



"May your day be touched by a bit of Irish luck, brightened by a song
in your heart and warmed by the smiles of the people you love."

...Irish Saying

SAGE LEAVES

The Herb Society of America Wisconsin Unit

Mar/Apr 2023 – Vol XXXXVIII #2

Unit Meetings

Saturday, March 18, 9:30 a.m. Social, 10 a.m. Meeting

Program: Companion Plants: "Magic, Myth or Science"

Speaker: Susan Obry

Location: St. Christopher's Church and Zoom

Tuesday, April 18, 9:30 am Social, 10 am Meeting

Program: Hundred Acre Farm, 3945 North 31st St., Milwaukee (inside gate parking)

Unit Election for Chair and Vice Chair

Please mark your calendar for the following upcoming events:

April 1, 2023 Spring Symposium
 Woman's Club of Wisconsin, 813 East Kilbourn Avenue, Milwaukee
 8:30 a.m. Social, 9:00 Tasting Room
 10:00 a.m. Program: Carrie Hennessey
 "Scarborough Fair: Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme"
 12 Noon Gourmet Lunch

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.

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Herb Society Office: herbs@herbsociety.org

Herb Society of America Website: www.herbsociety.org

Facebook: [HerbSocietyofAmericaWI](https://www.facebook.com/HerbSocietyofAmericaWI)

NEWSBUDS . . .



Hope you managed during the recent ice storms and power outages, oh, weather in Wisconsin. It makes me appreciate the first signs of spring—cranes, robins, redwing blackbirds, and chives starting to grow . . . soon.

The March meeting will be a tea and the presenter is our member, Sue Obry, on Companion Planting. Her talk was well received at the PBS Garden Expo in Madison, and we're lucky to have her present for us. We will also have our Seed Swap after lunch at our March meeting. Our April meeting will be on location at Hundred Acre Farm. We will be able to tour their hydroponic set up. Let me know if you want to preorder salad or basil, but they can take last minute orders too. I'll have an order list at our March meeting: Salad = \$5/5 oz. and Basil = \$4/2 oz. Our April meeting includes our election. Thank you for AJ and Joanne for their agreement to run for office.

The Symposium information will be mailed. Take advantage of the special member price and enjoy this lovely event. The menu is always great and Carrie, the speaker, informative and entertaining.

Our other public events are the Herb & Artisan Fair on Saturday, May 20 and Herb Day on Sunday, July 23. Your help is greatly appreciated at these events, and we always have a lot of fun!

Just a reminder that HSA has an opt-in directory that they update quarterly.

Herbally yours, Melody

From Mary Kay McDevitt, Luncheon Chair

A "TEA SANDWICH LUNCHEON" menu is planned for our Saturday, March 18, 2023, meeting. Marlene Mravik, Vice Chair of Programs, passed the clipboard at the February 21 meeting for those interested in preparing savory or sweet "tea sandwiches."

Three (3) members each would prepare 24 small savories, 3 members each would prepare 24 small sweets. A salad will complete this special menu. We will be celebrating January through June birthdays, so there will be a cake to share.

Joanne Ruggieri _____ Hostess
????? _____ Salad
Denise Nelson _____ Beverage = a selection of teas

For those of you who signed up to prepare savories or sweets:

- Place your "sandwiches" on a large platter or tiered cake stand, with a serving utensil.
- Ingredients are limitless. Be sure to use herbs like parsley, sage, rosemary, and/or thyme.
- Remember that some members do not eat meat and/or are gluten free.
- Decorate it any way you like - doilies, herbs, flower petals, etc. Pinterest has some great ideas.

If you enjoy having a "Tea Sandwich Luncheon," there will be another opportunity to volunteer at one of the 2023-24 HSA meetings.

***** RSVP's of "YES" will be required for the March 18 meeting *****

Reminder - a Luncheon Team volunteer roster will be sent about one week prior to the meeting. Questions? Contact Mary Kay McDivitt. Thanks so much.

March 18 Meeting – Annual Seed Exchange!

It's that time of year again. After our luncheon, we will have seed sharing thyme.

If you do not have seeds, that's okay. If you do, all the better.

Bring small envelopes, slips of paper and writing instrument to record:

Date of harvest, or on commercial packages, use by date, seed type, with binomen if available.

Planting info: start inside, plant directly outside, depth to plant seed (does it need light or darkness to germinate), moisture, height, width, etc. Questions? Contact Pat Greathead

Spring Symposium – April 1, 2023

Look in your mailbox for your personal invitation to the major educational event sponsored by our Unit, our 27th Annual Spring Symposium. 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 Hennessy, will present a lecture focusing on Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme. Our theme is "Scarborough Fair". Members receive a \$5 discount on their registration fee.

Elections

Candidates for chair and vice-chair will be voted on at the April meeting. The committee reports that the slate for elections is set with AJ Star for chair and Joanne Ruggieri as vice-chair. An absentee ballot may be requested before April 1 from Diane Kescenovitz (kescenovitz.diane@att.net) 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 18 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 Joan Amundson, Diane Kescenovitz, and Joanne Ruggieri

Chair Candidate

AJ Star has been an HSA-WI Unit member for nearly 15 years, joining during Spring Symposium on March 25, 2008. Pat Greathead signed her up and onward she went full speed ahead. Since that time AJ served as Ways & Means Committee chair for 10 years. She helped package or create many herbal products, food and non-food related, that were eventually sold at Symposium, Herb Fair's Thyme Square, holiday luncheon, annual HSA meetings (Indiana and Wisconsin), and some public arts and crafts events. AJ helped with "All About Herbs," a shared focus between our HSA Unit and Ozaukee Master Gardeners. She also served a two-year term as Unit secretary.

At present, AJ enjoys being a committee member who helps with the holiday luncheon and symposium arrangements. She also volunteers at Boerner Botanical Gardens in their herb garden. You'll find her engaging with the unsuspecting garden visitors by encouraging them to "scratch and sniff" their way around the beds.

Vice Chair Candidate

Hello, it's been my pleasure to be a member of Herb Society Wisconsin for over six years. During that time, I've been part of teams that served lunches to vendors and members at our Herb & Artisan Fairs at Boerner Botanical Gardens and served special herbal treats to members and guests in our symposium tasting room. I've poetically wished all a happy birthday while Out & About chair and am currently acting as Bylaws chair. The Herb Society of Wisconsin is an exceptional group of warm and hard-working herbalists, and I am pleased to be a part of it.Joanne Ruggieri

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 the mail, you will soon 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, please call me. Thank you in advance for paying your dues promptly, by May 16, 2023. Checks should be mailed to my home or given to me at a meeting.

Grant Awards for 2023

The Herb Society of America-Wisconsin Unit has for many years supported Milwaukee area public gardens by granting funds to help them create and present unique herb-related plantings and programs open to the public. For 2023, we are again supporting Boerner Botanical Gardens, Friends of Boerner Botanical Gardens, and Old World Wisconsin. The Grants and Scholarship Committee made the following recommendations to the Board and the Unit at their January in-person and Zoom meeting, and the Board and Unit voted unanimously to award the following grants for 2023:

Boerner Botanical Gardens – the Herb Garden \$1,000 for the ongoing maintenance and enhancement of the Herb Garden through the purchase of seeds, plants, and theme bed signage and props. The theme for 2023 will be “Tea Time in the Garden”. Monies will also be used for membership in the Herb Society as well as a subscription to The Herb Quarterly.

Friends of Boerner Botanical Gardens \$1,000 to help cover the cost of providing on-site educational programs for 30+ Milwaukee-area public middle school students. The money will be used for materials, educator hours and bus transportation to Boerner. Students will be taught by WI certified educators.

Old World Wisconsin had originally requested \$500, which was deferred from the 2022 grant to purchase and plant hops for the garden around the new brewery building, as well as \$1,000 for new plantings in 2023 for existing gardens. However, Covid 19 once again delayed the work on the hop plantings and the \$500 will not be used in 2023. The \$1,000 granted for 2023 will be used to purchase herb plants for the Polish cross/shrine garden, and additional plants to fill in or edge existing vegetable gardens to include the Yankee farm garden, the Finnish rock garden and Victory Garden, the Hessian rock garden, the Pomeranian circle garden, and the Shoe Shop sensory garden.

The Grants & Scholarship Committee members are Eva Boldt, Denise Nelson, Susan Williams, and Chair Lore Borth, who thanks the members for their hard work and wise decisions!

March 2023 Herb of the Month – Anise (*Pimpinella anisum*)

(Nino Ridgway)

Anise is an annual herb in the family Apiaceae (formerly Umbelliferae). It is quite similar to Queen Anne’s lace in appearance and growth habit: 2-3 feet tall, ferny upper leaves, large terminal umbel of tiny white flowers, oblong, hard seeds. It has a strong anise flavor similar to fennel. It is native to the Mediterranean area and Asia and requires quite a long growing season. It does not thrive in Wisconsin!

Anise seeds are used to flavor candies, confections, baked goods, and processed meats such as sausages and pepperoni. They are also prized for their medicinal properties and may be steeped either whole or ground to make a digestive tea and for other medicinal purposes.

April 2023 Herb of the Month – Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*)

(Nino Ridgway)

One of my earliest herbal memories was cutting chives to garnish a salad. They grew amongst the daffodils and peonies and roses...and just about everywhere! My mother grew no other herbs, but she could grow chives. Chives grow from tiny bulbs and continue to throw out new grasslike, onion-flavored leaves from early spring through late fall, blooming with cheerful pink (edible) flower clusters in Spring. They require little maintenance except as follows: (1) cut back hard after blooming to stimulate tender new growth; and (2) be sure to remove ALL seed heads as the flowers fade. Otherwise, you will have them coming up among the daffodils and peonies and . . . they spread prolifically from seeds. In fact, in many parts of the USA, many patches of lawn sport at least a few chive plants that persist despite mowing.

Chive leaves are used wherever you would use fresh onion but want a milder flavor and/or flecks of green. You can cook and bake with chives, but the flavor diminishes with cooking. They are typically snipped into salads, dips, butters, omelets, or added at the last minute to soups, seafood, and potato dishes. I especially enjoy stripping the pink florets from the flower clusters and sprinkling them into any kind of salad. This really steps up both the flavor and the eye appeal.

Recipes

Summer Salad with Herbed Ricotta and Balsamic Vinaigrette

(Sep 2022 Mtg)

Ingredients For Herbed Ricotta (4 servings)

1/3 c	ricotta cheese	1 t	fresh oregano, chopped finely
2	basil leaves, chopped finely	1 t	fresh thyme, chopped

Ingredients for Salad

2 T	evoo	6	radishes, sliced
1 T	balsamic vinegar	1/2	red onion, sliced
1/4 t	salt, or to taste	1	serrano pepper, chopped (optional)
1/4 t	pepper, or to taste	1/4 c	basil leaves, chopped
1 lb.	heirloom tomatoes, cut in 1/2" slices	1 T	oregano leaves
1/2	English cucumber, sliced		

Instructions:

1. In small bowl combine ricotta cheese with basil, oregano and thyme. Set aside.
2. In another small bowl whisk together olive oil, balsamic vinegar, salt and pepper.
3. Arrange tomato slices, cucumber, radishes and onion on a large platter; drizzle with dressing. Season with salt and pepper, top with serrano pepper, and dollop ricotta mixture evenly over the tomato slices.
4. Garnish with fresh basil and oregano – serve immediately.

Creamy Parmesan Alfredo Potato with Salmon Casserole

(Jean Longenecker – Feb 2023 Mtg)

Ingredients: Serves 4 – gluten free

4	large peeled & sliced potatoes
1	baked salmon filet (sprinkle with olive oil, add dill & sliced lemons, wrap in parchment paper, bake at 350 degrees till flaky, about 20 min)
1/2 c	alfredo sauce
1/2 c	4 cheese sauce
1/4 c	evaporated milk
1/4 c	shredded parmesan cheese
1/2 t	Penzeys JERK seasoning

1. Spray roasting pan with evoo, add potatoes, salmon, sauces, milk and JERK to pan and mix together lightly.
2. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese
3. Cover and bake at 350 degrees until potatoes are tender (about 45 min)

West African Chicken and Groundnut Stew

(Lore Borth)

I first tasted this dish when it was prepared for friends by two Sierra Leone pre-med students at UWM in the late 1960s. Never forgot the taste, and when I found a recipe for it in [Kwanzaa, An African American Celebration of Culture and Cooking](#), I immediately bought the cookbook and have made the dish ever since. (Author Eric V. Copage, published 1991 by Wm. Morrow & Company). Tastes great on a cold winter's night! Serves 6-8. Best served with rice.

2 TB olive oil	2 bay leaves
9 chicken thighs (about 3 pounds)	1/2 tsp. salt
2 medium onions, chopped	1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper (or to taste)
2 garlic cloves, chopped	3 c. chicken broth, homemade or canned
1 tsp. curry powder	2 (8 oz.) cans tomato sauce
1/2 tsp. dried thyme	3/4 c. sugarless peanut butter

1. Heat oil in a 5-quart Dutch oven. In batches, add the chicken and cook over medium-high heat, turning often, until browned on all sides, about 6 minutes per batch. Transfer chicken to a plate and set aside.
2. Add onions to the Dutch oven and cook, stirring until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Then add garlic, curry powder, thyme, salt and cayenne. Stir for 1 minute and then stir in the chicken broth and tomato sauce.
3. Return the chicken thighs to the Dutch oven and bring to a simmer. Reduce heat to medium low, cover tightly, and simmer until chicken shows no sign of pink at the bone when prodded with the tip of a knife, about 45 minutes.
4. In a small bowl, blend the peanut butter with about 1 cup of the cooking liquid. Stir this mixture back into the sauce, and cook until heated through, about 2 minutes. Serve immediately.

Zucchini Bread

(Sep 2022 Mtg)

3	eggs	3 ½ t	cinnamon
1 c	vegetable oil	1 t	baking soda
2 c	sugar	¼ t	baking powder
2 c	grated zucchini	1 t	salt
2 t	vanilla extract	½ c	chopped walnuts
3 c	all-purpose flour		

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Grease and flour two 8x4" loaf pans.
2. In large bowl beat eggs until light and frothy. Mix in oil and sugar. Stir in zucchini and vanilla. Combine flour, cinnamon, soda, baking powder, salt and nuts, stir into egg mixture. Divide batter into prepared pans.
3. Bake 60-70 min, or until done.

Cookies and Cream OREO Popcorn

(Jan 2023 Mtg)

Ingredients

12 OREO Cookies

9 cups (1.8 ounces) popped popcorn

16 ounces melted white compound chocolate

(a.k.a. confectionery coating, candy melts, almond bark, or melting wafers)*

Instructions

1. Break 6 OREO cookies into small pieces. In a separate bowl, crush another 6 cookies into small crumbs. Set the bowls aside.
2. Melt the white compound chocolate – use microwave or stovetop. Using microwave - pour into a microwave-safe bowl; heat on high power for 30 second increments, stirring after each, until melted. Using stove – heat 1 inch of water in medium saucepan over low heat. Set a bowl over the saucepan so that the bowl doesn't touch the water and seals well around the top edge of the pan. Pour the white chocolate into the bowl and allow to melt slowly, stirring often.
3. If you use pure white chocolate (made with cocoa butter) be sure to temper the chocolate. See Chocolate Making Tips website below for instructions.
4. Pour about 12 ounces of melted white chocolate over popcorn, reserving some to drizzle over top.
5. Toss the popcorn and white chocolate together just until the popcorn is evenly coated.
6. Spread onto a parchment paper-lined baking tray.
7. Drizzle the remaining white chocolate over the popcorn and working quickly, sprinkle cookie pieces and then crumbs over the popcorn.
8. You can reserve a bit of white chocolate to drizzle over the cookies.
9. Tap the tray on the counter a few times to ensure the cookies stick to the white chocolate popcorn.
10. Chill in the refrigerator for 15 minutes until the chocolate hardens.
11. Break up the popcorn into chunks. Don't break the pieces too small or your cookie pieces will fall off and you'll end up with popcorn crumbs. Enjoy!

Recipe Notes

Store your cookies and cream OREO popcorn in a metal popcorn tin at room temperature for up to two months or store the popcorn in an airtight plastic container or a cellophane bag for a week or so.

*This **recipe calls for white compound chocolate**, which is also known as confectionery coating, Candy Melts, Candi-Quik, Merckens melting wafers, Ghirardelli Melting Wafers, or white almond bark. It is made using palm kernel oil instead of cocoa butter and it is easy to melt and will harden quickly once chilled and will remain hard once warmed to room temperature. If you use **pure white chocolate**, you will need to temper the chocolate (heat and cool to exact temperatures) for it to harden properly.

Check out <https://hungryhappenings.com/chocolate-making-tips/> for detailed instructions on melting and tempering pure white chocolate!

My Seed Starting Sins

Posted [January 30, 2018](#) by [Ann McCormick](#) in [Southwest Gardening](#)

I must confess that despite being a “garden expert” I’ve had my share of seed starting disasters. Let me tell you about some mistakes I’ve made and how to avoid them.

Mistake 1: Using Old Seeds That Won’t Sprout – Every spring I have leftover seeds from last year. Old seeds may or may not sprout. To test before I sow, I take 10 seeds from a packet, wrap them in a wet paper towel, and store them in a plastic bag for a week. At the end of the week, I count the number that have sprouted. If it’s less than five, I toss the old seeds and buy new.

Mistake 2: Not Using Seed Starting Medium – If I’m pressed for time, I sometimes cheat and plant seeds in any old soil I have handy. Bad move on my part. Seed starting medium works better than any potting soil for starting seeds. These special blends are lightweight and fungus-free. Seeds are more likely to stay moist without getting soggy. It may cost a few more bucks but the results will be worth it.

Mistake 3: Using the Wrong Pot –The soil in pots crafted from porous material (peat, newspaper, cardboard) are inexpensive but will dry out quickly. I’ve had much better success using seed starting trays with a water reservoir underneath. Refilling a water reservoir every four to five days is also better for distracted people like me.

Mistake 4: Ignoring Directions – I’m one of those impatient souls who believe instructions are for the other guy. All too often that means I waste time fiddling around before I admit my foolishness and go back to the directions. I’ve learned the hard way to read the seed package first before sowing. Directions such as “don’t cover seeds,” “soak before sowing,” and “keep warm” are there for a reason. If I ignore these directions, I shouldn’t expect much to come up.

Mistake 5: Not Labeling the Seed Trays – Many plants look similar when they are small. In the weeks between sowing and planting it’s all too easy to forget what you planted where. I made the mistake once of planting half a tray with parsley and the other half with cilantro, two close cousins. Weeks later when I was ready to transplant, I convinced myself I knew which half was which. Then disaster struck. I managed to overturn the flat as I was preparing to plant them outdoors. I had no choice but to plant them higgledy-piggledy and hope I could tell the difference later when they were grown.

Mistake 6: Poor Lighting – Home is a wonderful place for me and my family. Not so for those seedlings. Plants need a wider spectrum of light than humans see. A sunny window may look bright to our eyes but only 10-15 percent of the sun’s total illumination makes it through the glass. I’ve learned to compensate for the darker indoor conditions with a grow lamp, a fluorescent bulb designed to imitate the sun’s broad spectrum of light.

*First Day of Spring
March 20, 2023*



*Look at the blue sky,
Hear the grass growing
Beneath your feet,
Inhale the scent of spring.*

--Sarah Ban-Breathnach



SPRING FOR SURE

Surely spring is imminent
This has to be the time
When the lilac buds are peeking out
This is a certain sign
It's time to hear the fairy folks
In plants along the walk
As they critique new flowers
And exchange fairy talk.
If you notice green dainty tips
In the plot along the wall
Hang the pansy basket
Invite your friends to call.

J E Janssen "Under the Leaf"



If you have an event, article, recipe, etc. that 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 to arrive by May 1 and July 1, 2023.