



“Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of Love.”

--Hamilton Wright Mable

SAGE LEAVES

The Herb Society of America Wisconsin Unit

Nov/Dec 2025 - XXXXVI #6

Unit Meetings

Saturday, November 15

Social 9:00 a.m., Brunch 9:30 a.m., Meeting 10:00 a.m.

Program: Study of Turmeric

Location: St. Christopher's Church

Holiday Luncheon

Wednesday, December 10

10:00 a.m. Social, Noon Luncheon

Location: The Town Club

7950 N Santa Monica Blvd., Fox Point

Donation collection for Capuchin Clothes Closet, a daytime shelter. See holiday luncheon invitation for suggested items.



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

Subscription rate: \$6 for 6 issues

Wisconsin Unit website: Herb-Society-Wisconsin.org

Herb Society of America office: Herbs@HerbSociety.org

Herb Society of America website: www.herbsociety.org

NEWSBUDS . . .



I was hoping I would find a good message to share with you that was relevant to this November/December 2025 edition of SAGE LEAVES. The November 2025 Better Homes & Gardens magazine gave me just what I hoped for! The main message in the article entitled "*What to Do for Your Mind*" is basically telling us that the ability to see a nature scene outside a window helps us heal faster and with less pain medication than those who do not have access to a nature view.

The researchers suggest that we surround ourselves with things that help us feel joyful and comfortable when we are ill. With cold and dark days ahead of us, bringing in some plants to over winter and surrounding ourselves with indoor green plants and flowers will help us connect with nature. We are naturally wired to enjoy and appreciate nature. This phenomenon is called **biophilia**! Who knew? Well, now we do. SO . . . if you haven't completed that yard and garden cleanup and hauled in those herb pots and geraniums, do it NOW! It's good for your health.

As you read on in this *Sage Leaves*, you will find important information about our Saturday, November 15, 2025, meeting. We will be talking about Turmeric, the Herb Study choice for this year. Information about the holiday party is also in this edition. Be sure to sign up yourself and maybe a guest for our Holiday Party at The Town Club in December. AJ

November is Herb Study Month

Thank you to Pat Greathead, Joanne Ruggieri, Helene Pizzi, Mary Williams, Denise Nelson, Melody Orban, and AJ Star for volunteering to do research on this year's Herb Study choice, Turmeric. Areas to be discussed include: History and interesting facts, culinary uses, health/medicinal uses, growing and propagating, and craft or other uses. If you would like to add to the information that will be shared, you are most welcome. Bring your information to the meeting and join the discussion. I'm sure we will learn so much from each other.

Holiday Luncheon – December 10, 2025

We are scheduled to have our Holiday Luncheon at The Town Club in Fox Point on Wednesday, December 10. A "Cardinal" theme is planned with craft projects and decorations. The invitation is included in this newsletter, which lists the luncheon menu and cost per person. If you have any questions, please contact me at (262) 376-0482.

Denise Nelson, Event Chair

Botanical Reads:

"The Twilight Garden" by Sara Nisha Adams – a story told in two timelines (the present and the 1970's), connected by a small garden and two houses in a London suburb. It's about community, found family as well as several societal issues.

"Night Magic Adventures Among Glowworms, Moon Gardens, and Other Marvels of the Dark" by Leigh Ann Henion – a series of essays on embracing the night and seeking out the flora/fauna found in the dark. Henion encourages us to cultivate relationships with darkness and the creatures who depend on it.

Kathy Bussanich

November 2025 Herb of the Month: Elderberry Sambucus spp.

Susan Obry

Elderberries, the dark purple fruit of the Sambucus tree and the American elder have been used as far back as 400 BC. This plant is native to North America, Europe, and parts of Asia.

Elderberries need at least six hours of direct sun daily but can tolerate partial shade. The soil should be well-drained but moist. Plant in spring after the last frost or in fall before the first frost. Harvest after the first frost. According to the UW-Madison extension, cultivars that grow well in Wisconsin are Johns, Adams No. 1, Adams No. 2, Nova, and York.

Sambucus nigra and Sambucus canadensis are most commonly used for culinary and medicinal purposes.

Culinary Uses: Elderberries are used in teas, jams, jellies, syrups, wines, cordials, savory dishes, and sauces. The flowers are used in beverages and desserts such as pies. It is also used in food coloring and body lotions. Elderberry tea is sweet and tart and tastes similar to blackberries and grapes.

In folk medicine today, the elderberry is considered one of the world's most healing plants; however, further scientific research is needed to support these claims.

Medicinal Uses: Elderberries are said to have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties and support the immune system. Elderberries have been used to help fight colds and flu. They may help lower cholesterol and blood pressure and improve circulation. It has also been used to treat constipation, headaches, some skin conditions, kidney problems, and stress. Elderberries are very high in vitamins A and C, and they contain potassium, fiber, and iron.

Of Great Note: Raw elderberries and other parts of the plant including the branches, twigs, leaves, roots, and seeds can be toxic. Cooking is **absolutely necessary**.

December 2025 Herb of the Month: Myristica fragans (Mace and Nutmeg)

"The Nutmeg Tree"

Susan Obry

Myristica fragans is an evergreen tree native to the Spice Islands of Indonesia and other tropical regions. The nutmeg tree can be grown in Zones 10 and 11 in the states of Florida, California, Texas and Hawaii. Nutmeg grown in these states is not considered a "true" nutmeg.

Indonesia is the world's largest producer of nutmeg and mace with India coming in second. The nutmeg tree produces both nutmeg and mace. Nutmeg is the seed encased in a bright red aril which is the mace.

The nutmeg tree only grows in truly tropical zones. Nutmeg trees begin producing fruit after about seven to nine years and can remain productive for up to 60 years. A tree can produce up to 20 pounds of nutmeg/mace or more depending on the maturity and growing conditions.

Culinary Uses: Nutmeg and mace flavor is described as warm, sweet with a hint of pepper. Nutmeg is used in baked goods, custards, beverages (like eggnog) and savory dishes including soups and sauces. Mace, which has a more delicate flavor, is often used in pastries, cakes and spice blends.

Medicinal Uses: Myristica fragans is used for its alleged digestive, anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties. Nutmeg has been used to treat diarrhea, insomnia and reduce pain. Mace is said to have these same properties. Nutmeg in large amounts can be toxic.

Commercial Uses: Nutmeg oil is used in cosmetics, fragrances, and soaps.

Of Interest: Nutmeg was once so valuable that wars were fought over its control and trade. In 1667, the Dutch formally gave the island of Manhattan to the English in exchange for a handful of Indonesian islands that grew nutmeg trees. This exchange increased the wealth of the Dutch East India Spice Company and led to global expansion into the Indo-Pacific area through the Spice Route.

RECIPES

Creamy Turkey Wild Rice Soup

(Joyce Pohl – Madison Herb Society)

Ingredients

1	small onion, chopped	2 c	cooked wild rice
2	stalks celery, chopped	2 t	dried sage
2 c	mushrooms, sliced	1 t	dried thyme
1	stick butter	1 t	salt
½ c	flour	½ t	black pepper
2 c	turkey broth	1-2 c	milk or cream
1-2 c	diced, cooked turkey		

Sauté onion, celery, and mushrooms in the butter, mix in flour to make a roux, add turkey broth, turkey, rice, and seasonings. Add milk or cream as thick as you want.

Tuna Salad

(Cheryl Kazimier)

Ingredients

5	small cans tuna, drained	1 t	garlic powder
3	ribs of celery, chopped small	¾ c	miracle whip light
1	yellow onion, chopped small	¼ c	bread crumbs
4 T	sweet pickle relish		

Combine everything in a large bowl, mixing thoroughly. Can adjust ingredients to taste. Refrigerate overnight for flavor!

ALL BECAUSE AUTUMN CAME

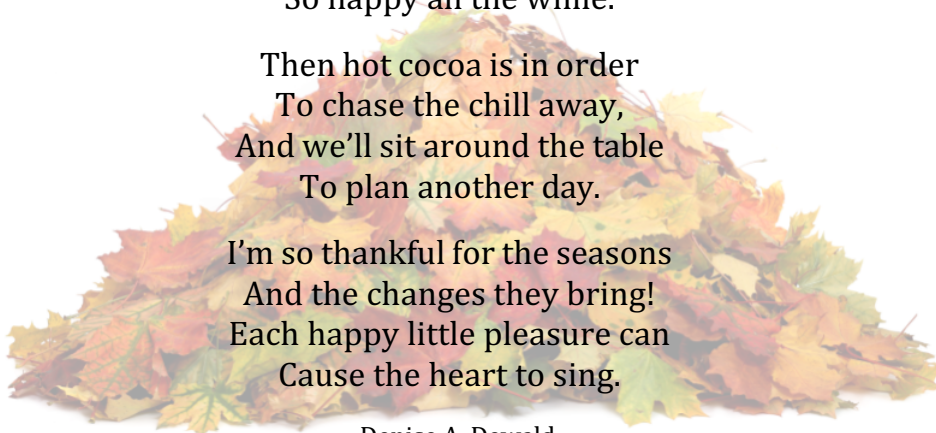
The Autumn wind rattles the trees
– I shiver just a little –
For it won't be long till Winter's winds
Make the branches brittle.

I pull my chair up to the fire
And watch the dancing flames,
Relishing warmth and coziness...
All because Autumn came.

Tomorrow we'll rake up the leaves
Into a great big pile,
And watch the kids as they jump in,
So happy all the while.

Then hot cocoa is in order
To chase the chill away,
And we'll sit around the table
To plan another day.

I'm so thankful for the seasons
And the changes they bring!
Each happy little pleasure can
Cause the heart to sing.



--Denise A. Dewald

How to Overwinter Rosemary Indoors

(Better Homes & Gardens - Lauren Landers, Dec. 11, 2024)



Rosemary is no match for the harsh winters of **Zone 7 and colder**. In these regions, most rosemary plants or cuttings need to overwinter indoors if you want them to survive to spring.

Overwinter Entire Plants

To overwinter whole rosemary plants, dig up the plants in autumn before the first frost. The plants grow better if they have a large root ball attached, so place your shovel at least six inches away from the rosemary plant stems before you begin to dig. After you've dug up the plant, place it in a large pot with fresh potting mix and allow it to acclimate to its growing container for a few days before moving it indoors.

Take Stem Cuttings

If you don't want to dig up your entire rosemary plant, you can also take cuttings of plant stems and root them in water or soil with a bit of rooting hormone. Rosemary cuttings should be about 4 to 6 inches in length. Cuttings taken from healthy branches with new growth tend to root best. Rosemary cuttings can take four to eight weeks to develop roots, so be patient as you wait for the new rosemary plants to grow.

Indoor Care Tips

Once you have rosemary plants or rooted cuttings indoors, caring for the rosemary plants during winter is relatively simple. Keep rosemary in a window that receives at least six to eight hours of bright indirect light daily, and only water the plants when the soil feels dry. You may also want to keep rosemary plants near a humidifier or a pebble tray, as dry indoor air can sometimes make rosemary leaves crispy.

Hardening Off

When spring arrives, and the danger of frost has passed, harden off the rosemary plants over the course of several days by moving them outdoors during the day and back inside at night. After the plants have acclimated to outdoor weather, relocate the potted rosemary outdoors for the summer or replant it in your herb garden.



Keep Your Poinsettias Looking Beautiful!

(Ebert's Village Gardener Express, Dec. 7, 2023)

The first consideration for a beautiful and long-lasting poinsettia is a toasty warm ride home. Cover your poinsettias for the trip to protect them from the cold and wind. Once your plants have arrived at their new home, immediately remove the protective covering.

The flowers (bracts) emit a gas called ethylene, and if left in the covering too long can lead to a decline in the appearance of your poinsettia. Never leave poinsettias sitting in a cold car for any length of time when transporting them. The cold damage will show up as wilting and/or discolored leaves.

It's best to take your plant out of the foil wrap around the pot when it's time to water it. You can also poke holes in it and set the plant on a saucer with stones so any excess water collects in the stones, and you aren't pouring off the excess water every time to avoid root rot. Let the soil dry between watering - the pot will be light in weight when your plant needs water. Your poinsettia can push through a slight "drooping" of the leaves, but don't let it droop too hard.

Poinsettias last longer if kept in bright filtered light. The more light they are exposed to, the better the plant will hold onto its leaves. Keep them out of cold drafts and away from vents. The optimum temperature is 65-70 degrees.

If you see yellowing leaves, make sure the plant is not in standing water in the foil or the saucer. If any excess water has accumulated, dump it out and adjust your watering schedule to avoid overly wet soil. Yellowing can also be the result of not enough light; move the plants to a brighter location if needed.

You can enjoy your poinsettia long after the holidays with the proper attention by keeping it in the proper location and following an appropriate watering schedule!



*Every piece of the universe,
even the tiniest little snow
crystal, matters somehow.*

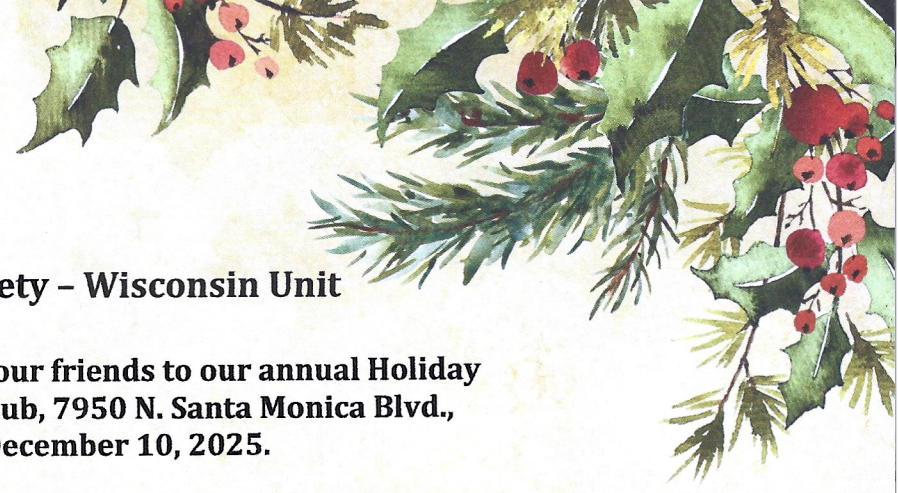
*I have a place in the
pattern, and so do you.*

--T. A. Barron



If you have an event, article, recipe, book, etc. that you think members might find interesting, please send to kescenovitz.diane@att.net, and I will try to put it in the next issue of *Sage Leaves* if room allows.

Future *Sage Leaves* will be mailed out to arrive by January 1, 2026, and March 1, 2026.



The Herb Society - Wisconsin Unit

We cordially invite you and your friends to our annual Holiday Luncheon held at the Town Club, 7950 N. Santa Monica Blvd., in Fox Point on Wednesday, December 10, 2025.

Please RSVP by December 2, 2025. Complete the form below and send it with your check (payable to HSA-WI Unit) in the amount of \$45 per person to: Denise Nelson - HSA Treasurer, W72N904 London Court, Cedarburg, WI 53012. Questions? Call me at (262) 376-0482.

The Luncheon will start with a Coffee Social (Bar items are available) from 10:00am until Noon. During this time, we will have a Cardinal bird project to make and other fun activities.

We will collect items for the Capuchin Clothes Closet this year. They need hats, scarves, gloves, socks, used adult clothing, and boots. Toiletries are also needed. Donations of cash/checks are appreciated.

Member Name: _____

Your phone number: () _____

Guest Name(s): _____

Price (\$45. per person) total sent: \$ _____

MENU: Green Salad with dressing options, dinner rolls

___ Chicken Piccata with lemon and herbs served with fingerling potatoes.

OR ___ Pasta with vegetables and herbs.

Reservations need to be received by December 2.
Refunds are only available if you cancel before Dec. 2
by calling Denise Nelson.

