

"Love is a fruit in season at all times and within reach of every hand."

....Mother Teresa

SAGE LEAVES

The Herb Society of America – Wisconsin Unit

September/October 2021 – Vol XXXXII #5

Unit Meetings

Saturday, September 25, 10:00 a.m.

Program: Annual Meeting. HSA Webinar: "All About Tea" by Kathleen Gips

Theme: Mad Hatter Tea Party

Location: St. Christopher's Church

Tuesday, October 19, 10:00 a.m.

Program: "The Herbal Brain" by Dr Emory Prescott, live on Zoom

Location: St. Christopher's Church

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!

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NEWSBUDS...



Greetings Herb Members,

You will be receiving this newsletter and the Annual Meeting mailing in early September. Marlene has arranged a wonderful schedule of programs for this year. In September, a Mad Hatter Tea is planned for after the Annual Meeting. There's no prep on your part...a delightful hat has been made for you for teatime. Just bring your smile; we'll take photos.

In October, we will connect via Zoom with Dr. Emory Prescott for a presentation on "The Herbal Brain". We do have her book on our library cart. Research for November will focus on Viola and Tricolor Pansy. Great edible flowers! The program list enclosed in your Annual Meeting mailing continues with the rest of the year for great sessions. Thank you, Marlene.

We do have open positions on our board. Consider stepping up to take a leadership role as Chair of the Bylaws Committee. The chair needs to be familiar with these two documents—Bylaws and Policies & Procedures-- that are on our Members section of our website. Please, let me know if you are interested. We are looking for a historian—someone to organize our photos and event flyers either in "scrapbook" or digital form. This could be a board position. Also, if you are interested in co-chairing the Herb Fair, May 21, 2022 with me, please let me know. Next year we hope to have both events: the Herb & Artisan Fair in May and the Herb Day later in the summer. Our collaboration with Boerner for Herb Day was successful, thank you to the many who gave their time for that event.

As you know, we have supported Boerner with grants. We have applied to have Boerner Botanical designated as a GreenBridges™ Program herb garden. The GreenBridges™ Program helps to create opportunities for the safe passage of plants and pollinators and to avoid habitat fragmentation. Each garden is a link in the chain across the nation, providing safe movement for the plants and pollinators that help maintain healthy ecosystems.

I hope you've enjoyed a good summer season, despite the Wisconsin weather. My summer included special babysitting time with my great-granddaughters age 4 and 5. It's wonderful to go to library story time and garden with curious young ones. They each had their own 3x3 square foot garden area. We enjoyed onions, squash, tomatoes and flowers. It was nice to feel safe traveling. I enjoyed visiting gardens at Chicago Botanical Garden Herb Weekend, West Bend Garden Walk, Green Bay Botanical, Congdon Garden in Delavan, Boerner, and Will Radler's Rosarium. It's always wonderful to see plantings of the herbs in containers and in ground designs.

I am looking forward to my second term as chair and seeing you at our Annual Meeting. We will keep growing forward,

Melody

Holiday Luncheon – December 8, 2021

We are scheduled to have our Holiday Luncheon at the Town Club, in Fox Point, on December 8, 2021.

A Nutcracker theme has been planned with craft projects and decorations. An invitation will be shared with the group in Fall, which will list the luncheon menu and cost per person.

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

~Denise Nelson, Event Chair

Out and About

Hello,

We're having a *Mad Hatter tea party* at the September 25th annual meeting; hopefully this will include food and drink. We'll also be congratulating July-December birthday people whether on zoom or in person, so feelings are running high for this special day.

The next book discussion will be in February and here are some of the books suggested:

Twisted Tea Christmas (Laura Childs) or any Laura Childs book

Queen Anne's Lace (Susan Wittig Albert)

The Last Chance Olive Ranch (Susan Wittig Albert)

Atlas Shrug (Ayn Rand)

Essentialism (Greg McKeown)

World Without End (Ken Follet)

Mistress of Spices (Chitra Banerjee)

Circe (Madeline Miller)

Wicked Plants (Amy Stewart)

A Lady's Guide to Etiquette and Murder (Dianne Freeman)

As I said these are suggestions, so if you have any books to add, please email the title to me and we'll vote, probably in December, so we have plenty of time to purchase and read the book.

July through December birthdays we'll be celebrating:

July 2 Mike Timm

July 3 Michael Dudley Williams

July 18 Valerie Kupczak-Rios

July 22 Melody Orban

July 29 Kate Normoyle

Aug. 12 Mary Beth Mahoney

Aug. 20 Joan Janssen

Sept. 4 Penny Atkin

Sept. 13 Lore Borth

Sept. 21 Lisa McCormack

Sept. 24 Susan Williams

Sept. 30 Kim Copeland

Oct. 4 Jeanne Langenberg

Oct. 8 Pat Greathead

Oct. 9 Mary Kay McDevitt

Oct. 12 Susan McDonnell

Oct. 23 Marlene Mravik

Oct. 26 Susie Bigham

Nov. 5 Shelly Culea

Nov. 16 Diane Clark

Nov. 30 Ellen Hayward

Dec. 1 Maureen Powers-Todt

Dec. 30 Denise Nelson

Dec. 31 A.J. Star

See you in September.

Joanne



HOREHOUND: SEPTEMBER HERB OF THE MONTH

(Nino Ridgway)

Horehound, *Marrubium vulgare*, is a perennial herb native to Europe, North Africa, and Asia. It thrives in a variety of soils and climates, and has become widely established around the world. It is an attractive 2 foot tall plant with silvery, ruffled or folded foliage but unremarkable flowers. In the right (or wrong?) location it can spread aggressively. It is sometimes used to cover gravelly disturbed areas. It is in the Mint Family (Labiatae), so beware!

Horehound has no culinary use, except it is occasionally used as a commercial flavoring (but see below!). People have long used it for respiratory ailments, digestive complaints, menstrual cramps, seizures, and many other health issues. The FDA has found no factual basis for using horehound as a medicine, but suggest that it does not have negative effects if used in moderation. I don't know why anyone would ever consume it. Horehound is horribly bitter! I tried to drink horehound tea once for a bad cough, but I couldn't get it down. Same with horehound cough drops. If I were to try it again, I think I would steep it in honey (also good for coughs) and then eat the honey!

MEDLAR: OCTOBER HERB OF THE MONTH

(Nino Ridgway)

Medlar, *Mespilus germanica*, is a small (20 foot tall) shrubby tree in the Rose family. It is native to Southern Europe and Southwest Asia, and has only been grown in North America since the early 1800's. The edible portion is the fruit, which looks like a rose hip on steroids. The fruits are hard and green when picked, and the fruits must ripen further indoors (bletting) for several weeks until they are soft and squishy (not quite rotten). The pulp is then separated from seeds and skin and eaten fresh or cooked into a compote. Fully ripe medlar flesh supposedly tastes like cinnamon flavored applesauce.

Now I am not going to run out and plant a medlar tree. First off, I wouldn't find one for sale. They are hard to start from seed and are normally grafted anyway. They are also not particularly attractive and many have thorns. They are self-fertile, so at least you would only need one. They are hardy in zones 5-9 and should produce abundant fruit in 3-4 years. But we are talking fruits slightly larger than a golf ball that are mostly seeds and skin, so hours of tedium await the cook. And do you have a "bletting cabinet" in your house? Nothing leads me to think these fruits are exquisitely flavored, nor do they have a strong history of medicinal use. Still, Shakespeare spoke highly of medlars, and they were at one time all the rage in British society. So if you want a challenge, go for it. Meantime I will ponder how this plant got onto the Herb of the Month list!

Recipes

Nannette's Orzo Salad

(The Essential Guide to Growing & Cooking with Herbs – HSA)

½ #	orzo pasta, cooked and drained	½ c	diced orange bell pepper
3 T	olive oil	½ c	finely chopped onion
2 T	red wine vinegar	4 T	crumbled feta cheese
1 t	Dijon mustard	12	Kalamata olives – sliced
1 t	chopped fresh Greek oregano	2 T	minced fresh parsley
1 t	fresh thyme	4 T	chopped fresh Greek oregano
1 T	chopped fresh chives	½ c	chopped Roma tomatoes
½ t	salt	½ c	chopped cucumber
			Salt & pepper to taste

- Cook pasta in boiling water for about 8 minutes, drain.
- Combine olive oil, vinegar, mustard, 1 t oregano, thyme, chives, salt. Blend thoroughly and pour over pasta. Mix well and allow to chill in refrigerator for about 1 hour.
- Stir in chopped vegetables, cheese, olive and additional herbs. Add salt and pepper to taste.
- Serve chilled or at room temperature.

Donna Knop's Beef Burgundy Recipe

BEEF BURGUNDY
(Winner of 1982 Frontier Festival Camp Cook-off)
(Cody, WY)

5 lb. beef, cubed	2 stalks celery
1/2 c. oil	2 carrots, sliced
1/4 c. flour	4 sprigs parsley, minced
3 cloves garlic	1 lb. bacon
4 c. dry red wine	1 c. sliced onions
3 c. beef broth	8 oz. mushrooms, sliced

In a Dutch oven, brown meat in oil. Drain and set aside. Add flour and cook until foamy. Stir in garlic, wine and broth and bring to a boil. Add browned beef, celery, carrots and parsley. Simmer 2 hours.

Saute bacon until crisp, then crumble. Saute onions and mushrooms in the bacon fat. Drain then add bacon, onions and mushrooms to beef. Season to taste. Serve over crisp hash browns - boiled potatoes or rice.

Donna Rae Knop

Fresh Herb Finishing Salts (America's Test Kitchen 6/20/19)

Store bought flavored finishing salts (which are used as a final salty flourish for a dish, providing pops of crunchy, mineral salinity) can be great, but they are always expensive. The good news is that they are both super easy to make, and a great way to capture and preserve the flavor of fresh herbs. Chop up a bunch of herbs, mix them with some nice sea salt, and let the salt do its magic, drawing moisture out of the herbs via osmosis. Because the herbs are never heated, their flavor remains fresh and bright. You're left with a delicious finishing salt that's great sprinkled on meat or fish, rubbed onto the rim of your cocktail glass, or dusted over movie-night popcorn.

Ingredients

1/2 c coarse or flake sea salt

Choose ONE of the following:

- 1-1/2 c finely chopped fresh basil
- 1 c thinly sliced fresh chives
- 1 c finely chopped fresh dill
- 1 c finely chopped fresh tarragon

Instructions: Makes 1/2 cup salt

This technique works well with most herbs. If you try it with an herb that isn't in the list below, just remember to use less if the herb is potent (like tarragon) and more if the herb is mild (like chives).

1. Line rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Combine salt and herb in large bowl. Pick up handful of salt mixture and rub between your hands to disperse herb throughout salt. Repeat until thoroughly combined, about 30 seconds. Transfer mixture to prepared sheet and spread into even layer.

2. Place sheet in 50 to 70 degree F location away from direct sunlight. Let mixture sit until completely dry, 36 to 48 hours, raking mixture with fork every 12 hours to ensure herb dries evenly.

3. Rub mixture between your hands to break up any clumps of dried herb and evenly distribute herb throughout salt. Transfer to airtight container. (Herb salt can be stored at room temperature for up to 2 months.)

Savor the Flavor of Herbs All Year Long

GRIT Reader Contribution By Lois Hoffman

There are vegetables, there are flowers, and then there are herbs. I call these little gems "little giants" because even though they are small in stature, they pack a big wallop of flavor and nutrients. So, why enjoy them just during the summer months when they are fresh?

Preserving herbs lets you enjoy their flavor enhancements to dishes all year long. Besides that, if you have ever planted herbs, you know that each plant gives and gives and keeps on giving, so much so that you could never use it all in one season, even taking into account if you share with all your friends and neighbors.

There are different ways to preserve them, depending on how you like to use them. Whichever method you choose, harvesting and preparing them all starts the same way. Be sure to cut them before the flower forms. If the plant has started to flower, cut the flower off or the plant will focus on the flower and not the leaves, which is the part you want.

Always cut herbs in the morning before the sun strips them of their natural essential oils. Snip the lower leaves first because they were grown first. Follow the motto of restaurants, "first in, first out." Be sure and cut just above where the leaf meets the stem. This protects them from getting diseases caused by cutting too close to the stem.

Wash the herbs in water thoroughly, checking for bugs and making sure all dirt is off, especially if you harvest just after a rain. Dry them thoroughly, using one of three methods.

Herbs can be dried by cutting whole stems and hanging upside down in a cool, dark place. They are dry when the leaves begin to crumble. Shake to remove dust and withered leaves. Secure stems together and hang in a place that is well ventilated away from light. If you don't have a good place, place them in a brown paper bag with holes to let air flow through. Ventilation is the key. This is probably the simplest method and it makes the space you hang them in smell delightful.

They can also be dried in the oven. This method is faster than air drying and is a good option if you are in a humid environment. Simply lay the herbs on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper since metal can affect the flavor. Place them in a 150 degree F. oven, or the lowest temperature that your oven has, and leave the door slightly ajar. Remove when the leaves are dry and crumbly and place in air tight container. This should take roughly 4 hours. If you have a dehydrator, that works equally well.

Herbs can also be frozen, especially leafy ones such as cilantro, basil, parsley and tarragon. They can be chopped and frozen on a cookie sheet and then stored in a Ziploc bag or they can be placed in ice cube trays and frozen in water or broth. If using the latter method, be sure and take into account the extra water when used in recipes. This approach works well for soups and stews.

Of course, you want to use as many fresh as you can and there are only slight differences between fresh and dried. Herbs placed in a glass of water will last two to three weeks in the refrigerator. When substituting dry for fresh, remember that dried have more concentrated flavor. When using dried, use a third of the amount of fresh that is called for in a recipe. Also, remember that fresh is added at the end of the cooking so heat doesn't destroy the color and flavor whereas dried herbs need more time for the flavor to seep into the food, so add them at the beginning.

Herbs can also be preserved in oil, vinegar and as butter. When making herb butter, combine your favorite herbs with butter, shape and freeze. These are great on fresh hot rolls in the middle of winter. Herb butter is also known as compound butter, so look under these two names when googling for various recipes.

Herb-infused vinegar is great for making your own marinades and salad dressings. You can get creative and use fancy old bottles, just be sure and use corks instead of metal caps since vinegar will rust metal. Mix 1/2 cup of herbs with 2 cups of vinegar, seal with a cork and set in a dark place for at least six weeks, the longer it sets, the more robust the flavor. Most of these are made with either white or apple cider vinegar but you can get creative and try balsamic vinegar if you like the taste of it or white wine makes a good choice too. If you are not going to use it for a while, seal around the cork with beeswax.

You can also do this with oil instead of vinegar. If using oil, make sure your herbs are completely dry as any water left in the leaves will make the oil rancid. The proportions are the same, use 1/2 cup herbs per 2 cups of oil. As with vinegar, choose your favorite oils.

Now, here is the real nifty one. You can make your own cooking extracts using herbs. Pour vodka in an old jar, add vanilla beans and wait six weeks and you have your own vanilla. One of my favorites is mint extract. Put vodka in a jar and add mint. You can't buy extracts that are fresher or more potent than making your own from your own herbs. Try your favorite flavor and add sugar to taste to make homemade coffee syrup. Put these in a pretty bottle and tie with a bow and you have unique Christmas gifts.

Herbs open up a whole new realm of flavor and can take a recipe from ordinary to extraordinary. There is no reason to watch them go to waste at the end of the season when there are so many choices for preserving them. Experiment until you find your favorites and then explore. The possibilities are endless.

The Annual Meeting

*It was their annual meeting
They gathered near a star
The fairies of the garden
Flew in from field afar.
They whispered to each other
Before the gavel fell
The secrets and remembrances
They could hardly wait to tell.
The business of the evening
To select the plantman's prize
Set the fairies to discussing
Who could ever be so wise?
Radiant and confident
Each arose to gently praise
Their friendly, favorite gardener
Whose flowers they helped to raise*

*After they finished voting
They whispered sweet good byes
Hugged and waved their fairy wands
To hide their teary eyes.
Fairies of the garden
Hate seeing the summer fade
Hate folding their fairy wings
Hate leaving the grassy glade.
Even fairies of the gardens
Must heed the season's plan
And hide away like flowers
Keeping safe in winter's span.*



...jejanssen

Successful Seed Saving

(Ebert's Village Gardener Express 7/15/21)

Saving seeds can be economical since a single flower can generate dozens or even hundreds of seeds. Although the procedure is simple, there are a few techniques that will improve your chances of being a successful seed saver.

Tools and Materials Needed:

- plant markers
- paper bags
- rubber bands
- envelopes
- labels

1. Choose the best plants. There's always some variability in a planting of the same variety -- some plants will have stronger stems or a more pleasing color or fragrance. Use plant markers to help you remember which seeds to save since the flowers will have faded by the time you harvest the seeds.

2. Observe seed formation. Most flower seeds are borne in pods or capsules. The ideal time for gathering seeds varies from crop to crop, but in general, you want to let the seeds dry on the plant as long as possible. Observe plants frequently and watch as seeds develop and ripen.

3. Use paper bags to collect seeds. Shake the seed head over a paper bag to collect the seeds, or snip the entire dried seed head and drop it into a labeled paper bag.

4. Separate seeds from the chaff. Some seeds fall freely from the seed heads or pods; others need to be rubbed to loosen them. Remove non-seed material.

5. Store seeds in a tightly sealed container. Good choices include small glass jars (baby food jars are handy) or film canisters. Keep them in a cool place -- in the refrigerator if there's room. You can store several different types of seeds in separate, labeled envelopes in the same jar.

Additional Tips:

Decorate envelopes, insert seeds, seal tightly, then give as gifts.

Include plant details and cultural information on the storage jars and envelopes, including plant name and variety, planting depth, and sun/shade preferences.

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



Autumn breeze

Changing leaves

Colors red and gold

Autumn sounds

All around

Beauty to behold.



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 11/1/21 and 1/1/22.