

"The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul."

Alfred Austin

SAGE LEAVES

The Herb Society of America – Wisconsin Unit

September/October 2020 – Vol XXXXI #5

Unit Meetings

Saturday, September 19, 10:00 a.m.

Program: Annual Meeting



"European Adventures in Gardening"
by Mary Beth Mahoney

Location: Zoom Meeting on your device

Tuesday, October 20

Program: To be announced

Location: To be announced

Please mark your calendars for the above dates and locations.



Editor: Diane Kescenovitz, kescenovitz.diane@att.net – if you will be going out of town for an extended period of time, please notify Diane of change of address or request e-mail copy – thanks!

Subscription Rate: \$6 for 6 issues

Wisconsin Unit Web: Herb-Society-Wisconsin.org (Editor: Diane Kescenovitz)

Herb Society of America office: Herbs@HerbSociety.org

Herb Society of America web: www.herbsociety.org – reminder: password for members is HSA-WI@76

NEWSBUDS...

Hello Herb Members,

Given our unusual circumstances with COVID, many of us are at home, being creative in so many ways -- finding that even when we have to stay home, there's not enough time to do everything we want to do. I hope you are all managing to stay in good health and spirits and look forward to seeing you on Zoom for our Annual Meeting on Saturday Sept. 19th at 10 am. You will have this newsletter and the Annual Meeting mailing arriving in September.

The Annual Meeting business portion will include the budget proposal and introduction of new members, the board and committee members. The program will be "European Adventures in Gardening" by Mary Beth Mahoney. Keep in mind, our budget has flexibility if we need to make changes through the year. The board worked to keep the programs and events scheduled in the plans, but we can cancel with advance notice if need be. We have the Holiday Party and Symposium dates on the calendar on our website.

Keep in mind the wonderful information on the national site: <https://www.herbsociety.org/hsa-about/welcome/> View the webinars, find the Herb of the Month information, and see the photos (Boerner included) in the Gardens of HSA <https://www.herbsociety.org/hsa-learn/hsa-garden-album/hsa-gardens-of-hsa/> You should have received email invitations for the Virtual District Gatherings:

I recently enjoyed the walk through of Will Radler's garden with beautiful hardscaped walkways, pond, flowing stream, bottle trees, fun flamingoes. and gorgeous variety of perennials, and of course, rows and rows of his Knock Out Roses! It was a fundraiser for Boerner Botanical Gardens. See photos on our website.

I've been reading a variety of magazines and newsletters online. You might like the recent ones I've read: Planters Place <https://plantersplace.com/perennials-forever/men-who-garden-cook/> and A Garden for the Home <https://www.agardenforthehouse.com/>

Herbally yours, Melody

HSA District Virtual Gatherings

Free registration for the Gatherings is available online [Herb Society of America : Events : District Gatherings](#)

2020 Northeast District Gathering **August 28 - virtual gathering - 3-5pm EDT**

2020 Great Lakes District Gathering **September 12 - virtual gathering - 11-1pm EDT**

Visit the website, additional Gatherings are being organized and listed.

Out and About

Hello Everyone,

I'm pleased to tell you that this year's first book club meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 7th at 1:00 p.m. Our book, by Susan Wittig Albert, is *A Plain Vanilla Murder* and should be a fun read. If you are interested in attending, please call me at 414-281-0051 or email me at joa38rugg@gmail.com

Diane Kescenovitz will welcome you and Carole Kinkaid will be our session leader. They may both be sipping a cup of tea and munching on a scone, so be prepared to join them from your cozy spot.

We will gather via zoom on our computers and I will be sending you an invitation on the computer a day or two before we meet. Please let us know if you need help answering a zoom invitation.

We're planning on four book sessions this year - the first in October, the second in January, the third in April and the fourth or last in July. I look forward to seeing all of you and sharing comments and thoughts about our first book.

Until then, Joanne Ruggieri

Holiday Celebration Luncheon at The Town Club

Please mark your calendar to save December 9, 2020 for our Herb Society – WI Unit Holiday Party.

It will take place at The Town Club on Santa Monica Blvd. in Fox Point.

Friends are invited to attend with you.

An invitation will be shared in the November/December Sage Leaves Newsletter.

If you have questions, please call me at (262) 376-0482.

Denise Nelson, Event Chair

Recipes

The National Garden Bureau, in fact, has named 2020 “Year of the Lavender,” based on the plant’s texture, scent, beauty, and versatility. <https://ngb.org/year-of-the-lavender/>

Since this has been such a wonderful year for growing lavender, thought I’d include some recipes that come from National HSA:

LAVENDER POUND CAKE

2 C cake flour
½ tsp baking powder
½ lb unsalted butter (room temp)
1½ tsp dried lavender blossom
1 C sugar
½ tsp. grated lemon zest
(plus extra for sprinkling on cake)
4 eggs (room temp)
½ C milk
Lavender Frosting

Heat oven to 325°. Grease 8"x4"x2½" loaf pan. Sift flour & baking powder; set aside. Cream butter, add lavender, sugar & lemon zest; beat until light in color. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each egg. Add ½ the flour mixture, then add milk. Fold in remaining flour. Pour into pan & bake 55-65 minutes or 'til a tester comes out clean. Cool on rack. Cover with lavender frosting and sprinkle with lemon zest.

WWW.HERBSOCIETY.ORG



LAVENDER FROSTING

for Lavender Pound Cake

3 Tablespoons Flour
½ Cup milk or soy milk
½ Cup unsalted butter (room temp.)
½ Cup lavender sugar

In a pan combine milk and flour. Stir over medium to medium low heat until thick. Set aside and let cool. In a separate bowl cream butter and sugar until fluffy. Beat together milk and butter mixtures until combined. Frost previously prepared cake and garnish with lavender flowers and lemon zest.



LAVENDER COOKIES

HSA's July 2018 Herb of the Month

1 stick unsalted butter, softened
½ cup light brown sugar
1¼ cup self rising flour
1 tablespoon dried lavender buds
pinch of salt
confectioners' sugar for garnish

In a bowl, cream the butter, brown sugar, and salt until light. Add flour and lavender. Mix well. Chill in frig for 1 hour. Preheat oven to 400°F. Grease cookie sheet. Roll dough on a lightly floured board and roll ½ inch thick. Cut the dough into rounds. Place on the cookie sheet. Bake for 8-10 minutes, or until delicate brown. Cool until slightly warm. Sprinkle with confectioners' sugar.

WWW.HERBSOCIETY.ORG



LAVENDER CRANBERRY PUNCH



4 Cups cranberry juice
1 Cup orange juice
1 Cup water
1/4 Cup sugar
2 T fresh lemon juice
1/2 small cinnamon stick
2 whole cloves
1/2 tsp dried lavender blossoms

In a large saucepan, combine the cranberry juice, orange juice, water, sugar, lemon juice, cinnamon, cloves, and lavender. Bring to a simmer over medium heat for 5 minutes. Strain. Serve hot or chilled!

SOURCE: HSA RECIPE DATABASE



Make a Lavender Spritzer

Ann McCormick (Southwest Gardening) says she loves to have a spray bottle of lavender water handy during hot summer days. Ann combines a tablespoon of lavender essential oil with a cup of water and pours it in a small spray bottle. Here are a few ways Ann uses this lavender water to add sweetness to life:

- A quick spray in the living room (or bath) perfumes the air for guests.
- Spray the cushions of lawn furniture to provide the subtle aroma for relaxing.
- I sometimes spray my bed pillow to encourage sleep.
- It also makes a nice after-bath body spritzer.
- Spray luggage or athletic bags to combat that funky aroma that often lingers.

Taste-Tempting Fruit Vinegar (All About Thyme 8/20 – Susan Wittig Albert)

An addiction to gardening is not all bad when you consider the other choices in life.—Cora Lea Bell



The peaches are ripe and luscious, the market is displaying beautiful raspberries, blueberries, and cherries, and your garden is full of fresh herbs. Use them, along with a variety of spices, to make flavored vinegars that will spark salads and fruit dishes in months to come. Start now, and you'll have a shelf of wonderful taste-tempters (and delightfully unique gifts) all winter.

Make Fruit-Flavored Vinegar with Fresh Herbs

- You'll need fruit and herbs (suggestions below), vinegar, and lidded containers.
- Select jars and lids (pint, quart, half-gallon: size depends on the amount of fruit you're working with). Wash and scald.
- Pit the fruit if necessary, cut it up, or mash it lightly. Wash the fresh herbs and bruise lightly.
- Heat the vinegar to just below boiling.
- Put fruit and herbs into jars and cover completely with hot vinegar. Leave 1/4" head space.
- Put on the lid and set the container in a dark, cool place, shaking or stirring every day and making sure that the vinegar covers the fruit and herbs. Steep as long as a month, checking for flavor.
- When the flavor suits you, remove fruit and strain through a coffee filter until vinegar is clear.
- Rebottle in washed, scalded jars. Label. Best to store in refrigerator (up to 6 months).

Suggested combinations

Use apple cider vinegar with these fruits and herbs:

- Raspberries, lemon thyme, and rosemary
- Cherries, tarragon, and anise hyssop
- Cranberries, mint, orange peel, cinnamon stick

Use white wine or champagne vinegar with these combinations:

- Peaches, opal basil, cinnamon stick
- Raspberries, fragrant rose petals, rose geranium
- Strawberries, mint, candied ginger
- Strawberries, peaches, opal basil, candied ginger

If you've had an abundant crop of basil this year, here is a site for you:

<https://www.foodandwine.com/seasonings/herbs/how-use-end-summer-basil>

PRESERVING SUMMER'S BEAUTY

From Herb n' Cowgirl – 6/13/19

Who can resist the lure of a summer garden in bloom? The riot of color, texture, and scent captivate our senses, helping us to shrug off the day's worries. Pausing to admire a bed of marigolds or sniff a climbing rose is good for body and soul.

With the coming of fall blossoms subside, tree leaves fall, and annuals complete their life cycle as nature prepares for winter. But wait – it doesn't have to disappear completely. You can start today to preserve the beauty of summer by drying flowers, leaves, and stems to decorate your home.

Before You Start Drying

Beautiful dried bouquets, wreaths, and swags start with plant material in the best condition. Select flowers and stems that are at the peak of their freshness. Always gather more than you think you will need. Some plant material shrinks by as much as a third when dried. Others may break apart or shatter easily. It's annoying to get near the end of a decorating project and be short of one or two dried blossoms. **Traditional Air Drying**

The simplest method for drying flowers while on the stalk is to hang them upside down to dry. A little patience is all that's required. Gravity helps to hold the petals and leaves in a more or less natural position. This method is best for sturdy flowers and stems that don't have a high moisture content.

Use rubber bands to secure the stems together. As they dry, the rubber band will shrink, keeping them from falling. When tying stalks together don't make the bunches very large. A large bundle will tend to stay moist in the center and may start to rot.

Don't have a bar or frame to hang your herbs? Create clusters of herbs or flowers, run a length of string through the bunch, and hang it on a clothes hanger that you can put almost anywhere.

Hang your botanicals in an undisturbed spot where the temperatures will be warm. For most of us, this will be a garage, attic, or shed but you may have other options. One crafter I know used a spare half-bath in her house for this. An electric space heater provided warm temperatures. She would turn on the ceiling fan to draw moist air out of the room. The result was a walk-in dehydrator.

Suggestions for Dried Materials

- Plants like yarrow, tansy, or lavender with strong stems and flowers that remain on the stem work well.
- Shrubs and trees with flexible stems can be twisted or woven into a wreath or swag shape before drying. Rosemary, sage, artemisias, and bay laurel are good examples.
- Ornamental grasses dry nicely but the stems are sometimes too slippery to hang. Then it's best to lay them on a screen or absorbent towel.
- Seedheads of dill, coriander, or garlic chives can often be allowed to dry naturally outside on the plant.
- And of course flowering herbs like calendula, bee balm, and roses.

Herb Storage Tip

Once you've dried herbs:

1. Store herb leaves whole. Crushed or ground leaves lose flavor faster than whole leaves.
2. Widemouthed glass jars are best for storage. I save pasta sauce jars for this although old canning jars are good too.
3. Take a piece of note paper and write the name of the herb and the month and year it was harvested. As you're filling the jar, put this paper *inside* the glass jar with the writing facing outward. You'll always know how old the contents are.
4. Store the closed jar in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight. Moisture, light, and heat are the enemies of anything organic.
5. Do NOT put dried herbs in the fridge, the freezer, or next to the stove. All three of these locations are sources of humidity.



On those foreign hillsides where wild herbs grow, they reproduce themselves naturally... When the plants' underground roots or rhizomes branch off and send up new plants, we say the plants have spread by their roots. A little farther along our hillside there is a colony of plants that multiply from their bases; every year each plant has a larger base with more shoots coming from it; we say these herbs multiply from their crowns.

—Thomas DeBaggio, *Growing Herbs from Seed, Cutting & Root*

Dividing your herbs to multiply them is good for you (dividing gives you more plants, for free!) and good for the plants (dividing discourages disease by thinning foliage). The best candidates for division are the perennial herbs that die back in the winter and return, larger than life, in the spring. In the southern half of the U.S., dividing these plants now will give them time to settle in for vigorous new growth in the spring. In the north, you may want to mark the plants now (before their tops die back) for division in early spring.

Whenever you dig, you'll use a shovel and a sharp knife. Dig around the circumference of the clump, then lift the root mass out of the ground. Shake off the soil or wash it off with a hose. Pull the clump apart, or divide the mass into pieces with the knife, trying to keep a large root system with each division. (Sometimes a clump will yield a dozen or so new plants; the larger the divisions, the less transplant shock the plant will suffer.) Dig a hole for your new plant, put it in, and water thoroughly.

Herbs to Divide

- Artemisia
- Bee balm
- Catnip
- Chives
- Day lilies
- Echinacea
- Lemon balm
- Lemongrass
- Mint
- Oregano
- Sorrel
- Sweet woodruff



Tips on Preserving Herbs – Ebert's Newsletter (8/3/20)

There's nothing like fresh herbs to punctuate the flavor of whatever you're cooking! Since we don't have warm weather all year-round here in Wisconsin, preserving your herbs will afford you that "fresh-from-the-garden" flavor during the colder months of the year. Who doesn't love home-made tomato sauce with the tomatoes that you've canned and prepared with fresh basil that you've sauteed your vegetables in? Read on for more tips on keeping that "garden fresh" flavor coming!



Preserving Your Herbs for Fresh Flavor all Year

The most common ways to preserve herbs are drying and freezing. You can also make herb-based sauces. Try one or more of these methods so you can enjoy that fresh-picked flavor year-round.

Here are the materials you should have on hand:

- paper bags
- rubber bands
- airtight containers
- ice cube trays
- freezer bags

Drying - Many herbs can be air dried by tying several stems together with a rubber band and hanging them in a cool, dark, dry location. Bay, marjoram, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, and thyme are good candidates for drying. If the area is dusty, keep the herbs in paper bags during the drying process. Parsley and thyme retain more of their color if they are dried in a 150-degree oven or in a dehydrator. When leaves are brittle, pull them off the stems and store in airtight jars in a cool, dark place. Don't crumble the leaves until you use them because they will lose flavor. Dried herbs keep their flavor and color for about three months. When you use them, rub them between your palms to release the oils for a more pungent flavor.

Freezing - Some herbs keep their flavor best when frozen. These include basil, chives, chervil, dill, lemon balm, mints, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, French tarragon, thyme, and lemon verbena. Wash them thoroughly and shake or pat off the excess water. Place individual leaves or chopped leaves in freezer bags. Flatten the bags to remove air. Dill, sage, rosemary, and thyme also freeze well on the stalks, which you can add frozen to cooking pots and remove before serving. You can also puree herbs with a small amount of water and freeze the paste in small, zippered freezer bags. Break off frozen pieces as you need them. Combine herbs that are good culinary companions, such as sage and thyme, mix with a little olive oil, and seal the paste in freezer bags. Or pour the mixture into ice cube trays. Once frozen, remove and store in freezer bags and thaw individual cubes as needed.

Tips - An herb's flavor is most pronounced just before the plant begins to flower. You can prolong the harvest by snipping off the flower buds whenever they appear. The essential oils are concentrated in the leaves in the morning, before the sun causes them to be released into the air, which make this the best time to harvest. Use a sharp scissors to snip individual leaves or cut an entire shoot just above a leaf node (this will encourage buds to grow at the nodes for a bushier plant).

Harvest the seeds of dill, fennel, and coriander when the flower heads have faded and started to dry. Clip the flower heads and place them in paper bags, then shake the heads to dislodge the seeds. Store seeds in an airtight container.

Public Service Announcement- Seeds in the Mail from China (Information from the USDA)

"Recently, you may have seen an unsolicited package come in your mailbox from China that contains seeds. It is very important that we collect as many of these seed shipments as possible. Therefore, we strongly encourage all seed packet recipients to send their seeds to their state APHIS-PPQ offices for investigation. In Wisconsin, please mail the unsolicited seeds with the original packaging (if available) and label to the following address:

USDA-APHIS-PPQ
1 Gifford Pinchot Drive
Madison, WI 53726

However, if you are unable to mail us your seeds, please contact our office to arrange for possible pickup or drop off options. Please note, due to COVID-19, building access is restricted to prearranged appointments only. Alternatively you may destroy the seeds or plants at home. Please see the instructions for the [approved destruction protocol](#) – do not compost this material.

We greatly appreciate your assistance with keeping America's agriculture and natural resources safe and healthy."

Diane Kescenovitz
2427 W Plum Tree Court
Mequon, WI 53092
(Return Service Requested)



UNDER THE LEAF

*Why are you surprised to find me here?
Under this leaf is my cozy abode
In summer I help in your garden plot
You see, I'm your garden toad.*

*This is my living room, and my muddy bed
In this kitchen, I dine in style.
Sometimes I must hurry to leave
When you scatter your compost pile.*

*Under the leaf in this jumble of weeds
Near the vegetable garden post
I catch millions of winged creatures
To change into yummy toad toast.*

*You're not aware you needed a toad?
You've never noticed me as I roam?
My work keeps pesty mosquitoes in check
Be glad I like to live at your home.*

...jejanssen



If you have an event, article, recipe, etc. in which you feel members might be interested, please send to Diane at kescenovitz.diane@att.net and I will try to put it in the next issue of SAGE LEAVES if there is room.

Future SAGE LEAVES will be mailed out to arrive by 11/1/20 and 1/1/21.

