

Herbs Make Scents



THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
VOLUME XLIII, NUMBER 7

SOUTH TEXAS UNIT
AUGUST 2020

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Aug 2020 Calendar

Day and Evening Meetings are not scheduled for August

Aug. 19, Wed. at 7:00pm

Pearls for the Pandemic – *Beat the Heat with Herbal Beverages.* See information on page 3 regarding our new Zoom educational program.

Sept 2020 Calendar

Day and Evening Meetings are cancelled until further notice.

Newsletter deadline: the 25th of every month
(September editor Linda Alderman)

Happy Birthday!

Member Concerns

8/05 – Rose Wherry

8/12 – Carolyn Kosclskey



Elayne Kouzounis:
Daughter Katherine's illness

PEARLS FOR THE PANDEMIC

~ SHARE YOUR PEARLS OF HERBAL WISDOM ~

*Join us on Zoom for
A Care and Share For Herbal Enthusiasts*

EPISODE ONE ~ AUGUST 19 ~ 7:00 PM
“BEAT THE HEAT WITH HERBAL BEVERAGES”



Chairman's Corner

We had a very productive Board Meeting this month. Here's a quick recap of what was discussed.

We have no scheduled meetings in August. It looks very likely that we will not be able to meet in person at all this fall. Despite these setbacks, our unit's mission remains the same. It is important to continue to provide our members and the general public a platform for discovering the use and delight of herbs. After these first few languid months of waiting for Covid to just go away, we now understand that we need to start planning for the future.

Our Program Chair, **Karen Cottingham**, has developed an outstanding original online series of herbal topics called "**Pearls for the Pandemic**". This program is open to both members and the general public. We have a great introduction and explanation of how it will work in this month's issue. We know that online programming does not meet everyone's needs. Hang in there, people! When the weather becomes cooler, field trips with social-distancing will become possible. I think the Houston Botanic Garden would be lovely in October! Of course, we are open to ideas on places to visit and look forward to hearing from you if you have an idea.

The Membership team is cooking up a way to reach out to our members, especially those who can't get out much. I don't want to spoil the surprise, just to say that if you would like to volunteer for some baking, driving or card making call Julie Fordes.

The Board has decided not to publish a new Directory this fall. All our current members are in the 2019-2020 Member's Directory, programming will be advertised online, and we will save the expense of publishing a new issue. Any member who needs a copy of the 2019-2020 Directory, please let us know.

Approximately half of our members have paid their dues! **Dena Yanowski** will individually contact members who have not paid dues yet. We would like to have most of our dues turned in before the August 31 deadline. If you hear from Dena, please take the opportunity to hop on our website and pay your dues. You can always mail a check to Maria Trevino's home, if you choose not to pay online.

We received two applications for the Madalene Hill Scholarship. Neither applicant met our current guidelines to receive a scholarship. However, one of the applicants is an outstanding candidate in all ways - except for being a graduate student, which our current guidelines do not permit.

With the Board's direction, the Scholarship Committee is putting together new guidelines that reflect the changes in what colleges and universities now call plant-majors. We are also considering extending the opportunity to graduate students if no qualified undergraduate student applies. We may even want to extend our guidelines to freshmen and sophomores attending a junior college. We will meet again as a board to review their recommendations, and then prepare a proposal to be voted on by the general membership. I am hoping to schedule a Members Business Meeting in the next couple of months.

Stay safe,
Julie Fordes
Unit Chair





DOES YOUR SOCIALLY DISTANCED LIFE NEED SOME SPICING UP?
TUNE IN, KEEP IN TOUCH, AND SHARE YOUR PEARLS OF HERBAL
WISDOM

ANNOUNCING OUR NEW VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING
“PEARLS FOR THE PANDEMIC”

Karen Cottingham



JOIN YOUR HSA-STU FRIENDS ON ZOOM FOR A
CARE AND SHARE SERIES
FOR HERBAL ENTHUSIASTS

Does the pandemic have you feeling like a wilted herb? Don't let it steal your joy!



Herbs Make Scents

August 2020

We may be in the midst of a pandemic, but there is still wonder in the world (or at least in our own back yards!). And even though we are “socially distanced,” we can absolutely help each other make each day special. How? By sharing our love of herbs.

Just think of how the most ordinary herbs bring a smile to our faces and a song in our hearts - from the uplifting fragrance of lemon verbena as we stroll through our herb gardens to the surprise and delight of a creatively-seasoned meal.

Herbal enthusiasts have a unique advantage during this pandemic, since we know how to find joy in the “ordinary” herbs we grow, use, and enjoy daily. We know that ordinary herbs are extraordinary. We also know that using herbs creatively can cultivate a sense of optimism and abundance - even in this time of uncertainty.



Realistically, our usual meetings and gatherings will probably be on “pandemic pause” for the rest of the year. But don’t worry - there’s opportunity in every crisis! Our pandemic precautions have given us a completely unexpected, but “golden” opportunity to develop a different, more informal type of educational programming - one that emphasizes member “Caring and Sharing.” We have adapted, adjusted, and are ready to plow ahead “virtually.”

Every two weeks we plan to offer an hour-long virtual “**Care & Share**” get-together. This biweekly event will be a relaxed and participatory forum for members and guests to share their personal “**Pearls of Herbal Wisdom.**” A general topic for each episode will be selected in advance and announced in the Newsletter and via Mailchimp, along with some light educational and inspirational material. Participants will be encouraged to explore the selected topic on their own and share their experiences, both good and bad (but hopefully good!), with the group. If people don’t have time to experiment but want to tune in anyway to learn from others and enjoy



the forum, they are more than welcome. A “star” in one episode might be an “extra” in the next. It’s all good.

The best way to describe “Pearls for the Pandemic” would be to imagine an herbal mentorship program where all participants are both mentors and students. We’ll encourage each other to explore, experiment, and find new ways to enjoy herbs - and then inspire others by sharing.

The **first episode, “Beat the Heat with Herbal Beverage,”** will debut **August 19**. Please see the article that follows for some basic information about cooling and refreshing herbs and suggestions for using them creatively in beverages. This will get our “Herbal Pearl” participants started so they can experiment and improvise on this general theme for the next two weeks. We will all share our herbal experiences when we get together on Zoom.

Episode #2 will be **“What Do I Do with this Watermelon?”** Again, we’ll provide introductory material (but not the watermelon!) and herbal suggestions. “Herbal Pearl” participants will be encouraged to sprinkle a little cayenne pepper or herbal salt on the standard wedge, make a spicy gazpacho, prepare a mint and watermelon salad, or even go all out with spiced watermelon pickles or jam!

We have selected Zoom for this new programming format, despite some of its limitations, since many of our members are already familiar with it.

If you need assistance or encouragement with technical matters, **ZoomMaster Julie Fordes** can walk you through the process of setting up and connecting with Zoom. Don’t worry if your computer skills are a bit underdeveloped. Julie will get you up to speed with a Zoom tutorial - just contact her at fordes.julie@gmail.com

Karen Cottingham will serve as **“Herbal Pearl,”** the Host/Moderator of each episode. Contact Karen at karen.redbrick@gmail.com if you would like to suggest topics for future episodes. The schedule for the rest of the year is still being developed and will appear in the September Newsletter.

These programs will be simple and accessible but bursting with fresh ideas for adding a little herbal joy to our daily lives. Now, more than ever, we need to feel connected and cared for.

We’ll “see” you on **August 19** for **“Beat the Heat with Herbal Beverages”** and can’t wait to hear all about your herbal adventures!





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

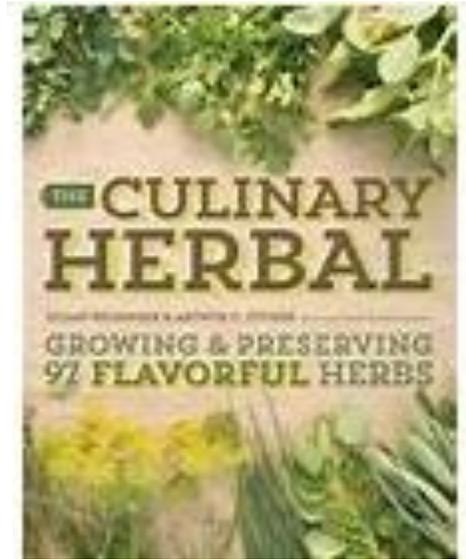


Linda Alderman
recommends

The Culinary Herbal

By

Susan Belsinger
&
Arthur O. Tucker



When it comes to having extensive knowledge and years of experience with growing, and using herbs, Belsinger and Tucker are an incredible duo! The book includes a description of 97 culinary herbs, with an explanation about growing, cooking and preserving them! It's an entertaining reference book, and the first one I reach for when it comes to culinary herbs!

Herb Fair Update from Donna Wheeler

The decision to proceed or cancel the Herb Fair will be made on or before September 1st.

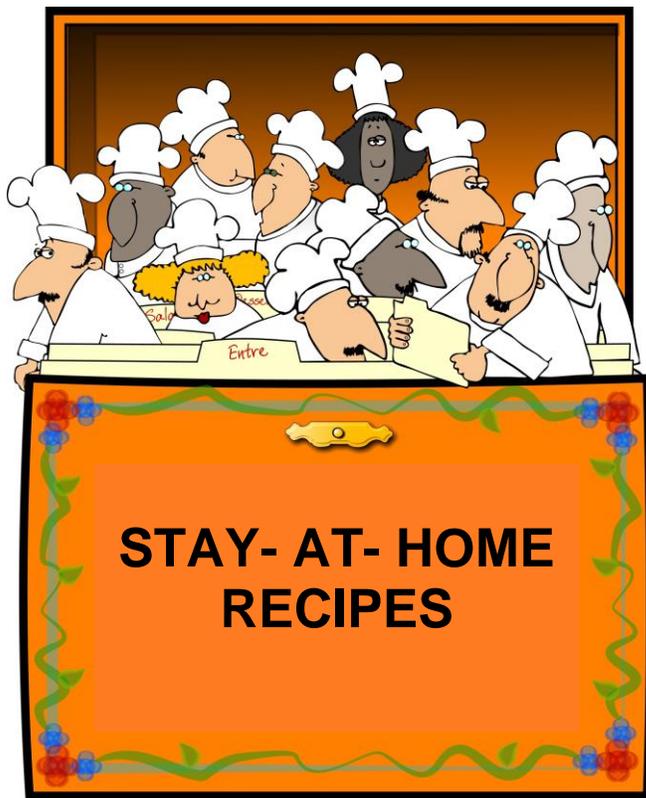
Many thanks go to all of the contributors for their event planning and preparation.

Even though Herb Fair is “up in the air”, please continue to harvest, dry and store your herbal bounty. When we decide what will happen with Herb Fair, we will know what to do with the materials we have gathered so far. Stay tuned.



Lemon Balm
Peppermint
Spearmint
Lemon Verbena
Orange Peel
Lemongrass
Holy Basil

Rose Petals
Oregano
Rosemary
Roselle (Hibiscus)
Red-stemmed Apple
Mint
Calendula Petals



Welcome to the new “Stay-At-Home Recipe” section, a continuation from the July HSA-STU newsletter “Stay-At-Home Recipes.” Member participation is encouraged by sending in your next month recipes to the *Recipe Lady*, at gridglitter@gmail.com . Since we all are, for the most part, staying at home these days and not dining out, most of us are preparing home meals daily and feel the challenge of coming up with new menu items. If you’re like most of us, we’ve never cooked so many meals, but re-think that in terms of not only does everyone have to eat, but everyone enjoys eating. In fact, on some days a meal may be the highlight of the day! Add to this the relentless hot and humid south Texas weather now upon us, after all it is now August, that several months back convinced most home cooks to abandon their ovens and opt for lighter meals cooked on the stove top, in their electric pressure cooker, in the microwave, in the toaster oven, on the grill—anywhere but in the hot oven. This month’s recipe addresses all of these concerns in that it’s a dish not only simple to make, but only requires using the stove top. It’s a refreshing vegetarian dish for these uncomfortably hot days as well as a very healthy dish. A “no-recipe recipe” basically gives you all of the ingredients and allows you adjust it to your liking. Perfect for the times we’re in!

NO-RECIPE RECIPE QUINOA SALAD

From the recipes of Carolyn Kosclskey

1 cup quinoa, rinsed well in a fine mesh strainer
 ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
 2 tablespoons or more fresh lemon juice
 1 garlic clove, minced
 ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
 Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
 1 large cucumber, peeled and cut into ¼-inch pieces
 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
 2/3 cup or more flat-leaf parsley, chopped

½ cup or more mint leaves and tender tops, chopped
 2 green onions (or more or less), white and green parts chopped

Other additions might include. . .

Feta crumbles
 Avocado, diced
 Blueberries, handful
 Sautéed corn kernels

In a medium sauce pan add 2 cups water, salt, and stir in rinsed quinoa. If time permits allow the quinoa soak for an hour or so before cooking. Bring water to a boil over high heat then reduce to low and cover. Simmer according to package directions, about 15-20 minutes, until quinoa is tender and the little tails are visible. Remove from heat and let stand covered for about 5 minutes and fluff with fork. Set aside to cool.

In a small bowl whisk together the lemon juice, garlic and olive oil and season to taste.

Transfer quinoa to a large bowl and mix in ¼ cup dressing. Cover and chill mixture and reserve dressing. This part may be done the day before.

When ready to serve remove bowl of quinoa from refrigerator and mix in chopped cucumber, cherry tomatoes, parsley and mint. Add remaining dressing and re-season with salt and pepper and brighten with more lemon juice.

Dish may be served as a mid-day meal or as an evening meal accompanied with store bought roasted chicken pieces. Bon appetite!



Call Out!
Respond by
September
1st

What is *Mail Chimp*?

Mail Chimp is software which allows user to create and manage mailing lists, newsletters, and more.

How is it used by HSA-STU?

In 2019 several HSA-STU members began using *Mail Chimp* to establish a single list of member and guest contact information. The goal was accomplished through the use of the *Mail Chimp* database.

By using this software, we were also able to reduce mailing costs, utilize an electronic tool to communicate and maintain our relationships with other herb loving contacts. Our announcements and newsletter is distributed using *Mail Chimp*.

Who provides *Mail Chimp* messages to our herb unit?

HSA-STU *Mail Chimp* users have been Benée Curtis, Janice Stuff, Janice Freeman, Julie Fordes and Dena Yanowski.

What is new?

We currently need a volunteer HSA-STU member to learn to use *Mail Chimp* and serve as back-up to ensure our future messages are disseminated to members and guests. Are you a volunteer, or a *Mail Chimper*? Are you ready to give the “high-five”? If so contact Janice Freeman by **September 1**. Instruction and practice will be provided.

Contact-

Janice Freeman:

jkfreemanhoustu@outlook.com or

Julie Fordes: fordes.julie@gmail.com

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



The Frog Prince in his Kingdom

(Photo courtesy of Karen Cottingham)





HSA-STU Membership Dues are Overdue!

Maria Treviño, Treasurer

Contact Dena Yanowski to be certain you have remitted your dues?

For online Payment,

Click this Link:

<https://squareup.com/store/hsa-south-texas-unit/>

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

Regular Member	\$67.50
Sustaining Member	\$80.00
Joint Membership	\$98.75
Affiliate or Life Member	\$12.50

SLOW DOWN AND SAVOR EACH DAY



(Photo courtesy of Catherine O'Brien)

“Adopt the pace of nature: her secret is patience.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson



BEAT THE HEAT WITH COOLING HERBAL BEVERAGES

Karen Cottingham

What are your tricks for keeping cool and hydrated in hot and humid Houston? Flavored waters and brightly colored sports drinks from the grocery store? Or healthy, homemade, herbal beverages full of flavor, nutrition, and anti-oxidants?



Cooling herbs include the traditional mint, but surprisingly, “hot” chili peppers are cooling, too!

If you’re not sure how to create an herbal thirst-quencher, or want to expand your skills, Episode #1 of our new virtual programming series, “**Pearls for the Pandemic,**” is for you! “**Beat the Heat with Herbal Beverages**” will be our first informal “Care and Share” for herbal enthusiasts. Join us in exploring herbal refreshments and keep cool, hydrated, and full of energy.



This article will give you some basic information about refreshing herbs and other ingredients that make a beverage particularly cooling. Look for the colored boxes for a quick explanation of the science - even if you think you don't like science! The more you understand, the more you will appreciate the versatility of herbs. There will also be a few recipes to give you some basic techniques and suggested combinations for combining fruits and herbs. Don't stop there, though. Get creative! Compose original beverages according to your own taste, your own herb garden and pantry, and your own imagination. We will all get together on Zoom to share our experiences when "Pearls for the Pandemic" debuts August 19 at 7pm.

Let's start with the simplest herbal beverage, an herbal essence water. Select your herbs and, if possible, harvest them between 10am and 2pm, when their essential-oil content is at its peak. Place about two handfuls of your herb (or herbs) in a quart jar and fill with warm water. You can solar-infuse it for about four hours, steep it a bit longer at room temperature, or infuse the liquid overnight in the refrigerator. Strain it if you wish, or decant the flavored water directly from the bottle.



Such a lovely selection of herbal and floral infusions for hot summer days

Almost any aromatic herb will make a delicious infused water. Mint is probably the favorite, but other herbs to consider include tulsi, fennel, lemon balm, leaf celery, parsley, anise hyssop, pineapple sage, lemon verbena, rosemary, and Mexican mint marigold. You can even throw in a few leaves from a citrus tree. And don't limit yourself to what you have in your herb garden - why not try an infusion of pine needles or fig leaves for something different?

Since the herbal infusion is not heated, this method is ideal for fragile herbs such as chervil and the delicate flowers of rose, borage, or butterfly pea flower. I'm looking forward to foraging goldenrod and sumac in the fall to make jewel-like golden and crimson infusions. Next spring, I'm going to experiment with redbud flowers, which are said to be tart and full of Vitamin C.

But mint is the universal favorite, starring in the summer beverages of hot climates all over the world. The mint julep, for example, is the signature Bourbon drink for sultry southern afternoons on the veranda. This



classic cocktail was created in the southern United States during the 18th century and is still a Kentucky Derby favorite. The traditional Iranian cooler, *sekanjabin*, is a vinegar and mint syrup enjoyed in beverages since the tenth century. See <https://www.emilyhan.com/mint-sekanjabin/> for instructions if you would like to make your own *sekanjabin*.



Sekanjabin, a sweet-and-slightly-sour mint drink from ancient Persia.

What is it about mint that makes it so popular for cooling drinks? Why do we experience it as so “refreshing”? It actually has to do with its high concentration of **menthol** and a strange chemical interaction between menthol and our nervous system.

It is essential that our bodies stay within a very narrow range of temperatures for proper function and even life itself. To help accomplish this, we are equipped with vast numbers of temperature receptors - mainly on our skin, but in other organs as well. Cold receptors have the important job of notifying our brain when there has been a drop in temperature. Strangely, the particular chemical structure of menthol also causes activation of these cold receptors. Think of the cool sensation we experience when peppermint or spearmint is eaten, inhaled as an essential oil, or applied to the skin in a cream. Our temperature does not *actually* drop, but of the illusion of cooling is convincing and refreshing. The highest concentrations of menthol are found in the mints, but significant amounts are also present in rose geranium, tarragon, catnip, basil, juniper berries, and the petals of sunflowers.

Creating healthy summer beverages is a perfect opportunity to showcase the bounty of summer fruits. Fruits not only contribute flavor, aroma, and color, but add valuable nutrients and a wide spectrum of antioxidants. And for those watching their sugar intake, a combination of herbal water and fruit gives the satisfaction of fruit juice without all of the sugar.



Simply add your desired fruit, either gently muddled or sliced or cubed, along with your herbs at the beginning of the infusion. Or if time is limited, you can always make an *aqua fresca* by combining fruit, water, and flavorings in a blender. See <https://www.epicurious.com/expert-advice/how-to-make-aqua-fresca-article> and <http://www.botanicalartspress.com/blog/2015/6/25/aqua-frescas-refreshing-beverages-of-the-season> for easy-to-follow instructions.



Colorful array of herbal and fruit *aqua frescas*

There are so many flavorful combinations to try, but here are just a few:

- Cucumber, orange scented thyme and tangerines (yes, botanically speaking, cucumber is a fruit!)
- Blueberries and lemon verbena or with ginger, mint and orange slices
- Peaches and lemon balm
- Blackberries and sage
- Papaya and pineapple sage
- Watermelon and cayenne pepper (more on that later)
- Pineapple and vanilla
- Pomegranate, ginger, and lime
- Black cherry and lemon thyme
- Nectarine and basil (try tulsi, if you have it) or fennel
- Apple, ginger and lemon grass
- Any fruit with a splash of rose water or orange blossom water



This tempting recipe from [Green Kitchen Stories](#) should get your tastebuds spinning:



Passion Fruit Summer Drink
1/2 cup mint leaves
2 limes, cut into 1 cm pieces
10 cm fresh ginger (cut into thin sticks)
8 passion fruits
4 oranges, juiced
1 cup sparkling soda

Muddle mint leaves, the lime pieces and half of the ginger sticks in a bowl, then pour it into a pitcher. Be careful not to over-muddle the mint or its flavor will get bitter and harsh. A few light bashes with a wooden spoon should do. Cut the passion fruit in half and scoop out the flesh into the pitcher. Add juice from the oranges and ice cubes and stir around. Top it with sparkling soda, a couple of ginger sticks and a mint leaf and serve.

It's time for a bit more science! Notice that the recipe specifies "sparkling" soda rather than still, or non-carbonated water. What is it about carbonated beverages that make them so popular? How is it possible that the sale of carbonated drinks generates a mind-boggling \$350 billion annual revenue just in the United States? What's all the fuss about fizz?

Like menthol, the carbon dioxide present in carbonated beverages such as mineral waters, seltzer, sodas, and beer seems to activate the cold receptors in the mouth. Messages incorrectly sent to the brain signal that relief from heat is occurring, leading to quenching of the thirst and the "sensation" of cooling. More importantly, though, as carbon dioxide passes directly into the tissues of the mouth, it forms carbonic acid, which is perceived as "biting" or mildly irritating by pain receptors. This sensation of pain is actually the body's main response to carbonation. It hints at something dangerous, even though there is no actual tissue damage occurring. Scientists don't fully understand why so many people seek out carbonated beverages, but they think that this "danger signal" gives us a non-threatening little thrill - the same reason why many people enjoy spicy food. Also, drinking carbonated water with all its pops and bubbles is a much more stimulating and pleasurable experience than drinking plain water could ever be.



In view of the astonishing financial success of the carbonated beverages industry, it seems certain that “seltzer scientists” will continue to look for insights into the connection between carbonation and human psychology!

If you want to experiment with other bubbly beverages, try a splash of kombucha and add some healthy probiotics along with the thrill of the fizz! If you have never made the fermented pineapple drink called *tepache*, this is a great time to try, especially if you are trying to practice “no-waste” cooking. See <https://www.thespruceeats.com/pineapple-tepache-recipe-4078751> for the easy instructions.



Tepache - sweet and fizzy, with the lush, tropical taste of pineapple

I can imagine *tepache* paired with pungent herbs with a bit of heat such as chili peppers or ginger, although cinnamon is the traditional *tepache* flavoring.

In addition to these fairly simple herbal and fruit infusions, many people like to use sweetened, concentrated herbal syrups for summertime coolers. These simple herbal syrups can be used in any variety of beverages that benefit from sweetening, including many of the trendiest cocktails, teas, and cooling summer drinks. Only a splash is needed for a vibrant burst of herbal flavor.



Rosemary simple syrup in progress and ready for use. Dilute with sparkling water for a refreshing drink.



Since this technique involves heating, it is ideal for woody or fibrous herbs such as rosemary, ginger, scented geranium, lavender, ginger, and lemongrass that require exposure to very hot water to release their oils and nutrients. And since sugar is a good preservative, a simple syrup can be stored for at least a few weeks in the refrigerator. See *How to Make Herb Infused Simple Syrups* at <https://toriavey.com/toriskitchen/infused-simple-syrups/> for complete instructions. This would also be the best technique to use if you have blackberries, elderberries, or currants and want to make a vibrant anti-oxidant rich syrup.

You might want to compare the flavors of mint, lemon balm, and tulsi waters prepared by the cold method versus the hot infusion technique, and see which method you prefer. There is no one "right" way.

Herbal honeys would be another great way to introduce a bit of herbal sweetness into summer drinks, and are easy to prepare. See <https://theherbalacademy.com/herbal-honey-recipes-for-kids>.



Absolutely gorgeous herbal honeys - like ancient herbs in amber

Other liquids to consider are green or black teas, especially fruit-flavored blends, coconut water, your favorite herbal tea (chamomile in particular seems to keep the mouth moisturized), aloe vera juice, or that quintessential summertime thirst-quencher - lemonade.

Lemonade...it conjures up images of lazy summer afternoons in the porch swing, farmers soothing their dusty throats at harvest time, and children serving customers at their lemonade stands. Despite its simplicity, consisting of but three ingredients - water, lemon juice, and sugar - lemonade is universally satisfying. Have you ever wondered why? It's time for a little more science.



There are 5 categories of taste sensation in humans: sour, sweet, umami, bitter, and salty. Each sensation is recognized by specialized cells in the mouth. Sour flavors arise from a variety of acids present in foods, including citric, tannic, and ascorbic (vitamin C) acids. Acids, of course, are potentially dangerous to human tissue and function, especially in high concentrations. When these food acids are dissolved in the mouth, the hydrogen ions released interact with the “sour taste receptors” and signal possible danger to the nervous system. This results in an immediate “all hands on deck” production and release of saliva into the mouth. In a nutshell, the response of the human body to sour food is to produce more saliva, which dilutes the acid and averts the danger. In the process, the increased saliva wets the dry mouth of dehydration and quenches the thirst. Citrus fruits like lemons and limes contain a large amount of acid, even when fully ripe, and thus strongly stimulate salivation. Other readily available sour foods and herbs include tamarind, rose hips, sour plum, vinegar, apple, blackberry, grape, mango, raspberry, tangerine, raspberry, blueberries, blackberries, huckleberry, sumac berries, and roselle.



Good old old-fashioned lemonade, jazzed up with mint

Anyone interested in herbs would by now be already thinking about which herbs might make classic lemonade sparkle in unexpected ways. With just a quick trip through the internet, you'll have enough inspiration to make a different lemonade very day for the next ten years! Here are just a few ideas from <https://drinks.seriousseats.com/2012/06/12-easy-lemonade-variations-homemade-lemonade-flavors-slideshow.html#show-250093> to get you started:

- Spicy Strawberry Jalapeño Lemonade
- Raspberry Limeade
- Fizzy Ginger Lemonade
- Cucumber-Basil Lemonade with Lemongrass
- Blackberry-Sage Lemonade
- Honey-Basil Lemonade
- Peach-Thyme Lemonade
- Lychee-Thai Chili Lemonade
- Blueberry Lavender Lemonade

What variations on the the lemonade theme can you compose?



If you want to get really fancy, try this Layered Blackberry and Turmeric Lemonade (recipe available at <http://www.foodandwine.com/recipes/layered-blackberry-and-turmeric-lemonade>)



Lush layers of color and flavor - turmeric water paired with blood orange and blackberry

I'm including the following recipe from <https://theherbalacademy.com/turmeric-lemonade/> (adapted from an original recipe by [Wellness Mama](#)) in its entirety because it is so unique:

ICED TURMERIC LEMONADE RECIPE

Ingredients:

- 2 cups water
- 2 cups ice
- 2 tablespoons fresh mint or basil, muddle
- 3 freshly squeezed lemons
- 2 teaspoons turmeric powder
- 1 teaspoon maple syrup (or more to taste)
- One or two grinds fresh cracked pepper.

Directions:

- Muddle mint/basil using a mortar and pestle. Otherwise rough chop it to the point that the aroma of the mint/basil is released. Place it in the bottom of your pitcher.
- Blend the remainder of the ingredients in a blender.
- Pour the fresh juice into your pitcher.
- Pour into cups over ice and garnish with a fresh sprig of mint and a lemon wedge.
- Enjoy with your family on a hot day.

And for other tart, thirst quenching beverages, don't forget *Hibiscus sabdariffa*, also called roselle along with many other common names. In Mexico, it's called *flor de Jamaica*, but Jamaicans (and other English-speaking Caribbean people) call it sorrel. It's known as *karkade* in North Africa, Italy, and Russia, and *orhul*



in India. In Senegal, *jus du bissap* is hibiscus tea with plenty of ginger and sugar, and sometimes orange, pineapple or lemon juice as well.

Hibiscus is a beautiful subtropical shrub with rather simple flowers but dramatic dark red sepals comprising the calyx, the outermost whorl of the flower. The luscious, fleshy red sepals are harvested and used fresh or dried.



The rich crimson color of roselle calyxes and infusions

Here's one last recipe (See <https://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/pineapple-hibiscus-tequila-cocktail>) to showcase the beautiful *Hibiscus sabdariffa*:

PINEAPPLE- HIBISCUS COCKTAIL

Ingredients

- 1 1/4 cups sugar
- 1 pineapple, peeled, cut into 1 1/2-inch pieces
- 6 tablespoons distilled white vinegar
- 1/4 cup dried hibiscus flowers
- 1 jalapeño, thinly sliced into rounds
- 5 sprigs mint
- 1 lime, thinly sliced into wheels
- 2 cups tequila
- 1 cup fresh lime juice

Preparation

1. Bring sugar and 1 cup water to a boil in a medium saucepan and cook, stirring, until sugar dissolves, about 3 minutes. Add pineapple, reduce heat, and simmer 10 minutes. Remove from heat and let sit 30 minutes to infuse syrup with pineapple flavor. Strain into a small bowl;



stir in vinegar. Cover and chill shrub until cold, about 30 minutes. Cover and chill pineapple pieces until ready to use.

2. Meanwhile, place hibiscus in a small bowl and pour 1 1/4 cups boiling water over. Cover and let steep 10 minutes. Strain tea into an airtight container; discard flowers. Cover tea and chill until cold, about 30 minutes.
3. Set aside 8 slices jalapeño and 8 pieces pineapple for serving. Stir mint, lime wheels, tequila, lime juice, remaining jalapeño and pineapple, 1 cup shrub, and 1 cup tea in a large pitcher and chill at least 1 hour.
4. Serve in ice-filled rocks glasses garnished with reserved jalapeño slices and pineapple pieces.

2. Do Ahead

1. Cocktail can be mixed 6 hours ahead. Keep chilled.

Does it surprise you to see a jalapeño pepper in the ingredient list for a cooling beverage? Aren't the hottest peppers for those who can stand the most heat? While it sounds counterintuitive, let's go to the science and find out how hot peppers help you cool off.

Just like menthol and carbon dioxide activate cold receptors and send a message of cooling to the brain, the *capsaicin* in spicy foods and herbs triggers nerve receptors on your tongue which register heat. When these nerves are activated, they send messages of emergency overheating. Your internal thermostat, the hypothalamus in your brain, responds by sending signals which activate your sweat glands. Sweating is the body's best cooling mechanism. As sweat reaches your skin and evaporates, heat is removed from the body.

The same receptor that senses heat also senses pain. As capsaicin arouses the nerve receptors in your mouth it not only confuses the nervous system into thinking you are feeling very hot, it also causes the nervous system to believe you are experiencing pain.

So in other words, eating spicy foods essentially tricks the brain to cool down the body, but the price we pay is sometimes painful indeed.



Our first Episode of "Pearls for the Pandemic" will be on August 19 and 7pm. Please make every effort to join us, and be sure to contact **Julie Fordes** if you need help getting set up with Zoom.

Stay cool, chill out, and enjoy your exploration of Herbal Beverages that Beat the Heat.

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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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.

