



*“May your blessings outnumber the Shamrocks that grow.  
And may trouble avoid you wherever you go.”*

*...Irish Blessing*



**The Herb Society of America  
Wisconsin Unit**

Mar/Apr 2024 – Vol XXXIX #2

**Unit Meetings**

**Saturday, March 16, 9:30 a.m. Social, 10:00 a.m. Meeting**

Program: Succulents  
Presider: Renee Barnard  
Location: St. Christopher's

**Tuesday, April 16, 9:30 a.m. Social, 10:00 a.m. Meeting**

Program: Culinary Herbs from Around the World  
Presider: Susan Obry  
Unit Election for Secretary and Treasurer  
Location: St. Christopher's

**Please mark your calendar for the following upcoming events:**

April 6, 2024            Spring Symposium at Woman's Club of Wisconsin  
May 18, 2024            Herb & Artisan Fair at Boerner Botanical Gardens  
December 11, 2024    Holiday Party

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 – thanks!

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Wisconsin Unit website: [Herb-Society-Wisconsin.org](http://Herb-Society-Wisconsin.org)

Herb Society of America office: [Herbs@HerbSociety.org](mailto:Herbs@HerbSociety.org)

Herb Society of America website: [www.herbsociety.org](http://www.herbsociety.org)

# NEWSBUDS...



After signing off from the February 20, 2024 Zoom only Unit meeting and our educational program on Bonsai, I felt a sense of relief. Our two Zoom Only, winter season meetings were completed and the promise of spring was in the air. Might I hazard a guess that you too are looking forward to returning to St. Christopher's Church for the 'in person' (and optional Zoom) meeting on Saturday, March 20, 2024? Mary Kay announced that an Irish Heritage themed luncheon menu is being planned. William Butler Yeats, an Irish poet, wrote "Earth in beauty dressed, awaits returning Spring". It seems to me he was imagining the 50 shades of green that is Ireland when he wrote those lines. May I suggest we all do a bit of "wearing of the green" on March 20. Those of you who want to participate in the annual **Seed Swap**, bring your seeds to the March meeting. Swap happens after lunch.

**The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Symposium** is scheduled for **Saturday, April 6, 2024**. Your registration form should have arrived in the mail. Please encourage your friends to join you for this wonderful educational and social event. The menu sounds delicious. No doubt Carrie Hennessey is developing another highly informative presentation about pollinators and the herbs they love.

Our April meeting will include the election of secretary and treasurer. Thank you to Tricia and Denise for agreeing to run for office again. Please contact Melody ASAP if you would like to nominate someone or if you would like to run for either of these offices.

I encourage you to check out the HSA National office website: [www.herbsociety.org](http://www.herbsociety.org). Look under EVENTS to learn about other spring educational conferences from nearby units.

Visit our WI-Unit webpage and Facebook page for updates and announcements about Spring Symposium and our Herb and Artisan Fair in May. Many thanks to Susan McDonell for creating lovely graphics and keeping the content up to date.

Happy Spring, AJ

## **Spring Symposium – April 6, 2024**

*(Denise Nelson, Chair)*

Look in your mailbox for your personal invitation to the major educational event sponsored by our Unit, our 28th Spring Symposium. Members receive a discounted registration fee of \$75. The historic downtown Woman's Club is a delightful site to host a day filled with herbal gourmet meals and tastings, a raffle table, and herb related vendor offerings for sale. The featured speaker, Carrie Hennessey, will present a lecture focusing on Butterfly Gardens: Pollinators and the Herbs They Love.

## **Elections**

Elections candidates for secretary and treasurer will be voted on at the April meeting, Tuesday, April 16. The committee reports that the slate for elections is set with Denise Nelson for treasurer and Tricia Hallam for secretary. An absentee ballot may be requested from Melody, [melody.orban@yahoo.com](mailto:melody.orban@yahoo.com), before April 1, and must be returned to her 10 days before the April meeting. The ballots will be opened and counted by the Nominating Committee at the April 16 meeting. The officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the members present and the returned absentee ballots at the April meeting.

*Submitted by The Nominating Committee, Chair Melody Orban, Louise Block, and Gail Gabrelian*

## **Treasurer Candidate – Denise Nelson**

Having over a decade of private banking experience has given me a well-rounded background for serving as your treasurer the past ten years. My detailed records have been reviewed and found to be accurate. I promptly pay the Unit bills, which include: building use and locker rentals, insurance policies, filing our tax return, renewing our Tax-Exempt permit and reimbursing members and businesses for approved expenses. As treasurer, I'm responsible for collecting membership dues, HSA event reservations, cash box tabulations, proceeds from and payments due for the Spring Symposium and our Herb and Artisan Fair. These duties have always been handled in a timely and efficient manner. I computerized our budget and committee expense reports. I am responsible for helping to formulate the Unit budget and present it at the Annual Meeting. I have the best interest of the Unit in mind as I take care of our financial records and business administration. I would like to continue to serve for another term.

### **Secretary Candidate – Tricia Hallam**

I am trained as an elementary school teacher, but I have had years of secretarial experience, as well as bookkeeping and retail. I have had much experience with taking minutes as secretary in many volunteer organizations, including Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, VFW Auxiliary, as a deaconess at our church, and the Waukesha Co. Sheriff's Reserve, and currently as your secretary. I have served as secretary in employee positions as well. My first job as a summer secretary in an elementary school gave me great training early in my career. I was also an Executive Secretary at Gary Machine Company and a secretary/receptionist at T.J. Hale Company for several years. As secretary, I have learned much and have adapted well being blessed with the privilege of working with two exceptional chairs, Melody Orban and A.J. Star. I have truly enjoyed my time serving as secretary for our unit and would love the opportunity to continue to serve our HSA WI-Unit for another term.

### **Renewal Message from the Treasurer – Denise Nelson**

It will soon be time to renew your HSA-WI Unit membership. We look forward to having you as a continuing part of our Society. Your friendship, support and generosity toward the Unit is greatly appreciated.

In an envelope addressed to your home you will find a membership renewal form. Please complete the survey portion and send it to me with your check payable to HSA-WI Unit. If you have any questions, call me at (262) 376-0482. Thank you in advance for paying your dues promptly, by May 14, 2024. Checks should be mailed to me at: W72N904 London Court, Cedarburg, WI 52012.

## **HSA-WI Unit 2024 Grant Awards to Milwaukee Area Public Gardens**

The Unit's Grants and Scholarship Committee solicited Requests for Proposals (RFPs) from three Milwaukee area public gardens in late summer of 2023, and in late fall received grant requests for 2024 from Boerner Botanical Gardens, Friends of Boerner Botanical Gardens, and the Old World Wisconsin Foundation. The Committee, Board and Unit approved the following grants:

**Boerner Botanical Gardens** received \$1,000 for the ongoing maintenance and enhancement of the **Herb Garden** to include plants and seeds, theme bed signage and props, as well as membership in the Herb Society and a subscription to the Herb Quarterly. The Herb Garden theme for this year will be "Tea Time in the Garden: History, Mystery Recipes and Lore."

**Friends of Boerner Botanical Gardens** requested and received \$1,000 to help defray the cost of offering four sessions of nature classes to approximately 35-40 third grade low income/underserved students from the Milwaukee area. These sessions are taught by certified educators and take place in the FBBG Garden Lab.

**Old World Wisconsin** requested and received \$1,500 to fund a hop garden near the front entrance at OWW. (This amount includes \$500 from the previous year's grant which could not be utilized because of COVID-caused delays in the restoration of OWW's recent acquisition of Wittnebel's Tavern.) All in all, there will be a BrewHouse, Tavern and Beer Garden---and beer will be brewed on-site with the hops we are helping purchase. Interesting fact: we all know that hops are an herb, but we probably didn't know that hops likely originated in China. The first documented use of hops to make beer was in the 8<sup>th</sup> century when Benedictine monks used them for brewing in a Bavarian abbey outside of Munich, Germany.

Take time in the coming spring, summer and fall months to visit OWW and Boerner Botanical Gardens to enjoy their beauty as well as to "see our dollars at work"!

*The Grants and Scholarship Committee members are Eva Boldt, Denise Nelson and Susan Williams Chair Lore Borth gives thanks for their dedication and good judgment!*

## Herb of the Month for March 2024 - Cilantro (*Coriandrum sativum*)

### "Hail the Mighty Bedbug"

(Susan Obry)



Cilantro plants are self-seeding annuals with broad lobed green leaves and clusters of white or pale pink flowers. Can be grown in full sun to partial shade. Can be grown indoors. Prefer rich, light, well-drained soil. Difficult to transplant so directly sow seeds after frost has passed.

Cilantro is also known as coriander, Chinese parsley (baby cilantro leaves), fresh coriander or Indian parsley. It was once thought that coriander had the power to make one immortal.

Coriander has been around for thousands of years, and gets its name is from the Greek word "koris" meaning stink bug. Mature plants smell like bedbugs. When fruits ripen, the smell becomes more citrus like. Coriander attracts pollinators and other useful insects.

Cilantro originally comes from the Mediterranean, Middle East, Northern Africa, Southwestern Asia. In the USA, it is mostly found in South Carolina.

The stems, seeds, roots, and leaves are edible. Only eat the stem when the plant is young and tender. It is primarily used as a spice for flavoring food in Mexico, Southeast Asia, China, East India, Central African and Spain.

Use cilantro in salads, sauces, soups, curries, pickles, relishes, with meats, vegetables, and seafood; and let's not forget guacamole. Its taste is similar to parsley. The cilantro leaves are very aromatic and with a flavor of citrus and sage leaves. Store dried seeds and leaves separately.

Some people say cilantro plant tastes like soap. This issue is genetics- a variation allows them to detect the soapy-flavored aldehydes in cilantro. Julia Childs hated cilantro.

## Herb of the Month for April 2024 - Dill (*Anethum graveolens*)

### Goodbye to Halitosis!

(Susan Obry)



**Dill** is a quick growing, self-seeding annual herb in the celery family. It is native to Europe, Asia, North Africa, Iran, and the Arabian Peninsula. The name dill comes from *dilla*, the Norse word for "to lull" because it was once used to induce sleep.

Dill looks similar to fennel. Its feathery foliage with yellow flowers attracts pollinators, butterflies and beneficial insects whose larvae feed on aphids. Dill tastes grassy with a bit of anise-like licorice flavor. The entire plant is very fragrant.

Dill can grow to five feet and can spread three-feet wide. Prefers rich, slightly acidic, well-drained soil. Dill is not a heavy feeder so if planted in rich soil it should not need fertilizer. Does best in full sun. Dill does not transplant well so seeds should be sown directly in the soil after the last frost. If you are going to plant dill in containers, use a dwarf variety.

To prevent self-seeding, deadhead flowers before they go to seed. When it turns hot, dill will bolt. Bolting makes the leaves bitter and less aromatic. To prevent the plant from bolting prematurely, keep the soil consistently moist.

The seed and leaves are used to flavor foods. It can be used in salads, garnishes, with seafood (especially salmon), meats, vegetables, eggs, sauces, soups, breads, spreads and it pairs well with apples. And let's not forget boiled dinners and our mother's potato salad. Used widely in seasoning pickled foods. The flowers are edible. Dill also has medicinal uses.

Leaves can be harvested at any time. Seeds when they turn brown. Dill freezes and dries well.

Fun fact: Dill can be chewed to alleviate halitosis.



## Recipes

When a recipe calls for garlic and fresh herbs, mince the garlic along with the herbs. Not only do the herbs add bulk to make mincing easier, but they also catch the garlic oil that is otherwise lost on your cutting surface.

### **Impress Your Guests with Your Herbal Style:**

- An herb sprig tied to the stem of a wine glass with raffia or ribbon is simple and pretty.
- Use two clear glass plates to sandwich a pattern of herb leaves.
- Serve herbal butter on a leaf of scented geranium.
- A single sprig or leaf in the center of an ice cube is enchanting.

### **Balsamic Vinegar and Sparkling Water Refresher** (Sue Steinhafel)

2 T balsamic vinegar of choice and 12 oz. sparkling water

From past All About Herbs Lecture Series, "Herbal Gardening, Cooking and Healing in Biblical Times":

### **Fines Herbs** – traditional French Recipe (Ann Beecher) – Makes 1 cup

¼ c chervil                      ¼ c parsley  
¼ c chives                      ¼ c tarragon

Try on eggs, in fresh fruit salads, in mayonnaise, butter, light cheeses, sauces, vinaigrettes and marinades.

### **Persillade** – simple and bright Greek and French recipe (Ann Beecher) – Makes 1/2 cup

Scant ½ c fresh minced parsley and 2 cloves minced garlic (or 2 large minced shallot)

Great to finish a gravy, on steamed/sauteed vegetables, to brighten pizza/pasta, over grilled fish/chicken.

### **Za'atar** – exotic, rather spicy, addicting Middle Eastern recipe (Ann Beecher) – Makes ½ cup

¼ c	toasted sesame seeds	
2-3 t	kosher or coarse salt	Use as a dipping sauce by mixing ¼ c herb blend to ¼ c olive oil.
2 T	dried thyme leaves	Great with pita bread or fresh vegetables.
1 T	oregano leaves	Sprinkle dry on bean, rice, or vegetable dishes.
1 T	ground sumac	Use in marinades for lamb, fish, or chicken before grilling.

### **Tabbouleh Salad** (Joan Amundson)

1 c	bulgur wheat	1 c	minced scallions, white and green parts (1 bunch)
1 ½ c	boiling water	1 c	chopped fresh mint leaves (1 bunch)
¼ c	lemon juice freshly squeezed	1 c	chopped flat leaf parsley (1 bunch)
¼ c	extra virgin olive oil	1	diced seedless cucumber (medium, unpeeled)
3 ½ t	salt	2 c	chopped plum tomatoes

Place bulgur in a large bowl. Pour in boiling water, add lemon juice, olive oil and salt. Stir, then allow to stand at room temperature for about 1 hour. Add chopped scallions, mint, parsley, cucumber and tomatoes. Mix well. Add more salt and pepper to taste. Cover and refrigerate for at least a few hours to improve flavors. Serve as a salad, a side dish or on crackers as an appetizer.

### **Tzatziki Sauce** (Denise Nelson)

2 c	plain yogurt	¼ t	ground black pepper
2 cloves	crushed garlic	¼ c	chopped fresh mint leaves
½ t	salt	1	large cucumber – peeled, seeded and shredded

Use cheese cloth to strain the yogurt over a bowl for 3-4 hours until most of the water has drained. Press excess liquid out of the shredded cucumber. In a medium bowl, stir together the cucumber and strained yogurt. Mix in garlic, salt, pepper and mint. Chill the mixture for at least 1-2 hours. Serve with pita chips or fresh vegetables. Good with cooked lamb or pork.

## **Starting Plants from Seed**

(Melinda Myers - from Eberts Village Gardener Express)

Save money and extend your gardening fun indoors by starting plants from seed. Start long season and hard to find vegetable, herb and flower varieties in a sunny window or under artificial lights. It's easier than you think and helps pass the time while waiting for the spring garden season!

### **What You Need:**

- \* Seed starter or well-drained potting mix
- \* Clean flats, cell packs, peat or cow pots, or other small containers
  - OR** compressed peat pellets that contain all you need for starting seeds
- \* Seeds
- \* Fertilizer labeled for use on seedlings
- \* Sunny window or artificial lights (optional)

### **Planting and Care Indoors**

1. Check the back of each seed packet for specific directions on planting time and depth for the variety of plant you are growing.
2. Create a seed starting list/calendar.
  - a. Make a chronological list of start times for plants you are growing.
  - b. Or mark planting dates on your calendar.
3. Fill clean containers with seed starter or a well-drained potting mix.
  - a. Always clean containers you are reusing from past seasons. Use a mix of one part bleach in 9 parts water. Then rinse with clear water.
  - b. When using peat pellets, soak the pellet in warm water and watch it expand, then plant.
4. Plant two seeds in each container **OR** create rows **OR** scatter seeds throughout a flat or other shallow container.
5. Moisten the soil and water often enough to keep planting mix moist.
  - a. Cover with plastic to keep soil moist and reduce watering frequency.
6. Once planted, place containers in a warm location to speed seed germination
  - OR** place on heating mat designed for this purpose.
7. Move to a sunny location or under artificial lights as soon as seeds sprout.
  - a. Regularly rotate plants in sunny window for even growth.
  - b. Adjust artificial lights as plants grow, keeping them 4 to 6 inches above the top of the seedlings.
8. Once seedlings develop two sets of true leaves (these look like the leaves of the plants you are growing) it is time to do some thinning or transplanting.
  - a. Leave one strong seedling in each individual container. Avoid damage to the remaining seedling by cutting the weakest seedling off at ground level.
  - b. Move strong healthy seedlings from flats to their own individual pots. Use a fork or other small utensil to carefully lift the plant out of the flat and into its own container.
9. Once seedlings have been thinned, established after transplanting and are actively growing, use a dilute solution of flowering plant fertilizer according to label directions.
10. Water thoroughly and often enough to keep the potting mix slightly moist.



## **Trouble Shooting**

- Seedlings fail to sprout -
  - Check seed packet as some seedlings take several weeks to sprout.
  - Too cold, move containers to a warmer location.
  - Planting mix is too wet or too dry, adjust watering as needed.
- Tall, spindly, and pale green seedlings - probably need more light -
  - Move to sunnier window, add artificial lights or move lights closer to the top of the seedlings.
- Pale green stunted seedlings - may need to be fertilized -
  - Review fertilization schedule and fertilize as needed.
- Brown leaf edges -
  - Review watering schedule - plants may need more frequent watering.
- Yellowing of leaves, yellow or water-soaked spots -
  - Overwatering - adjust watering to keep soil moist but not too wet.

## **Planting Outdoors**

- Harden off transplants before moving outdoors.
- Move plants outdoors to a sheltered and shaded location after the danger of frost has passed.
- Stop fertilizing and allow soil to dry slightly before watering.
- Move plants so they receive an hour more of sunlight each day.
- Cover plants or move them indoors when frost is in the forecast.

Move transplants into their permanent location in a week or two - check seed packet directions for spacing and desired growing conditions. Seedlings grown in peat, cow and other biodegradable pots can be left on the plants. The plant roots will eventually penetrate the pot and the container gradually decomposes. Remove the lip of pot to prevent water from wicking from the root ball into the air above. Slice through the sides and bottom of the pot to speed rooting through the container and into the surrounding soil. Water thoroughly and often enough to keep the soil around the plant roots slightly moist. Gradually increase the time between watering. Established plants usually need a thorough watering once a week in clay soils and twice a week in fast draining sandy soils. More often during hot dry weather.



### **Did you Know?**

The Shamrock is the national symbol of Ireland. Another fun fact is that it's very hard to find a four-leaf clover; experts confirm that the possibility of finding one is 1:10,000.

Diane Kescenovitz  
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(Return Service Requested)



## DEAR FRIEND, DID YOU KNOW?

Friends are flowers that never fade.  
Friends are gifts that can't be repaid.  
Friends take part when dreams are made.  
Friends hold fast where problems raid.  
Friends clasp tight when you're afraid.  
Friends just know if you need their aid.  
Friends laugh and love as life is played.  
Friends dare the loneliness to invade.  
Friends exchange smiles for errors you made.  
Friends brighten the day as love they trade.

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.