always someone who can answer herbal questions.

Organized events have included a popular hands-on demonstration of herbal teas made from freshly harvested herbs, and a comfrey leaf giveaway. Fellow gardeners were invited to stop by to chat with STU members and to harvest comfrey leaves from our thriving clump. Each gardener was given printed instructions for drying the leaves at home and making their own comfrey salve. And Julie is just getting started! There's even a covered pavilion for demonstrations.

All HSA-STU members are welcome to join the fun. Experienced gardeners can share their knowledge and enthusiasm, and it's a great place for beginners to learn basic gardening skills. Don't know what to plant or how to use what you have? You'll get plenty of help and advice, and you might even go home with a few plants. The last time I visited I came home with a holy basil and two comfrees that were growing in the middle of the walking path - all are now settled in my own garden and are thriving.

Julie's next Community Garden Herbal Outreach will feature lemon balm and tulsi. Don't miss the fun! Check the Westbury Community Garden section on page 3 and watch your emails for further information.

In April, the HSA-STU was invited to participate in "**Planting Palooza - 30 days of Planting**", a community-wide program sponsored by the city of Bellaire to help residents coax the city's freeze-damaged green spaces back to health. "Planting Palooza" provided residents with all the information and encouragement needed to make their surroundings a little greener. Several STU members who live in Bellaire showcased their recovering herb gardens in an inspiring, instructive video that they produced themselves.

The video, featuring the herb gardens of **Deborah Lancaster, Beth Murphy, Lucinda Kontos, and Susan Wood** can be viewed on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Bellaire.PARD/posts/4166651110063556>. You must have a Facebook account (or a friend with one!) to see the video. It's an excellent example of how our STU members have supported the gardening community while maintaining COVID precautions.



# Herbs Make Scents

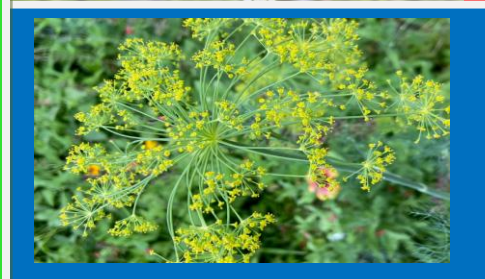
June 2021

Special thanks go to **Lucinda Kontos** for organizing the activity and **Deborah Lancaster** (along with Julie's wonderful husband, **George Fordes**) for creating the video.

HSA-STU members also spent a recent Saturday assisting with the preparation and planting of herb gardens at Garden Oaks Montessori. The school is designated as a Magnet with Environmental Sciences, and we are hopeful that our initial overture can blossom into a flourishing relationship. Thanks to our new member **Lindsey Pollack** who facilitated the volunteer activity, and gardening volunteers **Donna Yanowski, Catherine Wampler, Janice Dana, Julie Fordes, Debbie Lancaster, and Dena Yanowski.**

We're always looking for ways to help our community grow "from the ground up". What other "outdoor classrooms" are waiting to be discovered? ■

Debbie Lancaster's herb garden and the WBG provided by Debbie Lancaster, Julie Fordes and Karen Cottingham



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.

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[www.herbsociety-stu.org](http://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.

