

PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America
Pioneer Unit

July 4
Independence Day



—
July 16
Thunder Full Moon

—
July 17
9:00 a.m.
Pioneer Unit
Board Meeting
Festival Hill

July 2019

Volume 26, Number 11

MONTHLY UNIT MEETING

- Date: July 11, 2019
- Time: 9:30 a.m. Meet and Greet
10:00 a.m. Presentation and Meeting
- Location: St. John's United Church of Christ
516 North Colorado Street, Burton, Texas
- Directions: From Highway 290, take 390 northeast into Burton. At the intersection of 390 (Washington Street) and Main Street, continue on East Washington Street. At North Colorado Street, the church will be on your right.
- Program: The Best Tasting Tomatoes for Texas Gardens
- Speaker: Bill Adams
Central Texas Gardener
- Angel: Betty Pior
Hosts: Sherrie Tolbert, Phoebe and Rob Lake, Diana Reed,
and Jana Rinehart
- Lunch: Best Tomato Dishes



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings!

We had a relatively wet spring and even going into summer, which was great for growing just about anything. Yet June decided to remind us also that summer in Texas can be hot and humid! My herbs always struggle this time of year, but my vote for best survivor is yarrow. A new herb for me, but the greens are lovely even between blooming cycles. I also have an African Blue basil that was fully chomped by deer, but it managed to grow back and is now full of blooms. Amazing! I hope that all of your gardens have come through the hot weather okay and that you have many surviving treasures.

Working on Thyme Well Spent projects is a great way to keep involved in the Unit and build up your volunteer hours over the summer, and I urge you to contact either Pat Cox or Jane Press, co-chairs, if you would like to help out in some way. We need to be collecting fruits for making jams and jellies, collecting seeds, collecting and drying herbs to make dried herb blends, and we should also begin to work on sewing and knitting projects—something nice to do when it is too hot outside to work in your gardens.

If you can get to one of our gardens early, I know that extra help with watering is always appreciated. Contact Pat Garrett if you can help at Festival Hill and Marcella Ausmus if you have time for the Sensory Garden. Any help in the garden, even an hour during the summer, can make a big difference.

July is our last monthly meeting until September. There will be no August meeting, but I hope you join us in Burton July 11th. Hope to see you there, and have a great summer.

Karen Cornwell
Unit Chair



FROM THE PROGRAMS CHAIR

The picture shown is one of my huge loofahs – I have at least 4 others. Yep! Tomatoes and luffas are the big items in my garden this year. At first, I was a bit dismayed that my tomato crop would be almost gone by the time I hear Bill Adams speak. But now I see that I can ask questions and perhaps get answers on how they grew this year and why some have white all around the top of them and why ones on the very bottom got squishy and can I throw those tomato hornworms in the woods and they won't crawl back or do I really have to squish them. My chickens refuse them!

Bring your questions on July 11th for Bill Adams, or Dr. William C. Welch, Professor and Extension Horticulturist for 31 years. He will be bringing 4 books that he has written for sale, including The Texas Tomato Lover's Handbook and The Southern Kitchen Garden.

Also remember there will be sign up sheets for remaining positions for next year's host/hostess/angels! And this meeting is also your last opportunity to get your picture taken for including in the next Yearbook.

Best,

Kathe Forrest
Programs Chair



MINUTES OF UNIT MEETING
HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
PIONEER UNIT
June 13, 2019

Karen Cornwell, Chair, welcomed members to the June meeting.

Joyce Caddell, Scholarship Chair, announced that Kassidy McCabe, recipient of one of the Unit's college scholarships this year, was present at the meeting.

Kathe Forrest, Vice Chair Programs, introduced speaker Samantha Leivers with a program about bats.

Kathe thanked the host team. Sign-up sheets were available for lunch host positions next year. Members who would like their photo in the new Yearbook were requested to see Kathe.

Volunteers are needed to water the Brenham ISD Sensory Garden the last week in August. A meeting was held with the school to discuss education in the Sensory Garden.

Karen Cornwell gave the following information about the Board for all, and especially new members:

The Board is the administrative arm of the Unit and meets quarterly. The Board approves budgets, gets updates about membership, programs and other working groups and committees, and makes and approves recommendations. When issues come up, the Board handles them. (For those interested in attending a Board meeting, please contact Karen. There are meeting space limitations, but members are encouraged to get involved.) The Board speaks for membership, but there are two areas that need full knowledge and approval from the Unit. These are: 1) changes to bylaws, and 2) the appointment of Officers. Henry Flowers, as Past Chair, is working with his Nominating Committee to bring a list of Officers to the next June business meeting for consideration.

In the meantime, the Board has reviewed and brings forward proposed Bylaw changes that were approved at the April Board meeting, published for full membership review in the May newsletter, described at the May meeting, and are now presented for membership vote at this annual June business meeting. If approved, the changes will be reflected in the upcoming Yearbook publication in the fall. The Bylaw changes proposed are primarily for clarification and do not change Unit policy. They are as follows:

ARTICLE V

1.B. The Officers shall be elected by a majority vote of Active members present at the Unit Annual Meeting [in June].

3.A The Unit Chair shall appoint Standing Committee Chairs [to serve for a period of 2 years].

Motion: Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Unit voted to change the Bylaws as described above.

Karen introduced Janie Plummer as the Board-appointed replacement for Beverly Elam who resigned as Treasurer effective this summer. A Board appointment would normally be brought before the entire membership, but because Janie stepped in before the term was completed, the Board approved her replacement which will be ratified at the July Board Meeting. Janie served as Treasurer in the past, and the Board is grateful that she agreed to step in so quickly.

Karen also introduced Linda Yochim who has volunteered to be Georgia's apprentice in Membership. It is Linda's intention to learn the specifics of the role and hopefully be voted as Georgia's replacement at some point in the future (as deemed appropriate by both Linda and Georgia).

Also introduced was Ann Lugg who has agreed to learn Susan Lake's job in overseeing the Unit's web presence, and it is hoped she will agree to take over this job in the near future. Both Ann and Linda are relatively new members and their willingness to become active participants is applauded.

Sensory Garden oversight has been broken out into two areas: Garden maintenance and Education liaison between the Unit and Brenham Elementary. Marcella Ausmus has agreed to stay on following the resignation of Johnnie Pitts for health reasons and will serve as Sensory Garden Chair for at least one more year. A replacement is being sought for Sensory Education Liaison, which is not intended for developing curriculum but to help the school coordinate schedules so that Unit volunteers can be available for garden tours for the kids and/or their parents. The Unit hopes to find a willing volunteer before classes begin again in the fall, and anyone interested should talk to Karen.

Georgia Sowers, Vice Chair Membership, welcomed visitors Barbara and Tom Solis, Laura Frey, Cathy Kietlinski, Debi Price, Patty Royal, Cammie Beierle, Esther Hartman, Cody Marshall, Elizabeth Royal, and scholarship recipient Cassidy McCabe. Helen Foster and Jean Bachofner were welcomed as new active members and received their badges. Georgia requested that members send their volunteer hours to her by email whenever possible to save long lines at the table during meetings.

Pat Garrett, Festival Hill Gardens Chair, needs more volunteers for watering and asked those watering in the Shakespeare Garden to avoid getting water on the marble bench there. She reminded members that both Festival Hill and the Pioneer Unit keep track of watering hours and to be sure to write them down in the book in the Greenhouse.

Respectfully submitted,
Pat Cox, Secretary



MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Our June 2019 meeting was wonderful learning a wealth of information about beneficial bats! We were well attended with prospective active members, first-time, second and third visits, from Cathy Kietlinski, guest of Cathy Nitsch; Laura Frey, guest of Betty Pior; Debi Price, guest of Georgia Sowers; Esther Hartman, Cammie Beierle, and Barbara and Tom Solis for second visits; and Patty Royal for her third visit. Our Scholarship Committee Chair Joyce Caddell invited Scholarship Recipient Cassidy McCabe, who attended with her mother, Leah McCabe. Cody Marshall was visiting from St Louis Missouri, with his mother, active member Leona Marshall; and prospective active member Patty Royal had her granddaughter Elizabeth Royal with her. Affiliate members Pat Hoffmaster and Marijane Lipscomb were present and helping with the Host Team.

We have two new active members effective June 2019! Jean Bachofner was introduced to our Unit by Lori Yeats, and Helen Foster was introduced to us by Sherrie Tolbert. Following is their contact information, and you may update your current yearbooks. Jean Bachofner lives at 332 Floyd Lane, Round Top, Texas 78954-5457, her cell is 713-539-8449, and email address is jeanbachofner39@gamil.com. Jean's membership is effective in June 2019 and her birthday is March 13. Helen Foster lives at 280 Oak Run Lane, Round Top, Texas 78954-5008, her cell is 281-804-9855 and email address is helenmfoster3@gmail.com. Helen's membership is also effective in June 2019 and her birthday is May 17. Their contact information will be in next print of our yearbook in September 2019. Let's all make Jean and Helen Welcome to our Unit!

Our members' Renewal Forms poured in with payments of dues in June. Two of our Joint active members, Mary Ann and Oscar Hillegeist, renewed as affiliate members for 2019-2020. A couple others of our members are giving thought to become affiliate members with changes in life and circumstances. The following Changes-Corrections were posted on listserv in mid-June and are included in this publication for added emphasis to members:

Mary Ann and Oscar Hillegeist moved to 2516 Ivory Court, Texas City, Texas 77591-1463 and new phone numbers are (409) 229-7688 and Cell (903) 388-0763. All else the same. Peggy Richardson has moved to Austin and effective August her address will be 555 Sapling Drive, Driftwood, Texas 78619-4527, and her Cell is 281-387-8978.

Cheryl Easley, Candi Glancy, Carolyn Hayes, Susan Lake, Frances Pittman, and Penny Whiting to date have advised Membership they will not be renewing for 2019-2020. We will miss them and understand that each has her own personal reasons for this, and we wish them all well in whatever directions they pursue. Please update your current yearbooks as we prepare a draft for the 2019-2020 yearbook, due out in September. If any other changes or corrections are noted, please notify Membership at gzsowers@att.net or phone (979) 836-8228 for guidance.

We begin this Fiscal year 2019-2020 with clean slates for reporting your Volunteer Hours and Non-Reimbursable Donations. Membership Chair now has a reliable and willing Assistant to learn the roles of Membership: Linda Yochim. She is a quick study and will be a great help as this year begins. Several of our prospective active members are looking to obtain their 2 volunteer hours at each of the gardens and opportunities will be posted in the newsletter as well as in emails asking

for help. Membership will continue keeping these individuals apprised so they may progress with their new membership applications.

It's always a pleasure to help with your reporting hours and to answer questions about Membership. Please continue to inquire if we can help you in any way. You may email gzsowers@att.net or call 979-836-8228, as well as communicate with Linda Yochim at linda.yochim@gmail.com or call (281) 627-9090. Thank you all for your efforts; they are appreciated!

I look forward to seeing everyone at our meeting this month, and I wish all a comfortable Summer with rain as we need and good temperatures.

Herbally Summer,
Georgia Sowers

JULY BIRTHDAYS

July 3 — Mary Reeves

July 8 — Porter Versfelt

July 9 — Marcella Ausmus

July 26 — Wanda Hubbard

July 29 — Royceanna Kendall



Our new active member effective June 2019, **Jean Bachofner**, in her own words:

I grew up on a dairy farm in Pennsylvania where my grandmother had a large vegetable garden that included herbs. She had a Salamanca Indian friend who taught her the use of medicinal Native American herbs and salves and how to make them. I was always curious and I guess it just sort of rubbed off on me. She canned and pickled, made sauerkraut in a barrel, and sold chickens and eggs for "pocket money," as she called it.

I have worked for Disney and ABC Broadcasting as well as selling homes for two builders in Houston. I love life in the country and think that Round Top is a great community.

Our new active member effective June 2019, **Helen Foster**, in her own words:

I am originally from Ohio and moved to Texas in the late seventies. I worked for Corporate America in Houston. I retired about five years ago and moved permanently to Round Top. I took a Master Gardener class in Fort Bend about ten years ago.

I enjoy gardening and being active in our community.



CULINARY GROUP

Culinary Group had to postpone their field trip due to anticipated flooding in Houston so it has been rescheduled for July 31. We are taking the summer off and will meet again September 4 with Mexican Mint Marigold as the topic.

THYME WELL SPENT SEEDS

Please start collecting and keep collecting seeds for Thyme Well Spent sales during Forum. You can put them in a plain letter envelope, labeled please, and give them to Cathy Nitsch or Belinda Weatherly during any meeting. Seeds we collect from our own plants are better adapted to our area than some you might order and are appealing to our customers.



The History and Mystery of Herbs

Mexican Mint Marigold – Our Herb for 2020

Botanical Name: *Tagetes lucida*

Common Name(s): Mexican mint marigold, Mexican tarragon, Texas tarragon, sweet mace, sweet-scented marigold and, in Spanish, pericón, yerbaniz and hierbanis.

Family: Asteraceae

Mexican mint marigold is a perennial herb native to Central America and Mexico. It has long been a revered medicinal herb in its native region, but has more recently (in relative time) become a prized culinary herb – especially in the southern United States where the herb it is most similar to in taste, French tarragon (*Artemisia dracunculus* var. *dracunculus*), is difficult to grow.



The genus name, *Tagetes*, is believed to come from the name of the Etruscan prophet Tages, who is associated with the spring tilling of the fields and regrowth. Through most of its growing region this plant freezes to the ground in winter and sprouts back up in the spring and perhaps this is the link to Tages. The specific epithet, *lucida*, basically means "bright and shining" and is commonly used in reference to celestial stars. In the case of this plant it likely refers to its bright golden yellow flowers which are about 1/2 inch in diameter and are borne in clusters in the fall (sometimes also in the spring if the plant has not frozen back).

The leaves are very aromatic and have an anise-like scent and flavor very similar to that of French tarragon. French tarragon is a plant that has long been revered for its culinary uses. It has thin leaves with a slightly bluish cast and it is basically sterile and must be propagated by clonal means such as stem or root cuttings. It has long been prized by French chefs, and that is probably where its association with the name "French" comes from since it is not native to France, but instead is native to central Asia and Siberia. This then gives us a clue as to why it doesn't perform so well in our hot and humid climate with generally mild winters. Since we struggle to grow this herb in our gardens, it is nice to have an alternative which is very similar in taste and which is much easier to grow.

Physically the leaves are lanceolate in shape, have an acute tip, and are usually smooth to slight serrate in their leaf margins. They alternate with a 90° rotation in pairs at each node along the stem. Propagation is by stem cuttings, root cuttings, root division or from seed—not really that hard in any case.

Being a member of the Aster family, the flowers are composite and have both ray and disk flowers. There are normally 4-8 ray flowers which each have a golden yellow petal. The disk flowers are a richer, orange-gold and fade to a brown color with age. The flowers, like all those of edible herbs, are quite edible and have also been used as a dye for fabrics and yarns. I personally like to use them to garnish salads or other culinary dishes and have been wanting to make an herbal vinegar with the flowers alone to see if it will impart a rich golden hue there as well—maybe this fall. They also make a great addition to an herbal tea – hot or iced.

In garden cultivation Mexican mint marigold prefers to be in full sun, but can handle a bit of light shade. It will reach 2-3 feet (or possibly a bit more) in height by the time it starts to bloom in the fall. Taller cultivars tend to fall over, and dwarf, more compact ones stay bushy. If you have one of the former you can trim it back lightly a couple of times in the summer to help it maintain a bushier appearance. It will grow well in just about any soil that is relatively well-drained and will also perform well in a container. With the first heavy frosts it will freeze, commonly turning dark brown to almost black. If this appearance bothers you, wait a few weeks to be sure it is totally dormant, cut it down to near the ground and then put a light layer of bark mulch, leaves or pine straw over it for protection. A light fertilizing with compost or an organic fertilizer in the spring with the start of new growth is likely all the added nutrition it may need for the year. Keep it lightly watered through the summer and it will grow enough to keep you well-supplied with aromatic and tasty leaves.

Medicinally this plant has many uses. It is digestive, diuretic, has calming, sedative, properties and has been used for a host of traditional treatments.

The leaves and whole plant are digestive, diuretic, febrifuge, hypotensive, narcotic, sedative and stimulant. Use of the plant depresses the central nervous system, while it is also reputedly anesthetic and hallucinogenic. It is used internally in the treatment of diarrhea, nausea, indigestion, colic, hiccups, malaria and feverish illnesses. Externally, it is used to treat scorpion bites and to remove ticks. The leaves can be harvested and used as required, while the whole plant is harvested when in flower and dried for later use.

For culinary purposes it is a great plant—if you like its intriguing anise-like flavor that is. I personally can't stand black licorice, which is flavored with anise oil, but I do like aniseed and its close kin, fennel seed. Anise hyssop (IHA Herb of 2019) is also quite interesting and there are other anise-like herbs as well, all similar in some ways, but different in others due to their chemical compositions. Mexican mint marigold most closely mimics the flavor of French tarragon. It is not exactly the same and a person with great taste buds could tell them apart, but many people can't. Mexican mint marigold tends to have a stronger flavor, but also more rounded and less sharp than the flavor of tarragon. I did a taste test with the botany study group many years ago and most of the members present could detect slight differences, but I don't recall that they could say which was which. Thus I generally tell people not to bother with French tarragon, unless they are fully determined to give it a go, and stick with our wonderful Mexican mint marigold.

Although Madalene Hill definitely didn't create this herb, Mother Nature can lay claim there, and Madalene wasn't the first to use it, she is credited with getting it into the nursery trade in the US. The story she told me about it was that in 1969, on the day that the American astronauts first landed on the moon (July 20th), a lady originally from Mexico brought her a start of this plant at her Hilltop Herb Farm. Madalene recalled that they stopped to watch the landing on TV and that the lady wouldn't believe that the landing was for real. As with any new herb to her, Madalene was intrigued and grew the herb for many years before she actually experimented with it in food. The lady who brought it to her had explained that it was of great medicinal importance in Mexico, but culinary use wasn't mentioned. Madalene knew well the frustration of trying to grow French tarragon, so in time, as she became more familiar with this plant, she began to contemplate trying it in foods as a tarragon substitute. She did so and found that it worked beautifully. In any recipe

that calls for tarragon, dried or fresh, you can certainly substitute Mexican mint marigold. You might want to use a bit less in volume unless you really are fond of the taste.

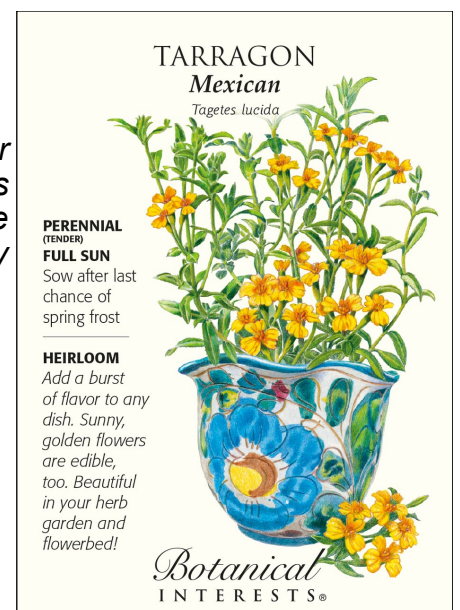
In experiments with cooking it became apparent that it really doesn't stand up to cooking at high heat for a prolonged period. Thus, as with basil, it is best chopped and tossed into a dish at or near the end of the cooking process. It is fabulous on green beans and other vegetables, including squash, and also, like tarragon, pairs well with fish and chicken and can be used to flavor a béarnaise sauce. These are very traditional uses, but my favorite was to use it in baked goods such as cookies or a good pound cake. I also like to use it in the summer, when dill is not readily available, in deviled eggs or in a potato salad. You can use it fresh during the growing season or dry it and use it that way. The best time to harvest for drying is when it is coming into flower—just cut off whole stems and hang them to dry. To preserve the fresh leaves you can process them in a mild oil and freeze the past—as we commonly do with basil and dill.

This herb is our herb of focus for the Herbal Forum in 2020, and I urge you to experiment with it in cooking over this summer and fall. If you come up with some great recipes, please share them with me as I am working on compiling some for the event. Just before sitting down to type this article I made a batch of my corn flake cookies with it as the main flavor. Yummy!!! Billi Parus likes to substitute it for the rose geranium in Madalene and Gwen's rose geranium pound cake and that is fabulous too! I'm thinking that it would be good in a squash casserole; it may be intriguing in a peach cobbler and would be a very unusual flavor in ice cream. Hmmmmm!!!

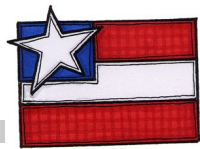
Please and Pretty Please!!! - experiment with it and share your results with me, either good or bad. I know y'all are some wonderful cooks and can come up with some fabulous dishes. Many thanks and I hope that you are all having a wonderful summer!


Henry Flowers
Pioneer Unit Past Chair and Mexican Mint Marigold Enthusiast

It is the policy of The Herb Society of America not to advise or recommend herbs for medicinal or health use. This information is intended for educational purposes only and should not be considered as a recommendation or an endorsement of any particular medical or health treatment.




July 2019

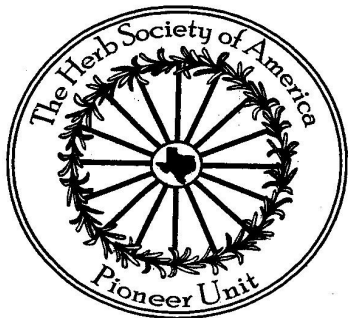


Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4 	5	6
7	8	9	10	11 PU Meeting	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 FH Work Day 9:00—noon	19	20
21 Newsletter Deadline Irowlett@gmail.com	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31 CG Field Trip			CG = Culinary Group FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden

August 2019



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
CG = Culinary Group FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8 NO PU Meeting	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 Newsletter Deadline Irowlett@gmail.com	26 	27	28	29	30	31



PIONEER PATHS

Volume 26

Editor: Linda L. Rowlett, Ph.D.

Pioneer Paths is a publication of The Herb Society of America, Pioneer Unit. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$10.00 per year.

The Mission Statement of The Herb Society of America: "To promote the knowledge, use, and delight of herbs through educational programs, research, and sharing the experience of its members with the community."

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