

“Love of gardening is a seed that once sown never dies.”

--Gertrude Jekyll

SAGE LEAVES

The Herb Society of America Wisconsin Unit

May/June 2024 – Vol XXXIX #3

Unit Meetings

Tuesday, May 14 – 9:30 a.m. Setup and Greet; 10:00 a.m. Meeting

Program: Prep for Herb & Artisan Fair held May 18

Sock Hop Herbal Craft Project

Location: St. Christopher's Church and Zoom

Saturday, May 18, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Annual Herb & Artisan Fair at Boerner Botanical Gardens, Hales Corners

Saturday, June 15 - 9:30 a.m. Setup and Greet; 10:00 a.m. Meeting

Program: Wrap-up Meeting for Unit events – Potluck Brunch

Location: St. Christopher's Church and Zoom

Please mark your calendar for the following upcoming events:

July 21, 2024 Herb Day at Boerner

December 11, 2024 Holiday Party

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

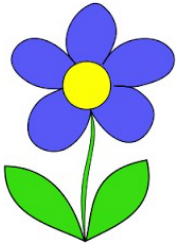
Subscription rate: \$6 for 6 issues

Wisconsin Unit website: Herb-Society-Wisconsin.org

Herb Society of America office: Herbs@HerbSociety.org

Herb Society of America website: www.herbsociety.org

NEWSBUDS . . .



. . . from AJ

These song lyrics came to mind when I was looking at the calendar, 'It's May, It's May, the lovely month of May' and 'June is busting out all over.' When looking around my herb and flower beds, I could see evidence of green growth popping up everywhere. Plant foliage, bird songs, sunshine, and slightly warmer temps all combine to give us a strong indicator that nature is transitioning into spring. Hopefully nature will bless us with a beautiful day for our Herb & Artisan Fair on Saturday, May 18, 2024. Planning for this important HSA WI-Unit event started in January. As you know, Herb & Artisan Fair is not only our fund-raising event for Grants and Scholarship but also another opportunity for us to educate the public about herbs and gardening. Please be sure to sign up to work at the Fair. The volunteer sign-up sheet will be available at the Tuesday, May 14 meeting.

EdCon is being held in Philadelphia, PA from June 20-21, 2024. Two of our members, Melody and Kim, have made plans to travel together for this special Herb Society event. They will take our Unit's raffle basket (filled with "made in Wisconsin" products) with them. I'm sure they will learn a lot and enjoy the garden tours around "America's Garden Capital". I know we will want to hear about their adventures while we hang out together during Herb Day in the Garden at Boerner Botanical Gardens on Sunday, July 21.

April Election Results

Congratulations to our Treasurer-Elect Denise Nelson
and to Secretary-Elect Tricia Hallam.
They will re-assume their roles on June 1, 2024.



Hello! It's hard to believe my first year as program planner is almost over and it has been such a delightful experience. Melody and AJ have given me so many speaker possibilities. Kathy was full of ideas in studying and presenting Yarrow, Sue and our guest speakers gave such wonderful presentations, and everyone in general has been so helpful. This is truly a 'team-effort' group that helps anytime there's anything to do. So, I extend my thanks to everyone who offered their hand to me during this past year.

May, our last official month to present an herb or gardening idea, is going to be a little mish-mashy. We're featuring *Hops* because we're having a Sock-Hop. AJ wanted to give each member a little gift after such a wonderful year, and we decided to make a fragrant, stuffed ankle-sock that you can put in a drawer or closet to leave a soothing, relaxing smell. They are stuffed with many herbs, including hops. Sock-hops!!?? We're also suggesting you wear your craziest looking socks, and the craziest might just get a pair of sock-hops to take home, instead of just one. A-n-n-d we're going to listen to sock-hop music while we each stuff our own sock-hops. Nice! Might some of you dance a bit, h-m-m Hope to see you there as always!

Joanne

HERB & ARTISAN FAIR AT BOERNER BOTANICAL GARDENS

This is a friendly reminder that our Herb & Artisan Fair will be on May 18 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Boerner Botanical Gardens. Please plan to help by baking for the Tea Room, cooking for the cafe, and giving at least two hours of time to help the day of the sale. All proceeds benefit grants and scholarships. We thank you for making the fair a success and look forward to seeing you at the fair.

From the Luncheon Chair, Mary Kay McDevitt

Thanks so much to all who have signed the clipboards for our two remaining events.

1. The Herb & Artisan Fair on Saturday, May 18, at Boerner Botanical Gardens
The Artisan Cafe sign-up roster for breakfast and lunch is almost complete.
Please call/email Mary Kay at 414-418-2322 or mkmcd@mac.com with your choice(s).

BREAKFAST

1 Small box non-dairy creamers
1 Pkg of 10 plain mini croissants (Pick 'n Save)
1 Pkg small or regular size muffins, any variety

LUNCH

Sm. plate of mixed fruits - cut
1 Pkg - 8 or 12 count small buns/rolls
Any variety of cookie or bar treat

2. HSA Member Meeting on May 14 – Cuisine of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark

HOSTESS

??

SALAD

Pickled beet and apple salad? Swedish cucumber, red onion & dill?

SOUP

Susan Obry

BREAD/SPREAD

Who signed up to make Beer Bread?

Bread & Dill Butter: Denise Nelson

BEVERAGE

Non-alcoholic, Sarsaparilla? Beer?

DESSERT

Krumkake? Lingonberry-cardamom cake?

Tea Room Donations – Denise Nelson

The Tea Room is one of three areas at the Herb & Artisan Fair that earn money for grants and scholarships. Your donations to the Tea Room are greatly appreciated. Please donate generously. If everyone brings as much as they did in the past, we should be in good shape.

- Package your items in plastic baggies, with pretty ribbon.
- Label your items with the name of the item, (ex. Chocolate Chip Cookies with Mint). Blank address size labels work well. Please add the word NUTS on your labels if your items contain them.
- Cookies, bars, and scones work well in baggies. Crumbles, crisps, slices of tea bread and cakes do well on plates, then wrapped in plastic. Small tea breads can be wrapped whole.
- On May 18, please bring your packaged items to the Boerner Atrium where the Tea Room table will be setup near the entry doors. Please bring them as early as possible. They will be priced with stickers at that table.
- Please let Denise know what you will be bringing. Call: 262-376-0482 and leave a message.
Thanks for your kind contributions.

Unit Membership Renewals are due May 14, 2024

Thank you to so many for already mailing in your membership renewals. If you have not done so, please send your renewal fees for the 2024-2025 business year to Denise by May 14. You should have received a renewal form with the amount due for your type of membership (individual, joint, or business). If you need a replacement form, please let Denise know. On that form is a survey, so the Board can assess what members would like to do in the next year and who has an interest in helping on various committees.

(If you are a committee chair and have receipts for budgeted expenses, please send them to Denise for reimbursement.)

Please send your check payable to HSA-WI Unit to Denise at the address listed below. Thanks!

Denise Nelson – HSA-WI Unit Treasurer
W72N904 London Court
Cedarburg, WI 53012

The Herb Society of America-WI Unit

Herb & Artisan Fair

Saturday, May 18, 2024 - 9 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Boerner Botanical Gardens

9400 Boerner Drive, Hales Corners WI

Free Parking and Event Entry

Admission fee if you'd like to visit the gardens.



- Artisan vendors selling soaps, teas, jewelry, ceramics, garden art, medicinal and other herbal products; some herb plants.
- Tea Room offering tea and homemade, sweet and savory baked goods.
- Herb Lady Heirlooms; gently used items and books.
- Children's activity table.

Herbal Seminars:

10:00 AM Yoga to Help Prepare Your Body Before, During, and After Gardening

11:15 AM Alice's Garden Urban Farm and Small Space Gardening

1:00 PM The Celestial Garden: Growing Herbs, Vegetables, and Flower in Sync with the Moon and Zodiac



Save the Date: Herb Day at Boerner – Sunday, July 21



Website: herb-society-wisconsin.org
Facebook: HerbSocietyofAmericaWIUnit

May 2024 Herb of the Month – English Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*)

Susan Obry

There are 47 species of Lavender. Within the species, there are about 40 different cultivars. Please note that different cultivars have different environmental needs. The two primary lavenders are French and English.

English lavender is the hardiest of the species and can withstand the colder temperatures of Wisconsin. It is known for its sweet fragrance and long-lasting blooms. Blooms can be white, purple, or pink.

Reliable cultivars for Wisconsin are:

- 'Hidcote': taller with dark purple long lasting blooms
- 'Munstead': a compact variety with lavender blue flowers making it an excellent choice for containers. Prefers full sun but can tolerate some light shade.
- 'Grosso': is a hybrid with large violet flower spikes. Has non-culinary aromatic and medicinal uses.

In general, lavenders prefer full sun and well drained, slightly alkaline soil. Wet, poorly drained soil will encourage root rot. Heavy clay soil will need to be amended. Once established, they are drought tolerant. Good air circulation is essential. Growing indoors can be challenging. Plant height can be 1-3 feet with a 1 to 5-foot spread. Plants may live up to 10-15 years (if your garden helper does not pull them up in the spring thinking they are dead). Lavenders have aromatic, ornamental, medicinal, and culinary uses (from cocktails to dessert to main dishes).

Fun Fact: Lavender is native to the Mediterranean area. The plant spread fairly rapidly to other parts of the world. It became a favorite in English gardens and was brought to America by the European settlers. Hence, the name English lavender.

June 2024 Herb of the Month – Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*)

Say Hello to the Fairies!

Susan Obry

Thyme is a Mediterranean low-growing, hardy perennial with small fragrant leaves. Culinary varieties are evergreen. There are over 50 varieties of culinary, ornamental, and medicinal thyme. The most common varieties of culinary thyme are French or English, lemon, and caraway. Thyme works well with soups, vinegars, meats, shellfish, teas, vegetables and desserts. Also, with anything slow cooked in wine. Fresh and dried thyme can be infused with many different types of liquors. It was once used in toothpaste.

The herb is drought tolerant and draws pollinators and other beneficial insects. Thyme prefers full sun and light, well-drained soil. Leaves are most flavorful when picked when the plant is in bloom. It can be pruned in both spring and summer. Late summer or early fall pruning will not allow the plant to become winter hardy. Mulch lightly around the plant after the ground freezes. Older plants will become woody and less flavorful unless divided or replaced every 3-4 years.

Thyme can be grown from cutting or transplants. It is hard to grow from seeds because of slow, uneven germination. Its height is 6-12 inches with a spread of 6-16 inches. Thyme is a great companion for plants with the same environmental needs. It will grow well indoors with proper environmental conditions. When harvesting, leave at least five inches for continual growth. The best time to harvest thyme is at dawn when the oil is at its highest concentration.

Fun Facts:

- The **name of the genus of fish** *Thymallus*, originates from the faint smell of thyme that emanates from the flesh. Isn't this great – a fish that seasons itself!
- Thyme is said to enable one to see fairies. I expect this happens after drinking a lot of thyme infused vodka or gin or tequila or bourbon.

Recipes

Irish Pub Salad

(Kathy Bussanich – March 2024 Mtg – Food Network, Valerie Bertinelli)

Ingredients

1 head butter lettuce torn into bite-size pieces
1 c multi-colored cherry tomatoes, halved
1 c pickled beets, drained & diced
4 ounces Irish Cheddar, cut into small cubes
2 stalks celery thinly sliced on the bias
1/2 English cucumber quartered and sliced
3 hard-boiled eggs quartered

Dressing

1/3 c extra virgin olive oil
1/3 c tarragon vinegar
1 T Dijon mustard
1 T dried parsley
1 clove garlic
1 small shallot
Kosher salt and ground black pepper

Shepherd's Pie

(Cheryl Kazimier – March 2024 Mtg)

Potato Topping

2 pounds russet potatoes peeled and quartered
1/2 cup milk
1/4 cup butter
kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Meat Filling

2 tablespoons avocado oil or olive oil
1 large onion diced
3 garlic cloves minced
2 large carrots peeled and diced
2 celery stalks diced
1 1/2 pounds ground lamb or ground beef
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1 cup chicken broth or if using ground beef use beef broth
1 1/2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce see notes above
2 teaspoons fresh rosemary finely chopped
1 teaspoon fresh thyme finely chopped
1 cup frozen peas

Instructions

- Place the potatoes in a pot on the stove and cover with cold water. Turn the heat to high and bring to a boil. Cook for 13 to 15 minutes, or until the potatoes are soft when pierced with a fork.
- Drain the potatoes in a colander, then return to the pot. Add the milk, butter, salt and pepper and mash until creamy.
- Preheat your oven to 400°F (200°C). In a large oven-safe saute pan, heat the oil on medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and saute for a minute. Then add the diced carrots, diced celery, and lamb. Cook for 8 to 10 minutes or until the meat is browned. Use your spatula to break up the meat while cooking.
- Drain the fat from the pan and add the broth, tomato paste, Worcestershire sauce, rosemary, thyme, salt and pepper. Simmer for about 5 minutes, until the sauce is slightly thickened.
- Add the frozen peas and stir together. Turn off the stove and use the back of your spatula to flatten the meat mixture into a single layer.
- Dollop the mashed potatoes on top of the meat and use a spoon or spatula to spread it flat to the edges. If desired, create texture in the potato topping with a spoon or fork.
- Bake the shepherd's pie until slightly golden, about 25 to 30 minutes. You can broil the top for 1 to 2 minutes as well.

Irish Soda Bread (3 large loaves)

(Lorrie Burrows – March 2024 Mtg – The Magic Omelet 3/17/09)

8 c All Purpose Flour
2 c Sugar
3 T Baking powder
2 t Baking soda
2 t Cream of tartar
2 c Raisins
3 Eggs, well beaten
¾ c Butter (1 ½ sticks) melted
1 qt (4 c) buttermilk

- The batter is a lot like muffins – mix the dry, add the wet, and stir just till blended.
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease three 9x5 loaf pans (or equivalent smaller pans - three small for each full-size loaf). In large bowl mix dry ingredients – flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, cream of tartar, and stir until thoroughly combined. Stir in raisins.
- Melt butter. Combine with buttermilk and eggs and beat with a fork until well blended. Pour wet ingredients into dry. Stir with a wooden spoon until well blended. Spoon equal amounts into loaf pans. Bake for 1 hour until golden brown and “hollow sounding” when tapped. (Small loaves about 45 min.).

Sweet, Sweet Woodruff (All About Thyme – Susan Wittig Albert)



From my youth I recall that elusive smell of woods in spring—a sweetness ascending from mold and decay but with the breath of young life rising from it. That is the odor that permeates the house when May wine is poured into the May bowl.

—Adelma Grenier Simmons, *Herb Gardening in Five Seasons*

We know you don't want to let the month of May slip by without a cup of traditional May wine. This drink comes to us from Germany, where the sweet woodruff (*Galium odoratum*) carpets the spring woodlands with starry white blossoms and whorled leaves.

The odd-sounding name woodruff grew out of the earlier *wudero*, or “wood-wheel” (*rove* comes from the French *rouelle*, wheel, referring to the circlet of leaves around the stem). The plant contains coumarin. When it is dried, it smells like vanilla. Sweet woodruff has long been valued for potpourris and perfumes and is a favorite in sachets. It was once used to stuff mattresses and pillows (hence another common name, *bedstraw*). During the Middle Ages, the herb gained a reputation as a wound healer and was used to treat digestive and liver problems. For gardeners with a shady, wooded area, sweet woodruff tops the list of Mother Earth's “Seven Herbs That Grow in Shade.”

For those who remember Connie Taagen's treat at the end of many Herb Fairs in the past, here's a recipe (Connie did not use this recipe – I think she just added the sweet woodruff overnight to the wine):

May Wine (All About Thyme – Susan Wittig Albert)

It's the herb's centuries-old use as a spring drink that we look forward to every year. Since the custom began in Germany, it's traditional to use Rhine wine. Here's an easy recipe that will please a crowd. If gathering a group doesn't seem like a good idea right now, share with your neighbors over the back fence or out on the front curb of your cul-de-sac. They'll love it.

1 gallon Rhine wine (use half champagne, if you like)
12-16 sprigs of sweet woodruff, dried overnight in the oven with the pilot light on
1 package frozen strawberries, thawed
1 cup sugar
Fresh whole strawberries

Steep the sweet woodruff in the wine for 3-6 days. Chill. Remove the herb and pour chilled wine into a punch bowl over a block of ice. Mash thawed strawberries with a cup of sugar and stir into the wine. Add champagne, if you wish, and garnish each cup with a fresh strawberry.



MY PORCH

Neighbors will climb the steps from the street I
welcome them all to my porch to meet.
The pleasure of my porch I freely share
Of my comfortable place friends are aware.
Here these knotty panels, these iridescent panes
Comfort and conceal me as daylight wanes.
Incandescent pictures in pink and purple ink
Reflect blushing leaves as sun tries to sink. It's
my own hiding place from vexing care When
morrow's thoughts I need to prepare. So join
me for a visit or to dream or to read The porch
of my home will suit every need.

J E Janssen "Under The Leaf"



If you have an event, article, recipe, books, etc. that you feel members might be interested, please send to Diane Kescenovitz 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 July 1 and September 1, 2024.