

*“Cheerfulness, like spring, opens all the blossoms of the inward person”*

*-Jean Paul Richter*

# SAGE LEAVES

## **The Herb Society of America – Wisconsin Unit**

Mar/Apr 2022 – Vol XXXXIII #2

### **Unit Meetings**

#### **Saturday, March 26, 10 am Meeting**

*(please note that this is a Saturday meeting)*

**Program:** Speaker: Lorrie Burrows “African Herbs/Plants”

**Location:** St. Christopher's – Choice In-Person or Zoom on your device

#### **Tuesday, April 19, 10 am Meeting**

**Program:** Speaker: Angela Kingsawan “Ancient Herbs”

Unit Election for Secretary/Treasurer

**Location:** St. Christopher's - Choice In-Person or Zoom on your device

#### **PLEASE NOTE – Symposium Rescheduled**

The board approved moving the 2022 Symposium to April 1, 2023 at the Woman’s Club in downtown Milwaukee. The theme will be Scarborough Fair. Carrie Hennessey will be speaking to us about the herbs Parsley, Sage, Rosemary, and Thyme.

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

Editor: Diane Kescenovitz – if you will be going out of town for an extended period of time, please notify Diane of change of address or request an email copy.

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Wisconsin Unit Website: [herb-society-wisconsin.org](http://herb-society-wisconsin.org)

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

Facebook: [HerbSocietyofAmericaWIUnit](https://www.facebook.com/HerbSocietyofAmericaWIUnit)

# NEWSBUDS...



Spring is right around the corner to be welcomed on March 20. Have you also been ordering seeds and drawing plans for your own garden? I have. We usually have a seed swap at our March meeting, so bring seeds and envelopes/zip bags if you would like to participate. We are making plans for our spring event: The Herb & Artisan Fair at Boerner on May 21. We have verbal agreements for speakers: Jane Hawley Stevens on "Teatime in the Garden for Increased Well Being" and Michael and Kathi Rock for "Gardening for Hummingbirds" and Rory Petry "Ferns, the Hidden Herbs". Pat is doing a marvelous job inviting vendors for indoors, on the lawn at the circle entrance and patio area. We will announce if we will be able to have our Tea Room indoors or out in a tent offering individually plated treats for sale, and count on member support for this public event.

Joan Amundson as past chair is the contact for nominations. Denise and Tricia are willing to be on the ballot again, but let Joan know if you would consider running for either office.

Consider sharing your experience for future meetings: In May our topic is Edible Weeds. Does any member have experience foraging for "weeds" or have recipes for Dandelion, Purslane, Chickweed, Garlic Mustard, Red clover, Wild Garlic (Ramps) who would like to share information at our unit meeting. Our June meeting will highlight the GreenBridges Program of HSA. I know Denise has a GreenBridges garden (and sign). Has anyone else in the unit applied for the status of GreenBridges? Please let me know.

Future Club Events: Denise has already been working on 2022 events. The Holiday Party will be Wednesday, December 7. For our Herb Symposium we are trying a date a bit later, hoping that winter weather will not be an issue but still early enough to use the learning from the day to make plans for our own garden. So, no fooling, Spring Symposium for 2023 will be on April 1. Visit our Facebook page for the announcement:

<https://business.facebook.com/pg/HerbSocietyofAmericaWIUnit/posts/>

Warmest regards, (While writing this in February the ice storm is expected---crazy Wisconsin weather-stay safe)

...Melody

## **April and May Scheduled HSA Webinars**

March 23, 1:00 p.m. EST: Christine Parks, "Grow Your Own Tea"

April 19, 1:00 p.m. EST: Paul Polechla, "Presentation on the 2020 Research Grant"

## **Renewal Message from the Treasurer – Denise Nelson**

It will soon be time to renew your HSA-WI Unit membership. We look forward to having you as a continuing part of our Society. Your friendship, support and generosity toward the Unit is greatly appreciated.

Attached to the front of this newsletter, you will find a membership renewal form. Please complete the survey portion and send it to me with your check payable to HSA-WI Unit. If you have any questions, call me. Thank you in advance for paying your dues promptly by May 17, 2022. Checks should be mailed to me or given to me at a meeting.

## **Grant Awards for 2022**

For the second year in a row, Covid-19 precautions prevented the Unit from holding its revenue-producing Herb and Artisan Fair at Boerner Botanical Gardens last May. But to show our continued support for Milwaukee-area public gardens, the Executive Committee came through once again and budgeted \$3,000 in grants for this program. Thank you, thank you!

The Grants and Scholarship Committee carefully reviewed the three grant proposals received and made the following recommendations to the Board and the Unit at their January Zoom meetings. The Board and the Unit voted unanimously to award the following grants for 2022:

**Boerner Botanical Gardens—the Herb Garden** \$1,000 for the ongoing maintenance and enhancement of the Herb Garden through the purchase of plants, seeds, and additional signage and materials as well as an HSA membership and an Herb Quarterly subscription. Boerner indicated that it will carry over the “Herbs and Plants of the African Diaspora” theme display for another year, as well as welcome back the “Herb Day”, which proved so popular in 2021.

**Friends of Boerner Botanical Gardens** \$1,000 for multi-session, on-site learning programs for 30+ Milwaukee-area middle school students. The money will be used for materials, educator hours and bus transportation to Boerner. Students will be taught by WI certified educators.

**Old World Wisconsin** had originally requested \$1,000 to be used to purchase and plant hops for the garden around the new brewery building; however, the construction of the building was delayed due to Covid-19. In light of this delay, OWW asked that if the original \$1,000 request were to be granted, \$500 could be deferred until the brewery construction was completed. The Executive Committee approved this deferment. OWW then asked for and received a \$500 grant to be used in 2022 to purchase soil, compost mix, and annual and perennial herbs (to include Viola) to fill newly constructed wooden boxes around the 72 square kitchen gardens at the 1860 Pomeranian Immigrant farm.

The Grants and Scholarship Committee members are (new member) Eva Boldt, Denise Nelson, Nell Schneider, Susan Williams, and Lore Borth (Chair), who thanks the members for their usual serious consideration and wise decisions!

## **Elections**

Candidates for secretary and treasurer will be voted on at the April meeting. An absentee ballot may be requested before April 1 from Diane Kescenovitz and must be returned to her 10 days before the April meeting. The ballots will be opened and counted by the Nominating Committee at the April meeting. The officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the members present and the returned absentee ballots at the April meeting. Submitted by the Nominating Committee: Chair Joan Amundson, Diane Kescenovitz, and Joanne Ruggieri

## **Secretary Candidate – Tricia Hallam**

I am trained as an elementary school teacher, but I have had years of secretarial experience, as well as bookkeeping and retail. I have had much experience with taking minutes as secretary in many volunteer organizations, including Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, VFW Auxiliary, as a deaconess at our church, and the Waukesha Co. Sheriff's Reserve. I will do my best to serve a second term for the HSA-WI Unit.

## **Treasurer Candidate – Denise Nelson**

Having over a decade of Private Banking experience has given me a well-rounded background for serving as your treasurer for the past eight years. My detailed records have been reviewed and found to be accurate. I have promptly paid the Unit bills, which include: building use and locker rentals, insurance policies, filing our tax return, renewing our Tax-Exempt permit and reimbursing members and businesses for approved expenses. As treasurer I have been responsible for collecting membership dues, H.S.A. event reservations, cash box tabulations, proceeds from and payments due for the Symposium and our Herb Fair. This has always been

handled in a timely and efficient manner. I computerized our budget and committee expense reports. I am responsible for helping to formulate the Unit budget and present it at the annual meeting. I have the best interest of the Unit in mind as I take care of our financial records and business administration. I would like to continue to serve for another term.

### **OUT & ABOUT**

*February is over and March is here to stay. That's in my thoughts and plans a lot today.  
And as I think of the coming Spring, I want to be out and about, doing everything.  
So let's hope the season means we're on the go; so far, however, we just don't know.  
Say a prayer that we'll soon browse and dine, and have a, long-awaited, HSA good time.  
Happy Spring! We're hoping for an 'in-person' birthday party in March.  
Theme: HATS AND FLOWERS.  
Joanne*

### **Herb of the Month for March - Tarragon (*Artemisia dracunculus*)**

(Nino Ridgway)

Tarragon is a small perennial plant in the aster family. It is likely native to eastern Russia, but French tarragon (var. *sativa*) was selected in Europe and is grown throughout the world. The Russian variety is strongly flavored, intense, bitter, and unsuited for cooking. Russian tarragon can be grown from seed, but French cannot. It doesn't normally bloom or produce seeds, and if it does, they are sterile.

French tarragon has a mild anise flavor, with overtones of mint and sweet vanilla. Though I am not a fan of licorice, I find its flavor to be subtle and pleasing. It is one of the 4 herbs of the French blend, *fines herbes*. French tarragon is used to compliment or enhance mild tasting foods, such as fish, chicken, eggs, potatoes, salad greens, and salad dressings. The fresh herb is FAR superior to dried. The best option for dried tarragon is to grow your own, dry quickly in a dehydrator, and use within 3 months. Frozen tarragon also quickly loses flavor.

French tarragon is hardy in USDA Hardiness Zones 5-8 and is easily grown in Wisconsin. Choose a sunny spot with well-drained soil. Pick frequently and prune back branches once or twice a year if they turn yellow in the heat. Mark the location, as tarragon is a little late to start growing in spring. It can be grown in a pot but does not like to be pot-bound; increase pot size as needed. Fertilize potted plants 2-3 times per summer.

Interesting fact: fresh leaves of all kinds of tarragon will cause your lips to go slightly and temporarily numb! Try it! The culprit is eugenol, a common component of many *Artemesias*. Tarragons have been used historically as anesthetics. Mexican (or Texas) tarragon (*Tagetes lucida*) is a marigold, also in the aster family but distantly related. Its flavor is identical to French tarragon and it also causes numbness of the lips. It is easily grown from seed and makes a great summer substitute for French tarragon. The flowers are pretty too!

### **Herb of the Month for April 2022 -Pinks (*Dianthus spp.*)**

(Nino Ridgway)

Dianthus is a large genus of annual, biennial, and perennial flowering plants in the Caryophyllaceae (pinks) family. They are native to temperate areas of Europe and Asia but are now grown all over the world for their beautiful, fragrant, edible flowers. There are hundreds of species and tens of thousands of cultivars, with more being developed every year. Most Dianthus are low growing, but a few, such as carnations and sweet William, are taller. Although many Dianthus have pink flowers, the name "pinks" refers to the fringed edge of the flowers that look as if cut with a pinking shears. Flowers are generally sweetly fragrant, though, like roses, some cultivars have been bred for color rather than fragrance. Some species have been used medically for urinary problems and skin ailments.

Dianthus grow best in full sun with good air circulation to prevent fungal disease. They grow well in the SE Wisconsin because they prefer neutral or alkaline soil (pH 6-7). Heavy clay soils should be amended with sand or compost to improve drainage. Perennial varieties are generally not long-lived, but may self-seed in optimal locations. Propagate annuals from seed, perennials by division.

Flowers of pinks have long been used as a garnish for salads, beverages, and cakes. Their flavor is sweet and floral, often clove-like. The petals should be removed from the center attachment, which may be quite bitter. Petals can be candied by crystallizing with sugar.

## **Recipes**

### **Lavender and thyme tea**

(Nourish Magazine – from Sue Steinhafel)

2 t fresh lavender buds, unsprayed, (or 1 t dried)  
2 t dried thyme (or 1 handful of fresh thyme)  
2 c filtered water, boiling  
1 T lemon juice

1. Put lavender and thyme in teapot. Add the boiling water, then the lemon juice. Cover and allow the herbs to infuse their oils for 10 minutes.
2. Pour into mugs/glasses or strain if you prefer. Note: Sue made iced with honey, lighter on thyme.

### **Boursin Cheese Spread**

(Louise Block – All About Herbs Lecture Series 2017)

2	large cloves of garlic, finely chopped or grated	¼ t	dry dill weed
16 oz	softened cream cheese	¼ t	dry marjoram
¼ c	softened butter	¼ t	dry thyme
1 t	dry oregano	¼ t	onion powder
¼ t	dry basil		

Blend all ingredients in processor

For Cucumber sandwiches, prepare bread slices by trimming off the crusts. Butter one side of bread, arrange thin (drained) cucumber slices on butter.

Take a second slide of bread and spread with boursin mixture. Flip onto cucumbers.

Cut sandwich in 4 squares.

Wrap tightly with plastic if making ahead of time.

## Easiest Herbs to Grow This Summer

(Just Vegan Today, 3/30/21)



Herbs are versatile in their usage, as you can use them in culinary and for medicinal purposes. Having an herb garden is a plus point if you are aware of the positives these plants serve. All they need is a boost from the sun, adequate water, and suitable soil to nurture them throughout. If you are a beginner wanting some advice on and selecting and growing herbs quickly at home, this article is for you. Here is a list of ten essential herbs suitable for growing in summers and are also easy to maintain. Read on to understand their best conditions for growth and their uses.

### **Basil**

Basil is a strong-flavored herb that finds its worth in some of the most famous dishes like pesto. Basil grows best in sunlight, so it needs around 6 to 8 hours of solid daylight. Plant the seeds or cuttings in well-drained moist soil and do not treat the ground with any insecticides.

### **Bay Laurel**

Bay laurel can thrive in sunny to shady environments. It can survive well in any soil type as long as the soil is well-drained. However, if planning to grow in containers, remember they need bigger containers for better growth. It is not very fond of water, so do not overwater, let the surface run a bit dry before you water it again.

### **Lavender**

Lavender is intensely aromatic and herbal. It requires porous soil having a good amount of calcium carbonate in it. It is drought-resistant, and so it requires moderate watering. However, 3 to 4 hours of sunlight should suffice their growth.

### **Lemongrass**

Lemongrass is a tropical herb widely known for its intense citrus flavor. It grows well in a warm and sunny environment, so it quenches the sun for almost 6 to 8 hours. The soil should be rich in compost or organic matter with a consistent water supply.

### **Mint**

Mint is a multi-functional herb that finds its uses in culinary, medicine, and some refreshing drinks. There are different types of mints- peppermint, spearmint, sweet mint, and chocolate mint. You can easily grow all of these mints in pots, with deep moist soil during spring.

### **Oregano**

Oregano is a perennial herb that tastes similar to thyme and is usually a flavor enhancer. It loves adequate sunlight, and it is best to grow oregano seeds or cut after around a month before the last spring frost. Frequent trimming is required to encourage a denser-looking plant. It's not very fond of water, but you shouldn't let the soil run dry. So water mindfully.

### **Parsley**

Parsley is a widely used herb for its strong take on flavor. To grow parsley, you will need its seeds grown in moist but well-drained soil with adequate sunlight. These seeds take around six weeks to germinate.

### **Rosemary**

Rosemary has an intense flavor with a pine-like structure that makes it look like a robust herb. It can be quickly grown in pots, and it requires well-drained, loamy, and slightly acidic requirements. In addition, it is drought-resistant, requires around 6 hours of sunlight, and needs fertilizers. Once you grow the cuttings, it takes approximately eight weeks for them to be rooted.

### **Sage**

Sage is an herb that adds intense flavors to your dishes. You can grow sage from seeds, and it usually takes ten days to germinate. It grows well in containers and requires a warm and sunny environment with well-drained soil. Remember, you need to water it daily to prevent it from running dry.

### **Thyme**

Thyme needs plenty of sunlight and water with healthy-drained soil. It goes well with compost and is better to grow thyme from cuttings rather than the seeds because their germination is uneven.

### **To Sum Up**

Growing herbs is an easy way to add some flavors, textures, and aroma to your garden. Furthermore, most of these herbs mentioned above are easy to grow in summers and require low maintenance. Also, they can be quickly grown indoors. Finally, you must also know that herbal treatment is considered an alternative branch of medicine, and there is also sufficient evidence to prove that this branch of medicine is effective and beneficial for us.

(Return Service Requested)



*Please, Spring, Come Again*

*Can we trust that spring will give birth  
After cold fingers have grasped the earth  
Will the sun release its frosty stare  
Will soft rains make the bulbs aware  
Will winter pass away with care  
Will the ground be warm for the seeds  
Will there be compost for their needs  
Will tiny birds arrive from the skies  
Will violets be teased enough to rise  
Will snow and ice melt from sight  
Will wind stop blowing with such might  
Will new green shoots be pleased to appear  
After that, we're sure, spring is near.*

(Joan Janssen "Under the Leaf")



If you have an event, article, recipe, etc. in which you feel members might be interested, please send to Diane and she 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 5/1/21 and 7/1/21.

