

SAGE LEAVES

The Herb Society of America Wisconsin Unit

Educates and inspires people to explore the wonder and pleasure of herbs.



AJ Star, Unit Chair Newsbuds

Here it is, Autumn. I love this time of year. Fall perennials are in bloom, lemon verbena is ready to be cut back, and the potted rosemary and geraniums (including pelargoniums) are ready to make the transition from outdoor to indoor temperature and light changes. The cooler temperatures also stimulate thoughts of simmering savory soups, freshly baked herb bread, and mugs of cinnamon-hot cocoa.

Please join us on **October 24** to celebrate our Unit's 50th Anniversary. Come share your favorite stories and enjoy a special Golden Memories Tea Party with us.

On **November 17** we will learn about the roses grown at Boerner Botanical Gardens from BBG Horticulturist Samantha Gilbert. I'm looking forward to hearing about the changes to that garden space from her point of view. Maybe we can include a rose-flavor-infused recipe into our Thanksgiving meal plan!

On **December 9**, we will begin our holiday gathering with a short business meeting, followed by festive fun—friendly conversation, our craft project, a group game, and of course a delicious luncheon. Falalalala!

Let's embrace the good that lies ahead.

2026-27 UPCOMING EVENTS

2026

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|--------|---|
| Oct 24 | Saturday, Monthly Meeting
50th Anniversary Event |
| Nov 17 | Tuesday, Monthly Meeting
My Rose Garden Work at Boerner
presented by Samantha Gilbert |
| Dec 9 | Wednesday, Holiday Party and Meeting
at The Town Club, Fox Point
10 a.m. Social/Mtg. with Noon Luncheon |

2027

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| Jan 19 | Tuesday, Monthly Meeting – Zoom Only
10 a.m. Grants & Scholarships |
| Feb | None; informational email will be sent |
| Mar 20 | Saturday, Monthly Meeting
IHA Herb of the Year™ Study – Flax |
| Apr 20 | Tuesday, Monthly Meeting, Program TBA
Election for Chair and Vice Chair |
| May 18 | Tuesday, Monthly Meeting
Final Preparation for Herb & Artisan Fair |
| May 22 | Saturday, Herb & Artisan Fair
at Boerner Botanical Gardens
9 a.m. to 3 p.m., all members involved |
| Jun 19 | Saturday, Monthly Meeting
Wrap-up of Unit Events |

Unless otherwise noted, monthly meetings are held at 9:30 a.m. at St. Christopher's Church.

Denise Nelson

Holiday Luncheon

Our Holiday Luncheon will be held on Wednesday, December 9, at The Town Club in Fox Point. New this year, we will hold a short member meeting during our social time beginning at 10 a.m. and then lunch at noon. The theme is old-fashioned ornaments. The invitation will be handed out at the October meeting; those not in attendance will receive it via USPS. We hope you can make it!

The heat of autumn is different from the heat of summer.
One ripens apples, the other turns them to cider.

—Jane Hirshfield



Mary Kay McDevitt
Brunch Chair

Our first meeting of the new program year in September was a wonderful success! We enjoyed a lovely brunch, learned all about Pelargoniums from Sue Obry, and celebrated our July-December birthdays and members' milestone anniversaries. Congratulations: Gerry Kovatch (30 years); Ebert's Greenhouse Village and Pat Greathead (20 years); Lore Borth and Diane Kescenovitz (15 years); Susan Obry and Joanne Ruggieri (10 years); and Kate Stefanik (5 years).

On Saturday, October 24, we will celebrate the HSA-WI Unit's 50th Anniversary with a Golden Memories Tea Party. Join us for a look back with a special presentation by Diane Kescenovitz titled, "Memories from Year's Past." In addition, Melody Urban and A.J. Star have created an exhibit featuring selected items from the HSA-WI Unit's archives reflecting its history from 1976 to the present. Special guests will share memories of the Unit's milestones, projects, and events. Come, celebrate over a lovely brunch. Enjoy savory bites, refreshing libations, and a celebratory cake from Simma's Bakery.

On Tuesday, November 17, we will share a Thanksgiving brunch. Watch for an email to be sent—we hope you'll take part; create an entree, side, bread and spread, sweet, or beverage. When the email arrives, please reach out to Mary Kay to sign up early, call 414-418-2322 or email mkmcd@mac.com.



Kathy Bussanich & Cheryl Kazimier

Botanical Reads Recommendations

Fiction: "The Language of Flowers" by Vanessa Diffenbaugh. A 2011 bestselling debut novel that explores trauma, the foster care system, and emotional healing through the Victorian tradition of flower symbolism.

Nonfiction: "Field Guide to EDIBLE WILD PLANTS" by Bradford Angier with illustrations by Arthur J. Anderson. A quick all-in-color identifier of more than 100 edible wild foods growing free in the United States and Canada.

The Herb Society of America's book clubs and favorite reads can be found on the [HSAs blog site](#).

The winter wind begins to blow,
As gardens fade beneath the snow,
But inside by the hearth and light,
The herbal magic warms the night.

Bring rosemary for memories sweet,
And sage to make the feast complete,
Hang fragrant thyme upon the door,
And scatter pine upon the floor.

Let cinnamon and clove combine,
To spice the cider and the wine,
While star anise and nutmeg glow,
Beneath the golden candle's throw.

So, steep a cup and share a cheer,
With earthy blessings through the year.
From root to branch, from leaf to bowl,
These quiet greens will soothe the soul.

– AI prompt

Herbs of the Month

October – Licorice

Glycyrrhiza glabra

This Herb May Get You Arrested



Licorice is a perennial member of the pea family native to

Southern Europe, North Africa, and Central Asia. It has been used in Chinese medicine for thousands of years. European *Glycyrrhiza glabra* is the non-native edible commercially available plant commonly grown in WI USDA zones 5-6. *Glycyrrhiza lepidota* is a rare native plant protected by Wisconsin State Conservation Guidelines. Growing and harvesting wild plants may require permits. Choose *G. glabra* for culinary/ medicinal use or *G. lepidota* for native planting. Both require full sun to partial shade with well-drained, moist soil; no clay or compacted soil. The deep easily spreading root system is an issue when grown near other plants. Roots are harvested from 3–4-year-old plants.

Culinary & Aromatic: Extracts are used in candies, beverages such as stouts and spirits, syrups, and throat lozenges. Root is sometimes infused as tea. Essential oils are used in diffusers and lotions.

Medicinal: Consult a healthcare provider before use. Used to aid digestive discomfort, soothe coughs and sore throats, and for its anti-inflammatory, antiviral, and expectorant properties. Caution: Excessive use can raise blood pressure, lower potassium, or cause fluid retention. Essential oils should be diluted before use.

Interesting: Some licorice candy – red varieties – does not contain true licorice root, and some black licorice is flavored with anise.

November – Tamarind

Tamarindus indica

The Gummy Bear of Herbs



Tamarind is a long-lived tropical to sub-tropical tree in the pea family

that produces brown, pod-like fruits that have an edible, tangy sweet-sour pulp. Leaves and flowers are also edible with a distinct sharp, sour taste like lemon or lime. Originating in Africa and Madagascar, Tamarind has been cultivated since the fourth century BCE and is now naturalized in Asia. Tamarinds grown in Africa and West Indian varieties have shorter pods with only one to six seeds, and those grown in Asia have longer pods with six to 12 seeds.

Tamarind would be difficult to grow in Wisconsin as it is frost-sensitive and would not survive our winters.

Suggested varieties are: Indian Tamarind that is generally sour, acidic, and used as a savory cooking agent, or Sweet Tamarind that when fully ripened has low acidity and can be eaten fresh as a snack.

Culinary: The sticky sweet-sour pulp is used in curries, stews, chutneys, soups, candies, desserts, marinades, beverages and as a thickening agent in sauces. Young leaves and flowers are also edible.

Medicinal: Improves heart, digestive, liver, skin, oral, joint health, and may help to regulate blood sugar. It is said to have anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.

Interesting: The genus *Tamarindus* contains only one accepted species. In its native environment, it can live over 200 years and grow to 90 feet. Seeds are used as beads in jewelry and hard wood is used in carpentry.

December – Cardamom

Elettaria cardamomum

Fit for the Queen



Green cardamom is considered true/genuine cardamom

belonging to the Zingiberaceae ginger family and is the only species in the *Elettaria* genus. The taste and aroma are described as sweet, floral, citrusy with mint overtones. It is native to Southern India and has been cultivated for over 1,000 years.

Cardamom requires filtered light to partial shade and consistently moist, well-draining humus-rich soil, slightly acidic, and high humidity. If grown in Wisconsin, it should be grown indoor or in a heated greenhouse as it prefers temperatures between 65–85°F. Its flowers are also edible and appear orchid-like, pale green to white with a distinct violet or pink-striped central lip.

Culinary: Whole pods, crushed seeds, or ground powders are used in sweet dishes, coffee, and baked goods, and pairs well with cinnamon and fruits. (Note: not to be confused with black cardamom, which is a different plant.)

Medicinal: It is believed to aid in digestion, relieve gas and bloating, and protect against stomach ulcers; helps to lower cholesterol and triglycerides, lower blood pressure, and regulate blood sugar; reduces inflammation; combats bad breath.

Interesting: Cardamom is nicknamed the “Queen of Spices.” It was highly prized in ancient trade and often considered a luxury spice, used as gifts for royalty. Cardamom is sometimes added to pet foods as a flavoring and digestive aid.

Fall Gardening Tips

Get the biggest benefit from your efforts by employing strategies in your landscape now that provide double or triple the benefits from each task.

Shred leaves as you cut the grass and leave them.

As long as the leaf pieces are the size of a quarter or smaller, leave the clippings; your lawn will be fine. As the leaves decompose they add organic matter and nutrients to the soil. Place the bagger on your mower so you can gather and shred leaves at the same time. If the lawn was not treated with a weed killer this fall, you can use the shredded leaves and grass clippings as mulch, a soil amendment, or addition to the compost pile.

Keep planting perennials, trees, and shrubs.

The soil is warm and air is cool; perfect conditions for planting. Just be sure to mulch the soil and water thoroughly as needed until the ground freezes.

Plant tulips, daffodils, and other spring bulbs.

These beauties provide colorful relief as the snow recedes and temperatures begin to warm. Include early blooming minor bulbs like winter aconites and snow drops for an earlier start to the spring floral display.

Still time to plant garlic.

Set the cloves in properly prepared soil and water in. This gives them a chance to start growing before the ground freezes.

Continue weeding.

Every weed removed before it sets seed means hundreds less you'll be pulling next season.

Continue harvesting.

Broccoli, cabbage, brussels sprouts, and other cool weather vegetables can tolerate a light freeze. In fact, the cooler temperature helps to improve their flavor!

Extend the harvest season with frost protection.

The first few frosty nights are often followed by several weeks of warmer frost-free weather. You will appreciate the extra gardening time as you enjoy a few more meals of garden-fresh veggies.

Source: Melinda Myers

Have some fun too!

Add pumpkins, decorative squash and corn stalks to your front entry. Set them in the garden to cover fading annuals or fill voids. Scatter a few gourds in and around your gardens and fall containers for a festive touch.



Fall Gardening Factoid



Pumpkins, perhaps the most iconic image of autumn, are grown on six of the seven continents; all but Antarctica. Their name comes from the Greek word *pepon*, meaning “large melon.” The word traded hands from French *pompon* to British *pumpion* before colonial Americans dubbed it *pumpkin* in the 1600s. The colonials went one step further: the phrase “pumpkin-head,” referring to a dork with short haircut all around, is recorded in America as early as 1781.

In Remembrance—Nell Schneider—A Garland of Herbs



Herbs; each a special gift for humanity. Some for healing, some for fragrance, some for nourishment, each unique and valuable. Looking at the assortment of my potted herbs and feeling very sad thinking about my dear friend Nell, who just passed away, the plants were comforting. Nell was a member of The American Herb Society's Wisconsin Unit since its very early days, and was, for decades, an active leader and valuable member. It was Nell who introduced me into the Herb Society. Now these herbs seemed to be a balm for my grief—each with a connection, somehow, to Nell.



Drawing by Helene Pizzi

- ***Apium petroselinum*** – Parsley, so ‘common, so ‘every-day,’ and yet so historical. The ancient Greeks dedicated parsley to Persephone and to their funeral rites. Sacred to oblivion and to the dead, they strewed parsley on the corpses and made parsley wreaths to lay on the graves. Thinking of Nell and imagining a beautiful wreath of both Italian and curly parsley to send her on her way seemed calming.
- ***Salvia officinalis*** – Its name comes from the Latin word *salvare*, to be saved. This medicinal herb was known to prevent sadness and depression. Looking at its soft grey-green comforting leaves, releasing the unique fragrance, so soothing, we gently can feel our spirits lightened and our precious memories of Nell float by.
- ***Rosa*** – The Queen of Flowers, loved since time began, was for the Ancient Romans, a sign of mirth and pleasure, but also used for funerals. A rose is Saint Rita's symbol, a reminder of her ability to overcome all sorts of problems, thanks to The Lord. Nell had mastered ‘overcoming.’ A magnificent, large *Rosa spinosissima* (Scotch Briar), originally from Floyd Johnson's garden, produces thousands of mirthful pure white blooms in Nell's garden in Glendale. The rose breeder Will Radler was Nell's dear friend for much of her lifetime, and it has always given her such pleasure.
- ***Ocymum basilium*** – Basil was planted on the graves in ancient Greece. In Egypt, women scattered basil blooms on graves of their loved ones. In Hindu households it was a cherished plant and every good Hindu is laid to rest with a leaf of basil on his chest as a passport to paradise. In olden Tudor England, it was the custom to give guests little pots of basil, or basil was included in nosegays to give away, as a symbol to procure cheerful and merry hearts. Wishing Nell a cheerful and merry way to paradise, with fresh bright green basil leaves.
- ***Laurus nobilis*** – Bay, or laurel, crowns were made in ancient times for heroes, poets, and scholars. Laurel crowns are still made to wear at university graduations in Italy. Laurel wreaths are laid on tombs. Nell's brilliant, poetic mind, sharp and clear to the end, certainly merits a crown of laurel forever.
- ***Mentha viridis*** – *Mentha piperita* – Gerard writes, ‘the smelle rejoiceth the heart of man’. Culpepper writes of nearly forty maladies for which mint is ‘singularly good’. Nell always had mint tea on hand to offer to her guests, and the fragrance of mint mingled with good conversations.
- ***Origanum vulgare*** – Its name *oros* means ‘mountain’, and *ganos* for ‘joy’...if wild marjoram (oregano) grew on the graves, it brought joy. Its fragrance is a reminder of Nell's joyful dinner parties, with vibrant conversations and bubbly laughter. Mountain top experiences; joyful memories.
- ***Thymus vulgaris*** – Courage in Greek is translated as *Thmus*. Thyme inspired invigoration and courage, as Nell's care with people she encountered in her lifetime. Thyme was also a symbol of elegance and grace; the perfect description of Nell. The potent antiseptic, thymol, extracted from the plant has helped save and heal throughout history, and Nell with her wisdom has done the same with many people over the years.
- ***Thymus serpyllium*** – We all can't but help love wild thyme, and, like the ancient Romans, feel our spirits enlivened and refreshed as we trod on this sturdy ground cover. As thyme is a remedy for melancholy, Nell listened, advised, and lovingly cared and helped many exclude melancholy from their lives. The fairies are said to love this plant too, and in Wales it is often seen planted on graves.
- ***Rosmarinus officinalis*** – An emblem of fidelity, rosemary, sacred to friendship and remembrance, was carried in hand to funerals of ancient Rome, and cast into the graves as the coffins were lowered so the deceased person wouldn't be forgotten. Rosemary flourishes where women rule, the old thought was. Nell grew rosemary; she was the ruler, the Alpha, the leader of her family and clan, of so many groups, always strong, serene, and loved by everyone. She will not be forgotten.

On August 5, 2026, Nell passed away at 96 and was sharp and spiffy to the end. She will be greatly missed.

Denise Nelson

In Remembrance of Joan Amundson



Joan joined the Wisconsin Unit in 2010 and made an immediate, vibrant impact. Known for her impeccable style and grace, she loved to “kick things up a notch” whenever she volunteered—whether she was preparing a luncheon dish, assembling a donation basket, or finding the perfect, thoughtful gift for an event. Joan was deeply involved with the HSA “All About Herbs” Committee, which hosted a three-part annual lecture series with the Ozaukee Master Gardeners. For many years, she chaired the Spring Symposium, constantly finding ways to elevate the experience. Her generosity was unmatched: she frequently donated restaurant gift cards for raffles and personally covered the expenses for the Fragrant Isle (Door County) guest speakers the year lavender was featured. Joan welcomed those speakers with extraordinary hospitality, treating them to dinner at Lake Park Bistro upon arrival, covering their stay at the Washington House Inn, and crafting a beautiful welcome basket filled with French bottled water and local treats. From 2015 to 2019, Joan served as the Wisconsin Unit Chair. She carried out her leadership duties with dedication, even after receiving a lung cancer diagnosis six months before the end of her term. Though she was later declared cancer-free, the treatments left her with permanent, challenging health complications. Even when she could no longer physically attend unit meetings and events, Joan maintained her membership and remained close at heart.

Joan passed away peacefully on August 14, 2026, at the age of 84. We will deeply miss our dear friend.

RECIPES

Relieve Sore Muscles

Relaxing massage oil, made with pain-relieving essential oils, increases circulation and eases soreness.

Ingredients: • 3 ounces almond oil • 1 ounce jojoba oil • 10 drops birch essential oil • 20 drops lavender essential oil • 10 drops peppermint essential oil	Directions: 1. Mix ingredients together and store in a tightly capped glass bottle. 2. Use as desired for massage, keeping away from the eyes and mucous membranes.
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Enhancing Steam Inhalation with Natural Herbs

Andrew Weil, M.D.

Ingredients: Each of the following botanical additions help open airways, loosen mucus, and soothe respiratory irritation better than plain water alone. • eucalyptus • sage • thyme • oregano	Directions: 1. <u>Boil water</u>: Heat a pot of clean water on the stove until it steams actively, then place it safely on a stable surface. 2. <u>Add botanicals</u>: Stir in fresh or dried leaves, or a few drops of pure essential oil. 3. <u>Create a tent</u>: Position a large towel over your head and the pot to trap the warm, medicated vapor. 4. <u>Breathe deeply</u>: Close your eyes and inhale slowly and deeply through your nose and mouth for 5 to 10 min.
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Treat Headaches with Herbs

For ordinary headaches due to the stress and strain of daily life. – Susan Wittig Albert

Ingredients: 1/2 teaspoon of each herb mixed: • Lavender, lemon balm, and meadowsweet OR • Sage, rosemary, and mint OR • Rosemary, marjoram, and peppermint	Directions: Use one of these combinations of dried herbs, brewed with one cup boiling water and sweetened with honey. Note: A cool lavender compress for the temples and a quiet rest in a dark room may also give you relief.
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The History of Ornaments

The Edible Beginnings (1600s)

The tradition of decorating indoor evergreen trees began in Germany during the 17th century. Ornaments were completely natural and mostly edible; branches were adorned with apples symbolizing the Garden of Eden, nuts representing wisdom, cookies, popcorn strings, and stars to convey the principles of heaven. To catch and reflect light before electricity, they added bits of hammered silver tinsel and real candles.

The Birth of Glass "Baubles" (1847)

The ancestor of modern old-fashioned ornaments arrived in 1847 in Lauscha, Germany when Hans Greiner began blowing hollow glass tubes into clay molds to create unique decorations. These glass ornaments were called kugels (German for ball) and shaped like fruits and nuts; replacing the edible. A silver nitrate solution was swirled inside the cooled glass before painting to give a mirror-like shine.



The Royal Trendsetter (1848)

Glass ornaments were originally a localized luxury until 1848 when an illustration of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, and their children standing around a decorated Christmas tree was published in the *Illustrated London News*. Prince Albert, who was German, brought the tradition to the British empire, and because the public idolized the royal family, the demand for intricate, European glass ornaments exploded overnight across Britain and the United States.

American Commercialization and F.W. Woolworth (1880s)

In the fall of 1880, F.W Woolworth reluctantly purchased a case of 144 ornaments with a refund guarantee if they didn't sell. They sold out in less than one day, launching a massive holiday tradition and defining his five-and-dime stores.



Shiny Brite and the World Wars (1930s–1950s)

When World War I and World War II disrupted trade with Germany, American innovators stepped in. In 1937, a German immigrant named Max Eckardt partnered with the Corning Glass Works company in New York. Corning adapted their automated ribbon machines used to mass-produce lightbulbs to thousands of hollow glass ornament spheres per hour; they were marketed under the name Shiny Brite and became the defining look of mid-century American Christmas trees; recognized by their bright pastel stripes and crinkled metal caps.

War-Era Fact: During WWII, metal restrictions forced Shiny Brite to use cardboard caps and string instead of metal tops, and some omitted the interior silver lining entirely, leaving them clear with simple painted stripes.



Imported 1920-1930
Impossible for American
glassmakers to replicate



L - Shiny Brite with cardboard cap
R - cardboard/glue/string top/hanger



Today's ornaments
Still mostly imported from Europe

The Post-War & Modern Era (1960s–Present)

By the 1960s, the introduction of cheap, mass-produced plastic and molded Styrofoam ornaments pushed many traditional European glassblowers out of business, but only temporarily. A deep appreciation for nostalgia sparked a major revival, and in 1973 Hallmark launched its Keepsake Ornament line turning Christmas decorations into highly sought-after, dated collectibles.

Today, antique kugels and vintage Shiny Brites are prized by collectors trying to recreate the classic warmth of an old-fashioned holiday. **Old-fashioned ornaments is the theme of our holiday party this year!**



The autumn winds begin to bite,
And draw the shadows in at night.
The leaves of gold and amber fall,
Answering the winter's call.

But as the trees are stripped and bare,
A festive magic fills the air.
The season turns from gray to bright,
To gather in the candlelight.

From chilly dusk to hearth-side glow,
Through fading light and falling snow,
We close the year in love and cheer,
Embracing those we hold most dear.

-AI prompt

Happy Holidays & Warm Winter Wishes



HSA Wisconsin Unit website: <https://herb-society-wisconsin.org>

Herb Society of America website: <https://www.herbsociety.org>

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Please email Susan any item(s) you would like to see included in *Sage Leaves*