

*“And the sun took a step back, the leaves lulled themselves
to sleep and Autumn was awakened”*

--Raquel Franco

SAGE LEAVES

The Herb Society of America Wisconsin Unit

Sep/Oct 2024 - Vol XXXIX #5

Unit Meetings

Saturday, September 21

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

Program: Annual Meeting

Speaker: Kevin Folivi, “The Science, Art and History of Distillation”

Location: St. Christopher’s Church

Tuesday, October 15

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

Speaker: Heather Klug, “Add Flavor and Boost Health with Herbs and Spices”

Location: St. Christopher’s Church

Please mark your calendar for the following upcoming events:

December 11, 2024 Holiday Party



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 . . .



Not so very long ago, April 6, 2024, to be exact, those of us who attended our fabulous Spring Symposium learned about the herbs that attract pollinators. It is now September, and I am enjoying the fruit of my herb planting labor because I see so many bees and butterflies visiting the plants. The flower heads on the dill, garlic chive, anise hyssop, mint (spearmint, chocolate mint and cat mint), borage, lavender, sage, monarda, marjoram, thyme and coneflower are making the fuzzy butts very happy. It's such a good feeling knowing that by providing these pollinator friends with sustenance, they will support our well being too. I'm thinking that getting back to our regular monthly HSA Unit meetings will be good for our well being too.

You will be receiving the Welcome Back information packet by September 12, 2024. The packet will include the 2024-2025 Board approved budget proposal as well as other documents that will help you plan for the months ahead.

Joanne has lined up some very interesting speakers/programs for us, one of which will be information from our own member, Kevin Folivi. Since our meal sharing period has shifted from lunch to brunch, Mary Kay and her team will set out our delicious food selections at 9:30 a.m. so we can nosh and sip before and during the business meeting. Sue Obry will continue to provide us with Herb of the Month education, which is always so interesting. At the Annual Meeting, Pat will be inducting new members and recognizing our 5-, 10-, 35- and 50-year members. You don't want to miss the opportunity to congratulate these members.

Looking forward to seeing **YOU** at 9:00 a.m. (social) on Saturday, September 21, 2024, at St. Christopher's Church, 7845 North River Road, River Hills.

AJ

Dear members,

Welcome to our new year as we gather for monthly meetings, programs, and delicious, member prepared cuisine.

It was decided, after a unanimous show of hands at our wrap-up meeting in June, to serve brunch rather than lunch. Sometimes, at our house, we eat breakfast instead of dinner! **Brunch, instead of lunch, will be served at a new time - 9:30 a.m.** The "bruncheon team" will place their fare on the buffet table when they arrive, and we will dine during the meeting. Meet around 9:00 a.m., greet good friends, and eat brunch at 9:30 a.m. More preparation at home and less in the church kitchen allows for more attention to the meeting and program.

RSVPs are required to attend all bruncheons. Watch for a reminder in mid-September.

Please read my comments about the September brunch menu in the "News Buds" section of the July-August 2024 *SAGE LEAVES*.

Join the Bruncheon Team:

September Hostess Denise Nelson

September Soup Kevin Folivi, African Nut Stew

Any question, please contact me.

Mary Kay, Bruncheon Chair

Holiday Luncheon – December 11, 2024

We are scheduled to have our Holiday Luncheon at The Town Club in Fox Point on Wednesday, December 11, 2024. A Christmas tree theme has been planned with craft projects and decorations. An invitation will be shared with the group in fall that will list the luncheon menu and cost per person.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Denise Nelson, Event Chair



2024 September Herb of the Month – Garlic (*Allium Sativum*) (Susan Obry)

Garlic is in the same family as leeks, shallots and onions. Garlic is a perennial plant but is grown annually in Wisconsin. Garlic probably originated in South-Central Asia. Records show it was also used by early civilizations such as the Romans, Chinese, and Babylonians. Most US commercial garlic is grown in the mild areas of California.

Garlic is used in a variety of dishes throughout the world. It is used mainly in savory dishes but can be used in sweeter dishes. A google search led to over 500 recipes. I once tried garlic ice cream and garlic fudge, with the emphasis on once!

It grows best in full sun, well drained and fertile soil. Garlic cloves should be planted with pointed side up. Garlic is a heavy feeder and should be fertilized with a nitrogen fertilizer just before and after planting in the fall with several applications in early spring and until harvest. Garlic requires regular watering. Dry conditions will result in smaller bulbs.

Do not use garlic cloves from the supermarket for planting since they will have been treated with chemicals for longer shelf life. Obtain bulbs from a reliable source or use the best and largest from your crop. Harvest when the tops begin to turn yellow and fall over. Cure garlic in a dry, airy, shady place until they are totally dry. Store in a cool place with low humidity. Do not store in a refrigerator or basement.

Types of garlic commonly grown in Wisconsin.

- **Hardnecks** are the best choice for our area. They are extremely cold hardy. They have larger cloves than softnecks. Hardnecks also produce scapes. These scapes must be cut just after curling starts to encourage larger bulbs. Scapes are edible.

Varieties:

- "Music"-mild in taste
- "Early Italian"-sweeter taste
- "German Red"-robust in flavor (most popular with cooks)

- **Softnecks** grow better in the south but can be grown in Wisconsin. Their larger bulbs have smaller cloves which are stronger in taste. They do not have scapes and store better than hardnecks.

Varieties:

- "California White Early"-classic. Type found in grocery stores.
- "California White Late"-mild and stores well.
- "Silver White" -classic best for beginners.

- **Elephant garlic - not a true garlic.** Similar to hardneck with a long, cool growing season. Bulbs and cloves may grow up to one pound. It has quite a mild flavor, similar to shallots.

Because garlic bulbs require a cold period (cold stratification), garlic is usually planted in the fall with harvest the following summer. This helps develop the individual cloves. In Wisconsin, the best time to plant garlic is between October 1 and October 21. Garlic can be planted in spring but must have a period of 30-40 days in cold storage prior to planting.

Of interest: Cultivated cloves do not produce true seeds so are the clones of their parents.

2024 October Herb of the Month – Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*)

(Susan Obry)

Turmeric is a perennial herbaceous plant in the ginger family. It is native to India and Southwest Asia. In India there are about 45 species of this plant. Turmeric has been used for over 4,000 years in Indian culture.

It is used as a dye, in cosmetics, and for its medicinal properties. There are many differing opinions and studies regarding its effectiveness for medicinal use. Further research is suggested if you choose to use this herb.

Turmeric has a warm, bitter, black pepper-like taste with an earthy and mustard-like smell. Turmeric is used widely as a spice in South Asian and Middle Eastern cooking. It is the main ingredient in curry. It can be used fresh or in powdered form. It can be used in both savory and sweet dishes. Plants are harvested for their rhizomes that are dried and then ground into a powder.

It grows well in zone 8 and below. Temperatures must be constantly between 68 and 86 degrees and in an area with high annual rainfall.

Interesting Note: Turmeric is traditionally called the Indian saffron.

Recipes

Rosemary Lemon Drop Cookies

(All About Herbs Lecture Series)

½ cup	sugar	½ tsp.	grated lemon rind
1-½ T	butter	½ tsp.	ground rosemary
1	egg	¾ cup	flour
1 tsp.	lemon juice	1/8 tsp.	salt
3 T	milk	1 tsp.	baking powder

1. Cream sugar and butter. Beat in egg, lemon juice, lemon rind and rosemary.
2. Sift flour, salt and baking powder.
3. Add sifted ingredients to butter mixture alternately in 3 parts with 3 T milk. Beat until smooth. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto greased cookie sheet, placing dough well apart as it spreads when baking.
4. Bake at 350° for 7 minutes.

Lemon Myrtle

Hi – on the first of the month my local library gives out free samples of herbs and spices. The herb of the month for August was Lemon Myrtle. Since it was an herb I had never heard of, I thought I'd share some information about it with you. Diane

Lemon Myrtle is a tropical rainforest shrub native to Australia. The botanical name of Lemon Myrtle is *Backhousia citriodora*, referring to its main flavor constituent of citral, which is responsible for most of the lemon scents and flavors in nature. Undoubtedly the most popular of Australia's native herbs, Lemon Myrtle's fresh tangy leaves may be used in teas, syrups, glazes, cakes, biscuits, dressings, sauces, ice creams, dips and meat dishes. Long hailed as the strongest, purest, and sweetest lemon flavor of any herb, Lemon Myrtle boasts an intensely citrus fragrance and flavor and has long been used in Aboriginal cuisine and medicine. Essential oil distilled from the leaves has a refreshing lemony scent and has been found to have antifungal and antibacterial properties.

Note: Since I could not find this herb on Penzy's or Frontier's website, I called our librarian and she purchased it from Amazon - "Organic Way Myrtle Leaf Powder" (my sample didn't seem all that powdery but more of a finely chopped leaf).

Lemon Myrtle Butter Fish with Pan-Fried Greens

- | | |
|--------|---------------------|
| 1 | garlic clove |
| ½ | lemon |
| 1 tsp. | lemon myrtle |
| 1 | bunch asparagus |
| 2 | zucchini |
| 2 | snapper fillets |
| 1 cup | baby spinach leaves |
| 1 | bunch dill |
| ¼ cup | butter |
| 2 tsp. | olive oil |



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Make the lemon myrtle butter. Place butter in a bowl. Finely grate garlic and lemon zest. Add garlic, lemon zest, and lemon myrtle to butter. Season with salt and pepper and mix well to combine.
2. Prepare vegetables. Snap woody ends from asparagus and cut into 1" long pieces. Thinly slice zucchini into rounds.
3. Cook fish. Season fish with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a frypan over medium heat. Add fish, skin side down, and cook for 3-4 minutes or until crisp.
4. Add butter. Turn fish and add lemon myrtle butter. Cook, basting with the butter, for a further 1-2 minutes or until fish is just cooked through. Transfer fish to a plate, leaving most of the butter in the pan. Add asparagus and zucchini and cook, stirring for 2 minutes or until tender.
5. Add spinach. Add spinach and cook, stirring for 30 seconds or until wilted. Finely chop dill and juice one-half of the lemon. Stir dill and lemon juice through vegetables. Cut remaining lemon into wedges.
6. Plate. Divide greens and fish between plates. Serve with lemon wedges.

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 airtight 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 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.



**Autumn is a time for change,
Red orange, gold, and brown,
Leaves scatter across the town!**

**Autumn is a time for change
Apple pickin', pumpkin patch,
Choose your favorite from the batch!**

**Autumn is a time for change,
Haunted houses, harvest time,
Let the spooky doorbells chime!**

Ellwyn Autumn



TREE TALK

Do not eavesdrop, mother said to me
But I can't avoid the chatter from a tree
The gnarled old oak will creak and groan
The supple locust gives only a moan
Dropping red and yellow leaflets from her grasp
The maple tree answers black crow's rasp
To punctuate, blue jay honks a sharp beep
Red Squirrel scolds with ringing cheep
Pine trees do not wish to complain along
Their branches applaud in expressive song
High white pine stutters pierce the shade
So daisies dance in the sun dappled glade
The lacy twig patterns delight my eye
Trees gossip and wave as I pass by.

J E Janssen "Under The Leaf"



If you have an event, article, recipe, book, etc. that you think members might find interesting, please send to Diane Kescenovitz, 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 November 1, 2024, and January 1, 2025.