

*Autumn . . . the year's last, loveliest smile.*

*William Cullen Bryant*

# SAGE LEAVES

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

September/October 2022 – Vol XXXXIII #5

### **Unit Meetings**

#### **Saturday, September 17, 10:00 a.m.**

**Program:** Annual Meeting

**Theme:** “Harvest Happiness” & Birthday Celebrations

**Lunch:** Fall Potluck Luncheon – bring your favorite Fall dish from your garden or Farmer’s Market

**Location:** St. Christopher’s Church

#### **Tuesday, October 18, 10:00 a.m.**

**Program:** “Victorian Fan” – Louise Block **Lunch:**

Sign-up with Tea Party

recipes **Location:** St. Christopher’s Church

***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)

Herb Society Office: [herbs@herbsociety.org](mailto:herbs@herbsociety.org)

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

Facebook: HerbSocietyofAmericaWI

# NEWSBUDS...



Hello WI Unit Herb Members,

I hope you had a lovely summer. I'd like to share my favorite summer volunteer activity— Family Club for 5-10 year olds at Bong State Park. Among the twice-a-month nature activities, we watered the children's garden, petted & picked herbs and enjoyed treats. They had chive butter, herb cream cheese, and pesto. Their favorite though was yogurt mixed with lime & basil, then frozen in individual cups. They enjoyed and learned about herbs!

We will continue learning about herbs at our monthly meetings. Marlene has arranged wonderful programs for this year. You will be receiving this newsletter and the Annual Meeting mailing in early September. In the mailing will be the program for the year, note we have a combination of our third Tuesdays and Saturdays.

I'm looking forward to the Fall Harvest Celebration Pot Luck that we will enjoy right after the annual meeting. Bring a favorite dish to share and your smile---we'll be taking photos.

We do have dates set for our public events for next year—April 1, 2023 Symposium and May 20, 2023 the Herb & Artisan Fair. Our collaboration with Boerner for Herb Day this past summer was successful, thank you to the many who gave their time for that event: Diane K, Joanne R, Gail G, Kim P, Mary Williams and all day from set up to take down: AJ, Denise, Pat. Thanks to Kim Paulus for all day help at our booth at the Chicago Botanical Gardens the Saturday before Boerner event.

I am looking forward to my final year as chair and seeing you at our annual meeting. Hope you are enjoying a harvest of tasteful herbs,

Melody



Dear Members of the HSA - WI Unit,

The first meeting of the 2022-2023 year will be on September 17 at St. Christopher's Church. Mark your calendars. Plan to RSVP "Yes, I'll be there" in person or on zoom.

It's the time of year when our gardens are growing ripe with delicious fruits and vegetables. The aromas of rosemary and basil are proof of the creative ideas born in your kitchen. With this in mind, we've chosen "Fall Harvest Celebration Potluck" as the theme for our first lunch, Pat Greathead is hostess. All who attend are invited to share the bounty of your own garden or from the many farmers' markets around the area.

Do you have a favorite family recipe? One from your favorite cookbook? How about using that produce to try something new? Hot or cold, casserole or dessert, a fall beverage, like apple cider or one of your choices, would be a nice addition to the meal. (Please call or email Mary Kay McDevitt to volunteer for beverage) What a glorious reason to celebrate this plenteous season.

More information will be coming in the meeting reminder in early September. From

Mary Kay McDevitt, Luncheon Chair, and Marlene Mravik, Program Chair.

## **Holiday Luncheon – December 7, 2022**

We are scheduled to have our Holiday Luncheon at the Town Club in Fox Point on Wednesday, December 7, 2022. A Poinsettia 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 Denise Nelson.

Denise Nelson, Event Chair

## **Herb of the Month for September 2022 COFFEE (*Coffea arabica* and *C. robusta*)**

(Nino Ridgway)

If we're going to call coffee an herb (and why not?) many of us would have to admit that coffee has been the most important herb in our daily life. Most people drink coffee as a pleasant stimulant, although many of us are familiar with its other medicinal properties: bronchial dilator (useful for asthma treatment), diuretic, relief for menstrual cramps, vasoconstrictor, laxative, and effects on blood sugar. Coffee consumption began about 1000 years ago and has spread throughout the world. Coffee is a highly important crop for many tropical countries, and economies rise and fall with the quality and quantity of coffee produced.

You won't be able to grow quality coffee here in Wisconsin (although a small coffee tree makes a nice house plant). Good tasting beans can only be produced in tropical latitudes and between 3000 and 6000 feet of elevation. It was once standard practice to remove large tracts of tropical forest to plant coffee, and many indigenous cultures were disrupted or displaced in the rush to grow this valuable crop. Now many fair trade groups have formed to insure that local people benefit from the coffee crop. Growing coffee in the shade of the forest takes a little longer but saves much of the forest from destruction.

Although coffee is appreciated mainly for its stimulant and other medicinal properties, it is also a culinary herb. It is used especially in baked goods and pairs particularly well with chocolate. Think truffles, cheesecake, ice cream. Also, many herbs have been paired with coffee (flavored coffee), some with great effect: cardamom; vanilla; nutmeg; cinnamon; ginger; and many others.

## **Herb of the Month for October 2022 Caraway (*Carum carvi*)**

(Nino Ridgway)

My mother was Norwegian, and her family used caraway seeds to season sour cabbage dishes, pork roasts, breads, stews, cheeses, eggs, and pickles. Many other eastern, northern, and central European countries also use caraway seeds for similar dishes, but this herb has not been widely adopted outside Europe except in parts of Asia where it is a native. My family also used caraway root as a vegetable in soups and stews or roasted with other winter root vegetables.

Caraway is a member of the carrot family (Apiaceae, formerly Umbelliferae). Like many other members of this family – carrot, parsnip, parsley, angelica – caraway is biennial. It grows a root and top in the first year, dies down over the winter, and puts up a new shoot in spring, which then blooms and goes to seed. Caraway has an anise flavor, like many other Apiaceae, with hints of cumin and citrus.

Caraway is easy to grow, although you have to wait patiently until the second year for your harvest. The ferny plants need careful weeding the first year as they are not competitive with weeds. The fun (not) comes in the second year at harvest time. The heads full of dark brown seeds are cut off and put into a paper bag until the seeds drop easily from the seedhead. When I grew caraway, there was a lot of plant material that mixed in with the seeds, and this had to be carefully removed. When I had my clean pile of seeds, I found that each one had a very sharp point and an inedible stem. I had to remove these with fingers or knife from each seed. I'm not sure I ever did anything more tedious.

# Recipes

## Sunny Tomato Hummus

(Denise Nelson – All About Herbs Lecture Series)

3-4	cloves garlic	2 cans	garbanzo beans (drained)
2 t	salt	½ c	olive oil
3 T	tahini paste	½ c	oil-packed, sun-dried tomatoes
¼ c	lemon juice	¼ c	fresh dill

Mix first 4 ingredients in processor till smooth, add beans and olive oil and process. Add tomatoes and pulse till chopped into little pieces. Add dill and process a few times to mix. Put hummus into bowl and chill for one hour. Drizzle some olive oil or sun-dried tomato oil over top for extra flavor.

## Chopped Mexican Salad with Peppers, Corn, Tomatoes & Avocado

(All About Herbs Lecture Series 2017)

- 2 large orange or red bell peppers\
- 1-½ c frozen corn
- 2 large firm-ripe tomatoes, seeded and diced
- 1 small jicama, peeled and diced (about 2 c)
- 2 large firm-ripe avocados, peeled, pitted and diced
- 1 15 oz can black beans, drained and rinsed
- ¼ c coarsely chopped fresh cilantro

All vegetables should be diced about same size, toss all with the following vinaigrette:

### **Honey-Lime-Cumin Viniagrette:**

- |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 small clove garlic       | Salt to taste            |
| 3 T fresh lime juice       | 3 T fresh orange juice   |
| 2 t finely chopped shallot | 1 T honey, more to taste |
| ¾ t cumin                  | ¼ c olive oil            |
- Freshly ground black pepper

## Crisp Caraway Cookies

(The Beginners Guide to Edible Herbs)

- |                   |                                |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1-2/3 c flour     | ½ c butter, softened (1 stick) |
| 1 t baking powder | 2/3 c sugar                    |
| ¼ t baking soda   | 2 eggs                         |
| ¼ t salt ½ t      | vanilla extract                |
- 2 t caraway seeds

1. Mix together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and caraway seeds.
2. Cream butter and sugar in large bowl till fluffy, add eggs and vanilla and beat well.
3. Stir in flour mixture. Wrap dough in plastic wrap and chill several hours or until firm enough to roll (the dough will be soft)
4. Cut the dough into quarters. Remove one quarter at a time from the refrigerator. Roll very thin on a floured surface (use pastry cloth and covered rolling pin to prevent from sticking). Cut with floured 3" round cutter. Put on ungreased cookie sheets.
5. Bake at 350° on top rack of oven 8-10 min, watching closely. Remove to a wire rack to cool. Store in airtight container or freezer. Makes 4 dozen cookies.

## Fresh Herb Salt

(from Homemade & Yummy)

3 c fresh herbs loosely packed  
½ c coarse sea salt  
1 clove fresh garlic or more if you wish

Wash herbs, remove stalks/stems. Arrange in a single layer on a towel. Let air dry for about an hour until all moisture is gone. Place herbs in a food processor, add garlic and salt, process until it reaches a coarse consistency (do not overprocess). Place in a jar and keep in fridge.

NOTE: This will keep for months in fridge. If you don't want to use food processor, you can chop herbs and garlic by hand – add salt and continue to chop until you reach coarse consistency.

Herbs that work well include: basil, parsley, dill, savory, mint, oregano, sage, thyme, cilantro and rosemary.



*Climb the mountains and get their good tidings.*

*Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees.*

*The winds will blow their own freshness into you,*

*and the storms their energy, while cares will drop away*

*from you like the leaves of Autumn. ”*

John Muir, "The Mountains of California"

# How to Grow Thyme Indoors

Enjoy delicious thyme year round

By Jon VanZile, Updated 06/27/19, TheSpruce.com

Thyme is a wonderful and versatile herb; there are almost endless ways to use its delicious and fragrant leaves in everything from salad dressings to marinades to sauces. Like most herbs, thyme can successfully and relatively easily be grown indoors; it needs only a bright windowsill and some basic attention to thrive. You can propagate thyme fairly easily, but there's no need to do so. With pots of young thyme readily available (even in grocery stores), it's a simple matter to keep a thyme plant alive while you slowly consume it, and then replace it when the plant begins to look weak.

## Best Growing Conditions for Thyme

While thyme is easy to grow, it does better when kept well-watered in a warm, bright location.

- **Light:** Thyme prefers bright light or full sun. I have excellent success on an east-facing windowsill. It can also be grown fairly easily under standard or compact fluorescent lights for a year-round supply.
- **Water:** Water regularly, but not excessively. Let the soil dry slightly between waterings. Thyme is naturally drought resistant.
- **Temperature:** Average. Thyme is a hardy plant that will thrive down to 50°F and up to 80°F or higher.
- **Soil:** Airy, light, fast-draining soil.
- **Fertilizer:** Use liquid fertilizer, or supplement the soil with controlled-release pellets. For organic thyme, use organic fertilizer or fortify soil with compost.

## Propagating Thyme

Thyme can be easily propagated from leaf-tip cuttings or division of mature plants. To divide a large plant, remove the plant from the pot and gently tease apart the root ball and stems, then plant each ball in its own pot. In most cases, however, it's usually easier to discard older, woody plants and buy new thyme plants. Thyme can also be readily grown from seed, which opens a larger selection, such as lemon or Spanish thyme. Thyme seeds germinate in one to three weeks.

## Repotting Thyme

Most thyme plants are only repotted after their initial purchase, perhaps stepping up from the 4" nursery pot into a 6" pot, which is plenty large enough to support a thriving and healthy thyme plant. Older plants develop a woody stem. You can divide older plants at repotting time and place them back into 6" pots with fresh soil—there is no reason to grow thyme in larger pots for kitchen use, especially if the thyme is part of a collection of kitchen herbs.

## Varieties of Thyme

As one of the world's oldest aromatherapy and medicinal plants (it's been in cultivation since the time of the ancient Greeks), there are many varieties of thyme. The most popular is common thyme or *Thymus vulgaris*. This plant is sometimes also called French thyme (although not exclusively). Other popular varieties include the citrus thymes, which are cultivars with a distinct citrusy aroma and flavor. Lemon thyme, in particular, is a wonderful herb. Other varieties include orange thyme and variegated thyme. Some forms of thyme are used as ground covers and are important sources of nectar for honeybees but are not edible themselves.

## Tips for Growing Thyme

Thyme is not a difficult plant to grow. In outdoor gardens, it's frequently used in xeriscaping in hot, dry locations where other plants have trouble thriving. It's hardy in USDA zones 4 to 9, although it can be grown in Zone 10 in the winter months. It can even tolerate light frosts in higher elevations. Indoors, the biggest challenge you'll probably face is providing consistently bright light and avoiding pests. Obviously, because it's a herb that you'll want to eat, you'll want to avoid as many pesticides and chemicals as possible.

## **Garden Tip From the Herb 'n Cowgirl**

Just a quick reminder that now's the time to take cuttings from scented geraniums. These succulents will die down to the ground at the first hard frost. Clip a 4-6 inch section of healthy growth. Remove any leaves from the lower half of the stem and stick it in moistened potting soil to just below the leaves that are still intact. Cover with clear plastic and leave it in a sunny window. Do not put it where it will be in direct sunlight while the plastic covering is on. Enclosed air can quickly rise to lethal temperatures. Think of how hot your car gets in the summer with the windows up. After about two weeks you should see signs of new growth. Remove the plastic and treat as you would any other young plant. Then when spring comes, move it outside and plant where you wish.

## **September and October Birthdays**

9/4 Penny Atkin

9/13 Lore Borth

9/24 Susan Williams

9/30 Kim Copeland

10/8 Pat Greathead

10/12 Susan McDonell

10/23 Marlene Mravik

10/26 Susie Bigham



*(Return Service Requested)*



## **AS FALL APPROACHES**

***Good night dear garden, in your brown loamy bed***

***The curls have fallen from your leafy head***

***Your earth mom is calling it's time now to rest***

***Your animal friends do in their soft furry nest.***

***Good night, cicely and sorrel, thyme, bouncing bet***

***Sweet woodruff, oregano, sage, violet***

***I spread out the mulch quilt. I silently frown***

***Hope you're comfy in your leaf-lined gown.***

***Sweet dreams now, may snow blanket you***

***May you slumber till sunshine warms you through***

***As spring bulbs arise, may your new seed awake***

***I will be ready with trowel, trug and rake.***

... J E Janssen ("Under The Leaf")



If you have an event, article, recipe, etc. that 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 11/1/22 and 1/1/23.