

# Herbs Make Scents

THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA  
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SOUTH TEXAS UNIT  
APRIL 2015

Editor –Linda Alderman ewalderman@comcast.net

## April 2015 Calendar

- Apr. 9** - Thurs. - 10 a.m. **Herb Day** Workshop at the home of Lois Sutton. Bring sack lunch and scissors.
- Apr. 14** - Tues. - 10 a.m. **Day Meeting** at the home of Susan Wood. Program presented by guest speaker, Justin Myers, Garden Coordinator from Recipe4Success Foundation. Bring a dish to share
- Apr. 15** - Wed. - 7 p.m. **Evening Meeting** at the West Gray Multi-Service Center (1475 West Gray) hosted by Marion Sullivan, Shirley Mills, Janice Stuff. Program: "*Small Space Gardening*", presented by Janice Teas. **Bring your plate, napkin and a dish to share. NOTE New change...we are suggesting members bring a dish to serve 6-8 and it is not restricted to finger foods. See Meeting Note on Page 3.**
- Apr. 16** - Thurs. - 10 a.m. **Herb Day Workshop** at the home of Tamara Gruber. Bring a sack lunch and scissors.
- Apr. 24** - Fri. - 12 p.m. **Set up for Herb Day Symposium**
- Apr. 25** - Sat. - 7:30-3:00 **Herb Day Symposium** – "*Where the Wild Herbs Grow*", Guest Speaker – Susan Wittig Albert

**Newsletter deadline: 25<sup>th</sup> of the month**

## May 2015 Calendar

- May 7-9** **National Annual Meeting in Williamsburg, VA**
- May 12** - Tues. - 10 a.m. **Day Meeting** at the West Gray Multi-Service Center (1475 West Gray), hosted by Lois Jean Howard. Program: "*Herbal Panaceas of the Wild West*", presented by Lois Jean Howard. Bring a dish to share
- May 19** - Tues. - 7 p.m. **Board Meeting** at the home of Pam Harris, 2624 University, Houston, TX 77005
- May 20** - Wed. - 7 p.m. **Evening Meeting** at the West Gray Multi-Service Center (1475 West Gray) hosted by Lucia Bettler and Pam Harris. Program: "*Mix Your Own Spices*", presented by Irene Potoczniak. Bring your plate, napkin and a dish to share.

**Newsletter deadline: 25<sup>th</sup> of the month**



## From our Unit Chair

It seems like April showers came early this year. The past month has been a wet one but in the end, we should have some very happy plants. Now that spring has arrived, it makes me feel like getting outside and working in my yard. The sunshine and warm weather we have had in between the storms has been wonderful. This is the time when you are cleaning up your plants and trying to find room for some new ones. While you are cleaning up start to write down what plants you have and their locations in your yard. Also, take the time to label your plants and see if you have more than one of the same type. This is the time to move them to a new home.

I look forward to next month programs. The day program will be on April 14<sup>th</sup> and presented by Justin Myers a friend of Susan Woods. Then you will have a tour of Recipe 4 Success Foundation. The night program will be on April 15<sup>th</sup> presented by Janice Teas on Small Space Gardening. This will be two great meetings not to miss.

I look forward to next month's meetings.

Martha Burg – Unit Chairman

## Herb Day - Sat. April 25

Thanks to everyone who has signed up to work on Herb Day and all the days leading up to the big event. Everything seems to be coming together but there are things that cannot be done until the day before, Friday April 24<sup>th</sup>. We will be able to set up starting at 12 noon on Friday; we are going to need a lot of fresh flowers from your gardens or a field close to your home or the side of of the road. Lois Jean Howard has a beautiful collection of antique "spooners" that we are going to use as center pieces for each table. These center pieces will be the main attraction on each table so we want them to be beautiful. If you have any ornate frames approximately 4" x 6", or slightly larger (glass area) please let me know. We need 24 of them, one for each table. We are printing an herbal quote to put on each table as part of the decorations. We have 12 frames now, we need 12 more, please "shop" your house and lend us any that you have, as always put your name on it, so we can get it back to you. I would like to have them the week before so the quote can be inserted before the set up day. On Herb Day we will need to

arrive at 7:30 AM, the public generally begins to arrive at 8:30 so we need to be there to greet them with

everything ready to go. We MUST be out of the main room by 3 PM so the church can set up for the next day, so everything that belongs to us must be moved by then.

As is our normal procedure we will have snacks for everyone on their arrival, so when someone calls and asks you to make cookies (recipes will be provided) please say yes! This is an important part of the day for the people who are our loyal customers, please be generous.

This year we are planning on less decoration, the facility is upstairs and although there is an elevator it will be more difficult to get the decorations to the room. We will need some large plants, blooming if possible and a few large decorative items. Please call and let me know what you are willing to bring so I can have an idea of what we will have to work with.

I am looking forward to Herb Day and I hope you are as well. Let's work together to make our "NEW" Herb Day as wonderful as everyone remembers!

Pam Harris - Herb Day Chair

## Membership Update

You have only April and May to update the hours you are spending gathering materials for your craft workshops and then creating the items. You need to also update your attendance on your membership sheets. Those who presented programs or hosted a meeting should record those hours of preparation.

Remember driving time to our regular day and night meetings does not count in our tabulation. We count only driving to planning and special meetings

Those sheets from the membership books must be completed by the **May 20<sup>th</sup>** evening meeting so I can tabulate our hours for the Annual Meeting June 7, 2015. Thank you for your cooperation.

Thelma Rowe - Membership



## Evening Meeting Notes

Having no kitchen facilities at the West Gray Service Center prompted a change to finger foods for the evening meeting. After trying this format, the board took into consideration all of the feedback it received and made the decision to return to the pot-luck dinner format. We are asking members to bring a covered dish for 6-8 people to share at the meeting. Don't forget to bring your own plate and silverware!

Remember that the meeting hosts supply the beverage(s) and table decorations for the serving tables as well as bringing the hospitality 'tubs' with extra plates, table cloths, etc. The team hosting the NEXT meeting takes home the hospitality tubs, the dirty dishes, silver and table linens.

All members: please remember to take home your dish with any leftovers. A little extra help to the hostess teams in both set-up and tear-down is always appreciated.

## March Program

### Seed Catalogues

Beth Murphy

March 18, 2015

The following list of seed companies provides catalogues that contain much helpful information and many hours of enjoyable reading.

- Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds, [www.rareseeds.com](http://www.rareseeds.com) (Mansfield, Missouri)
- Botanical Interests, [www.botanicalinterests.com](http://www.botanicalinterests.com) (Broomfield, Colorado)
- Comstock Ferre & Company, [www.ComstockFerre.com](http://www.ComstockFerre.com) (Wethersfield, Connecticut)
- Goodwin Creek Gardens, [www.goodwincreekgardens](http://www.goodwincreekgardens) (Williams, Oregon)
- John Scheepers Kitchen Garden Seeds, [www.kitchengardenseeds.com](http://www.kitchengardenseeds.com) (Bantam, Connecticut)
- Johnny's Selected Seeds, [www.johnnyseeds.com](http://www.johnnyseeds.com) (Winslow, Maine)
- Kitazawa Seed Company, [www.Kitazawaseed.com](http://www.Kitazawaseed.com) (Oakland, California)
- D. Landreth Seed Company, [www.landrethseeds.com](http://www.landrethseeds.com) (New Freedom, Pennsylvania)
- Mountain Rose Herbs, [www.mountainroseherbs.com](http://www.mountainroseherbs.com) (Eugene, Oregon)
- Mount Vernon, [www.mountvernon.org](http://www.mountvernon.org) (Fairfax Co., Virginia)
- Nichols Garden Nursery, [www.nicholsgardennursery.com](http://www.nicholsgardennursery.com) (Albany, Oregon)
- Old House Gardens, [www.oldhousegardens.com](http://www.oldhousegardens.com) (Ann Arbor, Michigan)
- Pinetree Garden Seeds, [www.superseeds.com](http://www.superseeds.com) (New Gloucester, Maine)
- Renee's Garden, [www.reneesgarden.com](http://www.reneesgarden.com) (Felton, California)
- Seed Savers Exchange, [www.seedsavers.org](http://www.seedsavers.org) (Decorah, Iowa)
- Seeds of Change, [www.seedsofchange.com](http://www.seedsofchange.com) (Spicer, Minnesota)
- Select Seeds, [www.selectseeds.com](http://www.selectseeds.com) (Union, Connecticut)
- Southern Exposure Seed Exchange, [www.southernexposure.com](http://www.southernexposure.com) (Mineral, Virginia)
- Sow True Seed, [www.sowtrueseed.com](http://www.sowtrueseed.com) (Asheville, North Carolina)
- Territorial Seed Company, [www.territorialseed.com](http://www.territorialseed.com) (Cottage Grove, Oregon)
- The Cook's Garden, [www.cooksgarden.com](http://www.cooksgarden.com) (Warminster, Pennsylvania)
- Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants, [www.monticello.org](http://www.monticello.org) (Charlottesville, Virginia)

## About our Members

### Recent Illness:

Carlene Thompson  
Akiko Wantanabe

### Happy Birthday!



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1-Janice Dana  
23-Thelma Rowe



## A Quick Peek at the Natives Lois Sutton Ph.D.

Susan Wittig-Albert, the keynote speaker for the 2015 Herb Day, has chosen useful native herbs as her focus. Consider this column a teaser

Native herbs (native plants in general) increase the value of our gardens:  
for ourselves – no loss of time pampering plants we are trying to force into our habitat  
for our human neighbors – fewer chemicals introduced into the environment  
for our bird, bee & butterfly neighbors – food & host sources.

**What is a native plant?** The US National Arboretum offers this definition: *A native plant is one that occurs naturally in a particular region, ecosystem, or habitat without direct or indirect human intervention. We consider the flora present at the time Europeans arrived in North America as the species native to the eastern United States. Native plants include all kinds of plants from mosses and ferns to wildflowers, shrubs, and trees.* Extending this one would have to consider the plants present in the south, southwest and west at the time of the earliest European (or non-European) explorations to be native.



Milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.). *Asclepias variegata* (redring milkweed) was The Herb Society of America's native herb of the year for 2014. While it doesn't grow in the Houston area, there actually are 25 – 30 species occurring in Texas. *A. viridis*, green milkweed, is a common low growing plant in the Round Top area. Milkweeds are a nectar and food source in the butterfly garden, beloved to the monarchs. Historically, fresh roots were applied externally to bruises and minor wounds as well as in bitter tonics, acting as an expectorant.

Golden rod (*Solidago* spp.) will be the native herb of the year in 2017. Did you know that a goldenrod was commercially grown in Texas? *Solidago odora*, aka sweet, Texas or licorice goldenrod, reportedly looks and smells like French tarragon. Without tarragon's flavor, the essential oil was harvested for use in perfumery

(Tucker). Goldenrods attract lacewings and lady bugs. It is used as a dye plant.

Something you may not know about both milkweed and goldenrod is that Thomas Edison considered these "good plants" as potential alternate sources for rubber (Mark R Finlay, *Growing American Rubber*, 2009). On his herbal-best list Edison had five milkweeds; *A. variegata* weighed in at 3.97% rubber. He also included five goldenrods. The *S. odora* mentioned above and *S. mexicana* both contain around 3% rubber but the *S. nemoralis* (field goldenrod) has a whopping 4.87%

One of the first spring wildflowers to appear is Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja* spp.). Propagating it by seed is difficult because of its parasitic characteristic – it needs to be planted with seeds of other plants and may use those plants as a nutrient source. Herbal uses are historic: flowers are edible if eaten in small quantities (NOTE: GRAS status not investigated). The plant absorbs selenium if it is in the soil and this is potentially toxic. Some Native American groups did, indeed, use the flower stalks as a paintbrush.



## Florescence: Tuesday & Wednesday April 28 - 29th at Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Every other year this premiere flower show appears at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Mark your calendar for Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, April 29<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. to attend this exciting event sponsored by River Oaks Garden Club, Garden Clubs of America, Houston Garden Clubs and MFAH. Admission is free to MFAH members, \$15 general and \$10 senior. You can get all the details at: [www.riveroaksgardenclub.org](http://www.riveroaksgardenclub.org) ; [www.flohouston.org](http://www.flohouston.org); [www.hgc.org](http://www.hgc.org) or [www.mfah.org](http://www.mfah.org)

If you go, you might see some of our friends from The Pioneer Unit visiting the show on Wednesday morning. I helped to organize their spring field trip to visit the new McGovern Centennial Gardens. Working with Ginger Heath, Cindy Nash and Susan Bame from the Pioneer Unit, we arranged for members to visit Florescence first, have a box lunch at Café Express and then visit the Centennial Gardens and Butterfly Center at Museum of Natural Science before heading west to Phoenicia and home. Also right now at HMNS is the fabulous Faberge exhibit and best wildlife photo winners from the annual National Geographic contest. The Pioneer Unit is sponsoring the bus trip as a member appreciation event after their very successful plant sale during Herbal Forum in Round Top. So, if you have the time, come out and say "hi" to our herbal friends in one of these beautiful venues.

Submitted by Susan Wood

The South Texas Unit is a non-profit educational organization incorporated under the State of Texas. The South Texas Unit has no paid employees. Our activities are accomplished through the efforts of our volunteers.

The Herb Society of America  
South Texas Unit  
P.O. Box 6515  
Houston, TX 77265-6515



The Herb Society of America is dedicated to promoting the knowledge, use and delight of herbs through educational programs, research and sharing the knowledge of its members with the community.



Find our Unit on the web at:  
[www.herbsociety-stu.org](http://www.herbsociety-stu.org)

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