Herbs Make Scents

THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
VOLUME XLIX, NUMBER 10

SOUTH TEXAS UNIT
OCTOBER 2026

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October 2026 Calendar

Oct 5, Mon. 1:30 - 2:30pm	**HSA Wellness & Medicinal Herbs Special Interest Group (Virtual)** A newly-formed group of HSA Members interested in learning how herbs support health and well-being, facilitated by **Beth Schreibman Gehring**. Contact Karen at karen.herbsociety@gmail.com to receive reminder and link to meeting.
Oct 10, Sat. 9:00 am	**Westbury Garden Workday** 12581 Dunlap St., Houston, TX 77035
Oct 13, Tues. 10:00 am **Open to the public**	**Day Meeting:** *Lemon Basil Taste Test* presented by **Julie Fordes** and **Benée Curtis**. Location: The Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion, 1500 Hermann Dr. Houston, TX 77004. Bring your bag lunch to socialize following the program. For those interested, the book group will be meeting during the lunch social to discuss *Soil: The Story of a Black Mother's Garden* by Camille Dungy (336 pp)
Oct 21, Wed. 6:15 pm **Open to the public**	**Evening Meeting:** *A Tea Master's Introduction to Matcha* presented by **Kim McHugh**, Certified Tea Blending Master and Founder of True Leaf Tea Company. 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.
Oct 24, Sat. 9:00 am	**Westbury Garden Workday** 12581 Dunlap St., Houston, TX 77035

November 2026 Calendar

Nov 6, Fri**.** 8:30 am – 1:00 pm **Nov 7,** Sat. 8:00 am – 3:00 pm	**Herb Fair: Unload and Set-up** **Herb Fair Day**
Nov 10, Wed. 6:15 pm **Open to the public**	**Day Meeting:** Field Trip to Hope Farms 10401 Scott St., 77051 Details to follow.
Nov 14, Sat**.** 10:00 **Note Time**	**Westbury Garden Workday** 12581 Dunlap St., Houston, TX 77035 We are teaching **an herb class at the garden.** ***Celebrate the Holidays with Herbs***
Nov 18, Wed. 6:15 pm **Open to the public**	**Evening Meeting:** *Herbs and Useful Native Plants in Your Landscape* presented by STU Member and Master Naturalist **Virginia Camerlo** 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.
Nov, 28, Sat. 9:00 am	**Westbury Garden Workday** 12581 Dunlap St., Houston, TX 77035

Newsletter deadline is the 25th of the month, and is strictly enforced (Nov co-editor is Linda Alderman)

October Happy Birthday wishes go to…

10/02 Faith Strunk
10/13 Benée Curtis
10/21 Janice Stuff
10/22 Yvette Darnell
10/24 Virginia Camerlo
10/27 Debra Maly
10/30 Corlas Pearsall

Chairman's Corner

As I settle into my role as Unit Chair, one thing I keep thinking about is just how much knowledge lives within this group. We have gardeners, cooks, educators, makers, researchers, longtime herb lovers, and folks who are still learning. It's what makes our community so special.

Herbal knowledge has always been something that grows when it's shared. Someone brings a plant. Someone else brings a recipe. Another member knows exactly why that plant refuses to cooperate in a Houston summer. And somehow, we all leave knowing a little more than we did before.That's the kind of community I hope we continue cultivating this year: one where we learn from our speakers, but also from one another.

Our own **Stephanie Calloway** gave a great presentation about oils. I enjoyed the interactive salve making! I also gave a chat at the River Oaks Breakfast Club. I look forward to many more opportunities to volunteer and hang out with the herbies!

What We Heard: 2025–2026 Program Evaluation
Thank you to everyone who shared feedback on our programs.

Members told us they value learning about herbs and spending time with people who share that interest. Hands-on workshops, culinary demonstrations and tastings, Herb Fair and Herb Day, fermentation, and field trips were among the experiences people most enjoyed. Several members also spoke warmly about programs led by fellow members.

Looking ahead, respondents asked for more opportunities to learn practical gardening skills, grow and use herbs in Houston, cook with herbs, and make preparations such as teas and salves. Garden tours and hands-on activities were popular as well. Members also suggested adding demonstrations, tastings, or useful takeaways to speaker programs when possible.

We heard ideas for improving the experience, too: clearer sound, a more comfortable meeting room, stronger connections with visitors and newer members, and opportunities for members to share their knowledge. Meeting-time preferences varied, so offering activities at different times may help more people take part.

We appreciate both the encouragement and the thoughtful suggestions. Your feedback will help us shape programs that keep us learning, making, growing, and connecting.

As we enter the Autumn Equinox, I give thanks to the rich roots of the wild harvests. Here's a concoction I like to drink in the fall:

Fall in a Cup: Spiced Cacao & Reishi Mushroom
For one mug -
Whisk together 1 cup warm oat milk, 1 teaspoon unsweetened cacao powder,¼ teaspoon cinnamon, a pinch of ginger, and a pinch of cardamom.
Add 1 teaspoon of reishi mushroom powder according to the package directions, then sweeten to taste with maple syrup.
I also like to add "Dandy Blend" (dandelion and chicory) for a "coffee feel". For a little extra fall flavor, add a splash of vanilla. Here's to another season of growing, learning, and enjoying herbs together.

Ro, Unit Chair

Announcing Our Meetings

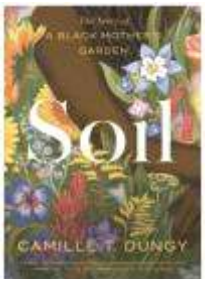
Location: Willow Waterhole

Day Meetings

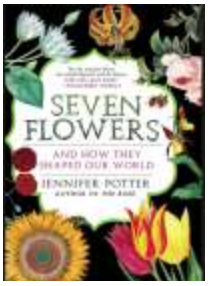
October 13: *Lemon Basil Taste Test* presented by **Julie Fordes** and **Benée Curtis**
November 10 – Field Trip to Hope Farms 10401 Scott St., 77051 (https://hopefarmshtx.org/about-us/) More details to follow.

The Day Group will have Book Discussions again this year after selected meetings. The three books selected are:

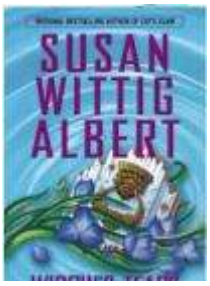
October 13, 2026 *Soil: The Story of a Black Mother's Garden* by Camille Dungy (336 pp)



February 13, 2027 *Seven Flowers and How They Shaped the World* by Jennifer Potter (304 pp)

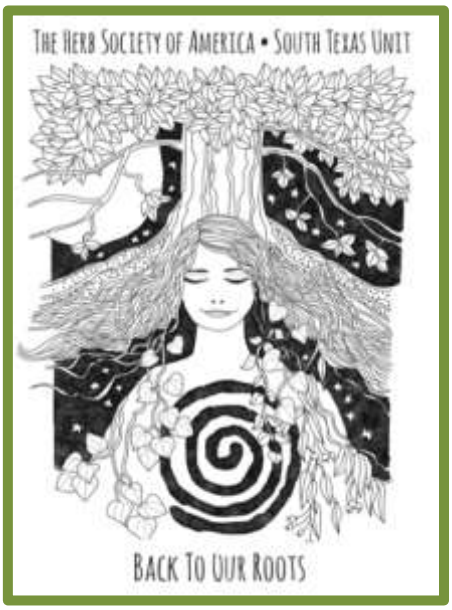


May 11, 2027
Widow's Tears by Susan Wittig Albert (300 pp)



Evening Meetings

October 21: *A Tea Master's Introduction to Matcha* presented by **Kim McHugh**



Back to Our Roots at Westbury Garden

Westbury Workdays on the following days
Please note the change in time on workdays

November 14 @ 10 am ***We are* teaching an herb class *at the garden titled Celebrate the Holiday with Herbs***

November 28 @ 9 am ***Westbury Garden Workday***

It has been extremely hot and dry **this month, and the** plants and humans too are looking and feeling stressed with the heat. We have made it past the Fall Equinox and are all looking forward to cooler temperatures that are much more hospitable to living beings.

Blue Pea, lemongrass, roselle and all our lovely basils are going gang busters!!! Please make it a point to get to a garden workday sometime before Herb Fair to help harvest herbs for the fair..

Herb Fair Preparations
The women at the last Day Meeting made olive oil infusions with several kinds of dried that will be turned into salves.We also made witch hazel and dried herb infusions for toners and spritzers. They will be decanted, bottled and labeled at one of the Sunday workshops in October.

Herbs we still need for tea blends.
Thank you all for bringing in your dried herbs. We have enough lemon dried herbs. We have enough lemon verbena, so no need to bring more. In addition to the dehydrated citrus rounds and citrus zest, we still need dried rosemary, Mexican mint marigold, red stem apple mint, roselle (may not be flowering yet), holy basil, rose petals, peppermint, and spearmint.

The Herbs of Promise Program

I hope that all the participants in this program had a good time growing, observing and using the two varieties of lemon basil. I know that I have enjoyed participating. The program is winding down this month. We have been asked to turn in our data electronically on October 15. Each unit may turn in ONE document, so if you have data to share about the plants you grew at home, or observations on the culinary use, please send me whatever you have on or before Tuesday, October 13. Then I can consolidate the data and send it in.

November Herb Class at Westbury Community Garden

Saturday, November 14 is the next date for our continuing herbal education at WCG. I would like to explore the use of herbs in the home during the upcoming holidays. This class will be open to the general public (usually a few Westbury residents) as well as Westbury gardeners. These classes are all about giving back to the garden. Teaching others what we know is what this is all about.

Continued next page

Our unit generously gave $500 for education at the garden. We plan to purchase a portable burner so we can demonstrate an herbal recipe as well as do a couple of make and take herbal crafts with our funds. So, we can demonstrate an herbal recipe as well as do a couple of make and take herbal crafts with our funds. I have not developed the program yet, so all your great ideas for using herbs for Thanksgiving and Winter Holiday family gatherings will be happily received. I know this is right on the heels of Herb Fair, but it is the only time the garden had. This will be a LOT of FUN…call with all your good ideas and offers of help anytime.■

LIST FOR GROWING AND HARVESTING HERBS

- □ Bay Leaf
- □ Blue Butterfly Pea
- □ Basil (Holy) *
- □ Calendula
- □ Chamomile
- □ Citrus rounds *
- □ Citrus zest *
- □ Comfrey
- □ Doublemint Madalene Hill (Red-stemmed apple mint)
- □ Elderberry flowers and berries
- □ Lemon Balm
- □ Lemongrass
- □ Lemon Verbena
- □ Mexican Mint Marigold *
- □ Peppermint *
- □ Rose Petals *
- □ Roselle *
- □ Rosemary *
- □ Sage
- □ Spearmint *
- □ Thyme
- □ Yarrow

*** Herbs still needed for Herb Fair this year.**

Time to Fill Your October Pantry

Don't Forget to Start your Homemade Fire Cider!

Successful Herb Fair Kickoff!

Stephanie Calloway, Herb Fair Chair

As we await cooler temperatures and adjust to shortened daylight hours for garden work, our STU membership is bustling away preparing teas, culinary blends, crafts, baked goods and herbal products; finalizing our plant list with local nurseries; collecting books and Twice Found Treasures for our garden-themed reuse shop; and sharing flyers, media posts, and gardening how-to articles to promote our annual fundraiser and community event: The Herb Fair. This year marks the 53rd anniversary of this event which will be held on **Saturday, November 7th**, at the Southside Place Clubhouse, 3743 Garnet Street, Houston, TX 77007.

Thanks to a growing partnership with the Houston Life program and other expanded efforts for outreach and marketing, we are expecting record turnout this year! Because of this, we are looking for more volunteers to help with event set-up on Friday, November 6th (9am-2pm) in addition to helping during the day on Saturday, November 7th (7am-2pm) and for clean-up on Saturday 2-3pm. There are a variety of roles available to leverage your talents:

- Setting up creative table displays on Friday throughout the day
- Unloading and organizing plants, books, and other materials Friday morning
- Helping customers prepare for a smooth checkout process
- Serving tea samples to guests and visitors as they peruse the tables
- Reorganizing plants and other display items as customers invest in herbal goodies throughout the day
- And through it all – the chance to chat with guests and STU members about the joys of herbs!

If you are interested in supporting the event as a volunteer, please reach out to Herb Fair Chair Stephanie who can point you in the right direction: stephaniec621@gmail.com.
Keep your eyes on our website event page for details on the Presale Vouchers which are set to go on sale by October 14th: https://herbsociety-stu.org/annual-herb-fair/

The HERB SOCIETY of AMERICA

Did you know HSA offers an herb study group?

2026 Topics
October - 10/5/26 - Aging Well with Herbs - Cindy Christ, Facilitator
November - 11/2/26 - Herbs of Shakespeare - Diane Galvan, Facilitator
December - 12/7/26 - British High Tea (with Herbs) - Diane Galvan, Facilitator
For more info and times of meetings go to:
February – 2/1/27 – Herb of the Year TM, Flax

* HSA members can find more information by visiting the login page of the HSA Website

The HERB SOCIETY of AMERICA

Did you know HSA hosts fiction and non-fiction book studies?

Book Club #1 - 2026 selections

September 8: *Botanist's Guide to Tradition and Treachery* by Kate Khavari
October 13: *Radical Prunings: Novel of Officious Advice from the Contessa of Compost* by Bonnie Thomas Abbott
November 10: *A Spell for Trouble: An Enchanted Bay Mystery* by Esme Addison
December 8: *Last of the Moon Girls* by Barbara Davis

* HSA members can find more information by visiting the login page of the HSA Website

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

STU Member Spotlight
Cynthia Card
By Karen Cottingham

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Just when you think you know someone, they surprise you with yet another amazing accomplishment.

A physical therapist by profession, Cynthia also tends an exuberant garden, creates exquisite needlework, and has worked side by side with her husband, Bob, to renovate three homes including a charming rustic Victorian dating from 1893. Cynthia also supports the Houston arts community by generously providing housing and studio space for artist mothers in the Ramona Residency program.

Recently, Cynthia achieved a long-term goal by becoming a docent at Bayou Bend, the former home of philanthropist Ima Hogg which is now the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston house museum for American decorative arts and paintings. Many of our STU members have enjoyed recent tours of the collection under Cynthia's knowledgeable and enthusiastic guidance.

Cynthia's tambour box will be used as a teaching aid for fellow docents and visitors to the museum.

The process of becoming a Bayou Bend docent involves rigorous training as well as either a research paper or a hands-on project.

Cynthia chose an intricate and demanding project involving the construction of a box with a tambour door mechanism. Inspired by a tambour desk in the Bayou Bend collection, Cynthia's box features a sliding panel made of narrow wooden slats. These slats are designed to flex along a curve, to either open or close off the interior of the desk or storage compartment.

The mechanism is similar to a roll top desk except that the flexible panel rolls horizontally along a curve rather than vertically.

Cynthia hard at work in the studio (above), selecting premium wood (left) for her project, and her completed tambour box (right)
All photos courtesy of Bob Card.

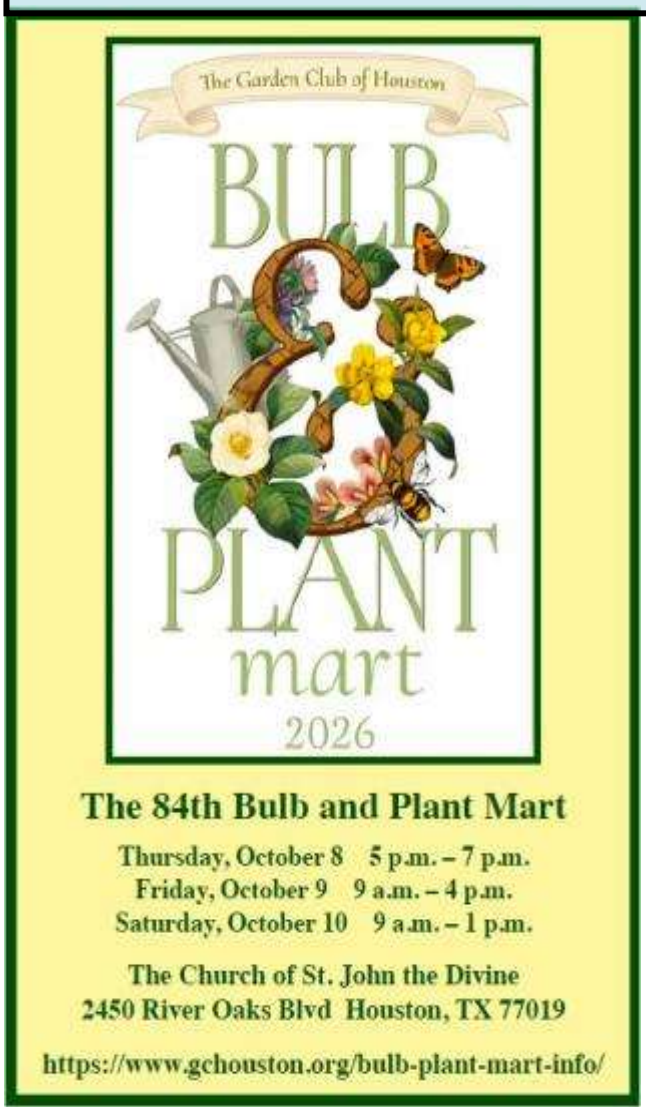
The next time you visit Bayou Bend, be sure to admire Cynthia's tambour box along with the Federal Period lady's desk that inspired it. And be sure to compliment Cynthia on the hard work, technical skill, and artistic vision that culminated in such a beautiful and useful object..

Ro Jones

Safety considerations: Licorice root (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) is generally avoided or used with caution in people with high blood pressure, heart disease, kidney disease, low potassium, or conditions involving fluid retention/edema. Long-term or high-dose use can contribute to sodium and water retention, potassium loss, and increased blood pressure.

More Happenings

STU sponsored Dr. Mark "Merriwether" Vorderbruggen as a featured speaker with a $2,500 donation to 2026 EdCon in San Antonio last April. If you were not there, or if you would like to see him again, he will be at Wabash for $27.22 total advance registration fee, space limited. Take an extra $25 with you to get an autographed copy of his book, *Foraging, Explore Nature's Bounty and Turn Your Foraged Finds into Flavorful Feasts.*
October 10 @ 10:30 am - 12:00 pm
Wabash Feed & Garden www.wabashfeed.com
4545 N. Shepherd, Houston
Houston's trees are loaded with wonderful, ancient foods. Join foraging expert Dr. Mark "Merriwether" Vorderbruggen as he presents how to properly identify and prepare common, forgotten fruits and nuts in our area. Students will leave with an appreciation of the bounty surrounding us, improved food security, and the ability to wow their foodie family and more.
Submitted by Susan Wood



Texas Native Plant Celebration October

Native Plant Society and HEB is Celebrating!
Learn more at:
https://www.npsot.org/our-work/texas-native-plant-week/h-e-b-native-plant-sale/

SPEAKERS BUREAU

Cynthia Card

The Westbury United Methodist Church held a Fun Day on September 12, 2026. The Herb Society of America, South Texas Unit was well represented with many members and volunteers to drum up interest in the upcoming Herb Fair on November 7 and to educate on the many uses of herbs. People that stopped by our booth got to make a bay leaf swag to take home. Many thanks to **Maha, Haya & Nahla**, **Rose W**., **Debbie G.** and **Suzy S**. for making the day more fun and enjoyable.

Upcoming Speaker Lectures

West University Senior Center

October 8, Thursday from 5:30–6:30 p.m. **Karen Cottingham** will be presenting “Sage and Thyme – Herbs for Long-Lasting Health.” for the Wellness Series**, Living Longer Through Lifestyle Choice**
6104 Auden St, Houston, TX 77005 Phone: (713) 662-5895

Pasadena Library

October 28: **Catherine O’Brien** will be presenting:
“Herbs of Shakespeare”
November 4: **Ro Jones** will provide a lecture on “Holiday Herbs”

Lectures will be held from 6:00-7:00 pm at the
Pasadena Library, 4330 Fairmont Parkway, Pasadena, TX
(713) 848-5345 Contact: ecornell@pasadenatx.gov

The Herb Society of America
South Texas Unit
P.O. Box 6515
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?

2026-276 STU Officers

Unit Chair: *Ro Jones*
Vice Chair: *Karen Cottingham*
Secretary: *Stephanie Calloway*
Treasurer: *Virginia Camerlo*

Standing Committees

Day Meeting: *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: *Cynthia Card*