

*“I have always been delighted at the prospect of a new day, a fresh try, one more start, with perhaps a bit of magic waiting somewhere behind the morning.”*

*... J B Priestley, Delight*

# SAGE LEAVES

**The Herb Society of America -**

**Wisconsin Unit**

Jan/Feb 2021 – Vol XXXXII #1

## **Unit Meetings**

**Tuesday, January 19, 10 a.m.**

**Program:** Grants & Scholarship Recipients' Reports

**President:** Lore Borth

**Location:** Zoom Meeting on your device

**Saturday, February 20, 10 a.m.**

**Program:** Herbal Crafts

**Location:** Zoom Meeting on your device

**2021 Spring Symposium, March 6 – CANCELLED - Rescheduled March 2022**

**2021 Herb & Artisan Fair, May 22**

**2021 Holiday Party, December 8**

**Please mark your calendars for the above dates and locations**

Editor: Diane Kescenovitz, [kescenovitz.diane@att.net](mailto: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!

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Wisconsin Unit Web: [Herb-Society-Wisconsin.org](http://Herb-Society-Wisconsin.org) (Editor: Diane Kescenovitz)

Herb Society of America office: [Herbs@HerbSociety.org](mailto:Herbs@HerbSociety.org)

Herb Society of America web: [www.herbsociety.org](http://www.herbsociety.org)

# NEWSBUDS...

Happy New Year 2021 -- Hope your holidays had happy times. Thank you to the members that joined our Holiday Party Zoom session in December. It was nice to see ugly & sparkly sweaters and AJ's plaid, jewelry and china some from our mothers, see Mary Kay's apron and prepared tea party, learn about amaryllis from Marji, enjoy Val's elf hat, see Eva's wreath from past craft time, Susan McD for the view of Lake Michigan. and having Diane read the chat items. Thank you Louise and Sandy for mentioning the WE Energy Cookie Books are online [Cookie Book Holiday Tradition/WE Energies \(we-energies.com\)](#) I'm sure I'm missing some enjoyable details. We didn't have time for a jeopardy game, but having just the social time was so nice!

Let's plan a bountiful 2021 of herbal education and hopefully a great herbal harvest to share at our meetings. We are still scheduling Zoom sessions for our next meetings. I always enjoy hearing the grant reports at our January meetings. Maybe you've seen the light show at Boerner or have participated in their activities: [Friends of Boerner Botanical Gardens » Learn in Nature at Home](#). OWW had an interesting email describing their fund raiser this winter, and maybe you saw the Milwaukee article on their next project [Eagle's Old World Wisconsin creating beer Brewing Experience building \(jonline.com\)](#) At our February meeting, we will feature herbal crafts as our topic. Check on the list of HSA and other virtual events; please share learnings from these if you are able to view them.

Happy Anniversary to Our WI Unit! Hope you saw our ad in the Herbarist Issue 85, page 63. I look forward to when we can meet in person to celebrate. Thank you to those members who have started to collect some memories of our past years and list of past unit chairs.

My first seed catalog has just arrived in the mail! I just read the description of Amazel Basil, and I remember Peggy planting it at Boerner. It's at the top of my list to purchase for this spring.

Herbally yours, Melody

## **HSA Webinars** [Herb Society of America : Portal Log In page : HSA Webinars](#)

Jan. 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 *A History of Chocolate* with Sarah Lohman, author of *Eight Flavors: The Untold Story of America Cuisine*

Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021 1 pm Eastern *Weird Herbs*, with horticulturist Amanda Thomsen and author of *Kiss My Aster: A Graphic Guide to Creating a Terrific Yard Totally Tailored to You*. See her website [Kiss My Aster!](#)

## **HSA Events** [Herb Society of America : Events : Event Calendar : Event Calendar](#)

Jan. 6 Wed., Herbal Conversations - Let's Ponder Parsley - An Herb With A Storied Past, A Delicious Present, And A Promising Future

Feb. 3 Wed., Herbal Conversations - Herbal Truffles In Love And Lore

## **HSA Virtual Ed Con**

June 10<sup>th</sup> - Annual Meeting of Members

June 11<sup>th</sup> - Awards Ceremony - Rosemary Circle/Golden Sage Recognition

June 12<sup>th</sup> - Unit Chair & Member at Large Meeting

**HSA Past Fall Gatherings** – Recordings are still on the member website if you missed the presentations this fall [Herb Society of America : Portal Log In page : National Meetings & District Gatherings](#)

### **Events of Interest**

January 20 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Melinda Meyers - Grow Flavorful and Nutritional Herbs Indoors  
Fight the winter blues and boost your winter meals flavor and nutrition with homegrown herbs. Plant a windowsill herb garden filled with your favorites. Melinda will tell you how to start your garden from seeds or transplants. She'll also share tips on proper care, harvesting and more.

Feb. 20-21 Sat. & Sun Virtual Garden & Landscape Expo Feb. 20-21 - Madison Garden Expo [Garden & Landscape Expo \(wigardenexpo.com\)](#) The three main components of the 2021 virtual Garden & Landscape Expo will include immersive video garden tours, a virtual exhibitor mall, and a full schedule of educational video presentations followed by a live Q&A. There will also be a virtual community garden you can contribute to, as well as gardening activities for kids.

March 2021 Racine-Kenosha Master Gardeners Virtual Spring Into Gardening Conference at \$20 with two topics each Sat. morning. Registration in early January.

### **Happy Anniversary to Our WI Unit**

*We are 45 years old! Anyone interested in helping create a powerpoint and/or brochure to honor our history? Let Melody know. We have some information gathered and a list of past chairs; assistance could be used in layout, proof-reading, and word smithing.*

### **Nominations**

We will be accepting nominations for Chair and Vice Chair for our elections in April. Please consider nominating someone or stepping forward and nominate yourself. Any qualified member who is interested in being included on the slate of candidates must apply to the Nominating Chair, Melody Orban, by the end of the February meeting. Candidates for office should be an actively involved member in good standing for at least one year. The proposed slate of candidates will be sent to the unit membership in the March-April Sage Leaves. We anticipate another absentee ballot for this election.

### **Herb Fair May 22, 2021**

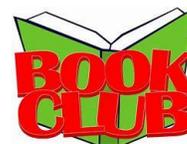
Last year we needed to cancel our event. We have a date scheduled for this spring. Anyone interested in co-chairing. Please phone or email Melody.



***We know that you know how to celebrate Valentine's Day. But here is an interesting gender fact to ponder. During the year, women purchase 75% of the chocolate, but during the days before Valentine's Day, 75% of the chocolate purchases are made by men. Consider this, too: we're not the first civilization to value chocolate—and of course, chocolate is an herb, too!***

## OUT AND ABOUT

Our next Book Club zoom-discussion will be Wednesday, January 6, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. We will be discussing Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer. If you are interested in attending, please email Joanne Ruggieri (joa38rugg@gmail.com) so she can include you in the zoom discussion.



Also, we welcome suggestions for books to read for our next discussion in April – please send within the next two weeks so we can make selection at end of January book club gathering. Thanks, Joanne

### **Book discussion:**

Gardeners have a special relationship with the earth and the genuine pleasure of being in partnership with it. Yet "humans are the younger brothers of creation."

- In BRAIDING SWEETGRASS how does Kimmerer describe Sweetgrass and its importance?
  - How do we define earth's gifts to us?
  - Do you agree that humans can learn from plants and animals? If so, how?
  - How does respect for earth's gifts change us?
  - What made you want to be a gardener?
  - Do you respect what you take from the earth?
  - Do you see the earth as property or gift? How does your perspective show how you value what you take from it?
  - How does reciprocity between plants and humans give balance to our world/lives?
  - Is there an interdependence between humans and plants?
  - What does each of The Three Sisters - corn, beans and squash - bring to their reciprocal relationship?
  - What do the maples teach us?
  - What is our responsibility to the land?
  - How can plants (or losing them) repeat the history of the people?
  - Does our land need to be healed?
  - In ceremonies, why is Sweetgrass burned?
  - Do you feel differently toward your plants, gardening, the earth - now?
- 

### **New Event:**

We're in the thinking/planning stages of having birthday gatherings - one in March for the January-June people and one in September for the July-December people. That's right in the middle of each half of the year so nobody's day is too far from a celebration. If you have ideas please send them.

We're a little stymied now with quarantine and all, but if you're computer savvy and know of a good concert, movie, travelogue, etc. you can share with us, just give a call. We can pop our own popcorn, pour our own glass of whatever and enjoy the event with each other.

Be safe, be well and be at peace in the new year.

Joanne, 414-281-0051

## ***Herb of the Month for February 2021***

### **PINK PEPPERCORNS**

(by Nino Ridgway)

Pink Peppercorns are the fruits (berries) of 2 South American shrubs, Peruvian peppertree, *Schinus molle*, and Brazilian pepper, *S. terebinthifolia*. These fruits are the size and shape of black peppercorns from the unrelated black pepper vine (*Piper nigrum*), except they are bright rosy pink. Their peppery flavor is milder than black pepper and somewhat fruity. Peruvian peppertree is not found in the USA, but the Brazilian pepper was introduced into Florida as an ornamental shrub. It has unfortunately become an exotic invasive, commonly known as Florida holly.

The FDA banned pink peppercorns as a food for a time because there was some concern that they might contain toxic substances or would cause allergic reactions to people with tree nut allergies. (They are related to cashews.) These ideas were largely debunked, and the ban was lifted. However, neither species is endorsed by the FDA as safe to eat. Both types of pink peppercorns can still be purchased from spice companies in the USA, as well as Europe, Africa (Madagascar), Asia, and South America.

Pink peppercorns have a delicate texture, so they are not ground like black pepper but used whole or else crushed with the side of a knife blade or in a mortar and pestle. They can also be used whole in salads, in cheese, or in a fish sauce, somewhat the way capers are used. They were once commonly used in French haute cuisine, and are still found locally in France and other parts of the world. They are most often used to season beef, pork, fatty fish, and in salad dressings, marinades, curries, and sauces.

Pink peppercorns can be purchased locally at Penzeys and the Spice House, or ordered on-line from Frontier Co-Op.

## ***2021 International Herb of the Year – Parsley***

(Parsley also happens to be Herb of the Month for January)

**Parsley** - From the book Green Thoughts by Eleanor Perenyi)



No food snob today will use anything but the flat-leaved Italian variety, which they have been assured by Marcella Hazan, among others, is superior in flavor to the curly-leaved. Well, I don't agree, I use Italian parsley when instructed to do so in a recipe, and not otherwise. I much prefer the curly kind, which is also more versatile. Unlike the Italian, it can be frizzled to accompany fish or croquettes, grated in a Mouli made in France for the purpose, and heaped on a platter as decoration. I grow enormous quantities of it, mixing in a few plants of the Italian variety for those occasions when I need it—mostly to save face.

Parsley is a biennial and will flower and set seed the second year. The inexperienced think its survival portends another crop, and are doomed to disappointment. Once the seed heads appear, the plants are finished. The seeds, to be sure, will make plants the following summer, but in the meantime you will be without garden-grown parsley. It is therefore necessary to begin anew each spring, preferably not with

seedlings, which are expensive and don't transplant very well. (The lower leaves are apt to turn yellow, and the whole plant takes time to regain its equilibrium.) Seed, however, is notoriously hard to germinate, and books recommend soaking it overnight to loosen the rough outer casing. My advice is: don't. The wet gelatinous mass sticks to the fingers and is impossible to sow evenly. Thalassa Cruso has solved this problem once and for all: you hoe a shallow trench and sow the seed. Then step into the kitchen and set a kettle of water to boil. The instant it does, seize it, dash back to the garden and dribble the scalding water down the row. Cover lightly with soil. A uniform row nearly always results.

Parsley is as miserable in the kitchen as most herbs. Limp, etiolated and not enough for a family, a pot of it isn't worth the effort when any good grocer has crisper, greener bunches to sell. It has a long season in the garden too—I have picked it as late as December, even under a light covering of snow.



## **Recipes**

### **Herbed Parsley Garlic Butter**

1 stick	butter	Process all ingredients till smooth
½ c	chopped parsley	Store in covered container
1 T	lemon juice	Can be used on bread, chicken, seafood,
½ t	minced garlic	steak, etc.



### **Strawberry Banana Delight** (Tricia Hallam)

2 c	crushed graham crackers	3	eggs
6 T	melted butter	1 t	vanilla
¼ c	sugar	4-5	bananas
1 c	butter	1 pt	strawberries
2 c	powdered sugar	1 pt	whipping cream (or cool whip)
1 t	vanilla	¼ c	powdered sugar

Mix graham cracker crumbs, butter and sugar. Form shell up sides of a 9"x13"x2" glass pan. Bake 10 min at 400° and cool.

Cream butter very well, 5-10 min. Gradually add 2 c powdered sugar. Add eggs one at a time. Beat well after each addition. Add 1 t vanilla. Beat entire mixture 10 minutes or until completely smooth. Slice bananas and place over crust (I dip them in lemon juice first to keep from turning brown). Add strawberries. Pour filling in crust over fruits.

Whip cream, add ¼ c powdered sugar and 1 t vanilla. Spread over top. Refrigerate overnight.

NOTE: For a "Banana Split Torte", add crushed pineapple to the top of filling.

## **This Is the Best Way to Keep Your Herbs Fresh**

*(TASTE OF HOME [Christine Rukavena](#))*

**You can keep herbs fresh for up to a month—if you know how to store parsley, cilantro and basil the right way.**

### **How to Store Parsley (and Other Fresh Herbs)**

*The Trick Is to Treat Fresh Herbs Like Flowers*

It's a simple rule of thumb to help you get the most longevity out of your herbs. Like flowers, fresh herbs benefit from having a freshly cut stem. This maximizes the herbs' ability to take up water and remain turgid—the scientific term for fresh and firm, not droopy, plant cells.

Start with a fresh-cut stem for fresh herb bunches such as parsley, basil, cilantro and mint. Next, prep your "vase," which is any sturdy tumbler that won't tip over without a fight. Add about an inch of water. Just like with flowers, make sure no leaves are immersed in the water. This hastens spoilage and quickly ups the funk factor. To keep herbs fresh for up to a month, take the time to carefully clean and arrange the herb bunch.

*Pro Tip:* Use the knowledge that you'll be storing your fresh herbs in a vase the next time you pick up a bunch. Choose a tidy one!

*Prolong Life in the Fridge*



Just like at the florist, parsley and cilantro last longest when they're kept in the cool. Our home refrigerators are notoriously dry places, though. Easy fix? Tie a produce bag around the top of the bunch to protect your herbs. The bag traps humidity so herbs don't wither.

*Pro Tip:* Each time you use the parsley, change the water and turn the produce bag inside out so any moisture that has built up inside the bag can escape.

### **Keep Certain Herbs on the Countertop**

Basil and mint are too delicate for the fridge's cold temps. They'll soften and decay faster in the chilly confines of the icebox. Keep a pretty vase of them on the counter (or a pot growing on your patio) for all your summertime favorites.

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



### **AS YOU LIKE IT**

*Snow flakes are never alike, they say  
Because for some they are work  
For some they are play.  
Snow means fun for the young-hearted age,  
For shovelers and plowers it means extra wage.  
The thousands of patterns nature floats down on us  
Sometimes tie up traffic for trains, cars and bus.  
Those of us who have lost childlike fun in the snow  
See drifts as a nuisance to shovel or blow.  
Storms deliver a mighty cause of winter woe  
Delaying a flight, broken ankles or frozen toe.  
Apologies to skiers we make, of course  
And to those who can find a sure-footed horse.*

*...J E Janssen "Under the Leaf"*



If you have an event, article, recipe, books, etc. in which you feel members might be interested, please send to Diane at [kescenovitz.diane@att.net](mailto: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 3/1/21 and 5/1/21.

