

***In my garden I can find solitude. I can go out there and say, "No [cell] phones, no interruptions, I am busy," and then shut myself off for a little while.***

*Helen Hayes, Actress*

# SAGE LEAVES

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

Jan/Feb 2022 – Vol XXXXIII #1

### **Unit Meetings**

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

**Program:** Grants & Scholarship Recipients' Reports

**Presider:** Lore Borth

**Location:** Zoom

#### **Saturday, February 19, 10:00 a.m.**

**Program:** Herbal Vinegars & Dressings

**Location:** Tentative St Christopher's & Zoom

#### **2022 Spring Symposium, March 5 at Woman's Club of Wisconsin**

(Board will take a vote as to whether we will hold this event because of Covid)

#### **2022 Herb & Artisan Fair, May 21 at Boerner Botanical Gardens**

#### **2022 Holiday Party, December 7 at Town Club**

**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...

It has been quite a year in 2021; and I'm wishing you a wonderful New Year in 2022. May you be blessed with joy and rest and good health. I thank you very, very much for all of the work you, our members have done for our unit. It is VERY much appreciated. During the year, we had zoom only meetings, choices of zoom or in person meetings, celebrated our 45th anniversary, enjoyed a walk at Elaine's garden, held our first July Herb Day at Boerner, had fun at a Mad Hatter's Tea for our Annual Meeting, and enjoyed our December party. See the holiday party photos on the members section of our website under calendar. I look forward to the meetings and events we plan for the new year. We will start the year with an all Zoom meeting for January with the program of Grants and Scholarships. We are not able to meet at the church.

January is National Hot Tea Month. <https://nationaltoday.com/national-hot-tea-month/> "Whether you follow the brewing traditions of the English or Chinese Customs, or you only microwave your tea, National Hot Tea Month is best celebrated with a cup."OR depending what type of "holiday" calendar you choose January 12 — National Hot Tea Day <https://www.holidayinsights.com/moreholidays/January/national-hot-tea-day.htm>

I hope we return to in person and safe travel by spring. I plan to attend the HSA Annual Meeting on April 28 and 29, 2022 in Charleston, SC in person.

HSA Webinar **A Green Revival: Cultivating Gardens for People, Place and Plants** with Susan Betz January 18, 1:00 p.m. ET. Learn how to enhance your home and landscape by altering its design to fit your personal needs and the surrounding environment. Properly designed gardens can become beautiful functioning ecosystems.

Also see the HSA Blog for tradition on New Years:  
[https://herbsocietyblog.wordpress.com/?blm\\_aid=25011](https://herbsocietyblog.wordpress.com/?blm_aid=25011)

Happy New Year - Rest, relax, enjoy time with family and friends. We will hope for much goodness to come our way in 2022 . . . and enjoy a cup of tea while you read this newsletter.

Melody



## **Repairers of the Breach 2021 Donations from our Members**

For the tenth year, our Unit collected items for "Repairers of the Breach" daytime homeless shelter in downtown Milwaukee. Our Unit donated \$500 worth of toiletries, warm clothes, and household items this past December. The items were delivered as cold weather hit our area sending the temperatures plummeting. Your warm thoughts and generosity are helping in a very immediate way.

Our members also made donations of \$155 to the Shelter to help cover their heat and electrical costs. We received a thank you letter from Repairers expressing that our donations were a tremendous help and very much appreciated by the homeless people who truly live on the streets.

Thank you for your very generous donations.

Denise Nelson

## **Nominations**

We will be accepting nominations for Treasurer and Secretary for our elections in April. Our current Treasurer and Secretary have graciously offered to run once again. However, any qualified member who is interested in being included on the slate of candidates must apply to the Nominating Chair, Joan Amundson, by the end of the February meeting. Candidates for office should be an actively involved member in good standing for at least one year. The proposed slate of candidates will be sent to the unit membership in the March-April Sage Leaves.

## ***OUT AND ABOUT***

In February we'll be **zooming** the following:

February 3 at 1:00 p.m. - book discussion of "Asking for Truffles" by Dorothy St. James (You can get the book at the library and on Amazon).

**Please let me know if you're going to attend so I can zoom you an invitation.**

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March 26 will be our birthday celebration, hopefully in person and our theme will be "*Hats and Flowers*".

Hope to see you soon!  
Joanne



**Herb of the Month for January 2022: Violet  
(also International Herb of the Year 2022)**

Our November meeting was our traditional Research the Herb of the Year 2022-- Thank you to all who helped make our November meeting successful and FUN!

**Herb if the Month for February 2022: Bay Laurel (*Laurus nobilis*)**

(Nino Ridgway)

Bay laurel, also known as sweet bay and bay leaf, is a leathery-leaved tree in the Lauraceae family. It is native to the Mediterranean area, where it can grow to 50 feet tall! It is not winter hardy in most of the United States (to zone 8) but can easily be wintered in a pot on a sunny windowsill. Keep the soil on the dry side, and never let it stand in water. Fertilize lightly in summer (if potted), not at all in winter. Leaves may brown or drop if unhappy (usually if soil gets bone dry). If defoliation happens, it will soon put out fresh leaves and carry on as if nothing happened! Some leaf loss is normal.

Sweet bay is relatively pest-free except for scale insects. These should be removed monthly in winter with a damp tissue or cotton ball when you notice the leaves getting sticky. In summer, keep the plant outdoors so the predatory bugs can clean up any scales you missed. When the plant gets too big or is not the shape you want, prune off the unwanted branches. Hang the branches until dry, then share leaves with friends,

Bay leaf is a very important herb for flavoring meats, poultry, potatoes, beans, tomato sauces, and root vegetables. It is most often used in dishes that are slow-cooked, such as soups, stews, and pasta sauces. Leaves are removed at the time of serving. Fresh or recently dried leaves have the best flavor. Avoid leaves of unknown vintage. If you have had bay leaves lingering on your shelf for years, toss them out and get fresh! Better yet: grow your own. It's easy!



## **Recipes**

### **Chocolate-Hazelnut Spread Hot Chocolate**

(Joan Amundson)

1 c whole milk  
2 T chocolate hazelnut spread  
1 T caramel sundae topping  
1 T unsweetened cocoa powder

Heat & enjoy!

### **Caramel Dipped Apple Juice**

(Joan Amundson)

12 oz apple juice  
1/4 t cinnamon extract or ground cinnamon  
whipped cream  
caramel sundae topping

Heat apple juice until simmering. Add cinnamon. Serve in a mug topped with whipped cream and caramel. To warm you up even more, add 1 oz of caramel or vanilla vodka.

### **Asparagus 'n' Shrimp with Angel Hair (2 servings)**

(Taste of Home)

3 oz	cooked angel hair pasta	2 t	chopped green onion
1/2 #	uncooked shrimp (16-20/#) peeled and deveined	1/2 c	white wine or chicken broth
1/4 t	salt	1-1/2 t	minced fresh basil
1/8 t	crushed red pepper flakes	1-1/2 t	minced fresh oregano
2 T	evo, divided	1-1/2 t	minced fresh parsley
8	fresh asparagus spears, cut in 2" pieces	1-1/2 t	minced fresh thyme
1/2 c	sliced fresh mushrooms	1/4 c	grated Parmesan cheese
1/4 c	chopped seeded tomato, peeled		Lemon wedges
4	garlic cloves, minced		

1. Cook pasta according to package directions. Meanwhile, sprinkle shrimp with salt and pepper flakes. In a large skillet or wok, heat 1 T evo over medium-high heat. Add shrimp, stir-fry until pink, 2-3 min. Remove, keep warm.
2. In same skillet, stir-fry the next 5 ingredients in remaining oil until vegetables are crisp-tender, about 5 min. Add wine and seasonings.
3. Drain pasta, add to shrimp mixture and toss gently. Cook and stir until heated through, 1-2 min. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Serve with lemon wedges.



*“Winter seems to me  
A time for tea  
When all the garden  
Is at rest  
To sit and sip  
Is best.”*

... Adelma Grenie Simmons

## **Questions About Seed Starting**

(Ann McCormick – Ann lives in the Southwest, so you might want to start a bit later here in the Midwest, however, this is a good time to start planning your garden)

February is the season of love...and of the very beginnings of your summer garden. This is the month when you can buy fresh packets of seed and start growing the new herbs, veggies, and flowers you will enjoy in your garden all year long. Starting seeds doesn't take much – quality seed starting medium, a container with good drainage, and those precious seeds. The tricky bit is getting them to grow.

**Q:** My seed packet says I have to put my seeds in the refrigerator for a week. Is this really necessary?

**A:** If you want to have success growing these plants, then yes you need to follow directions. Each type of seed starts to grow when it senses the right combination of light, moisture, and temperature. If one of those is off, the seed will stay locked up tighter than Fort Knox. Seed companies know this, which is why they give you the best advice on how to get seeds to germinate. A little patience now will give you a successful crop.

**Q:** Do I have to sow seeds indoors first? Can't I just put them outside on the ground?

**A:** All seeds naturally grow outside in the soil. The advantage of starting seeds indoors is two-fold. First it gives you a chance to get a "jump start" on spring. There may still be snow on the ground but you can get your basil and green bean seeds germinated and growing indoors so you are ready as soon as the soil warms to put out your young plants. Another advantage of starting seeds indoors is that you can give them the special care they need to get started. Perhaps as many as half of the seeds available for you to grow might not thrive if they are simply sown outdoors. Giving them a little TLC indoors will make them grow for your garden.

**Q:** Can I use seeds from last year?

**A:** Yes, you can but be aware that the older the seed is, the less likely it is to germinate. Some seeds have a shelf life of as little as 3-4 months, just enough to stay alive through winter and germinate the following spring. Before sowing old seeds you can test them for viability. Take 10 seeds and wrap them in a wet paper towel. Consult the seed packet to find out the days to germination. Put the damp towel in a plastic bag and set it aside for the number of days mentioned on the packet. Unwrap the seeds and count how many germinated. If five germinated, then only about 50% of the seed will come to life. If this is good enough, then go ahead and sow.

**Q:** I'm worried I might have seeds from GMO plants. How can I tell?

**A:** There are very, very few true GMO plants available to the public. These are generally confined to field crops such as alfalfa, corn, soy, etc. Even if a seed packet does not mention this issue, it is almost certainly not a GMO crop. Keep in mind there is a very big difference between GMO plants and genetically modified/manipulated plants. Nearly every food plant we use today has been changed by genetically manipulation through selective breeding. Everyday genetically manipulated plants are quite safe.

**Q:** I have leftover seeds? Can I keep them for later?

**A:** Yes you can. For maximum storage life, seeds should be stored in an airtight container and kept away from high heat. Then you will be ready to sow them next year.

(Return Service Requested)



## PROMISE FOR FEBRUARY

*Groundhog day must come and go  
Winter surrenders his blanket of snow  
Icy winds don't continue to blow  
The sun tries very hard to show  
Spring-like signs we yearn to know  
Like daffodils about to glow.*

*The tulip with an upturned face  
Will greet the gentle rain's embrace.  
Tiny green leaves will begin to sprout  
Old man winter will begin to pout  
He'll go packing and he won't be missed  
Our garden goddess deserves to be kissed.*

*...J E Janssen "Under the Leaf"*



If you have an event, article, recipe, books, etc. in which 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 3/1/22 and 5/1/22.