

PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America
Pioneer Unit

October 2024

Volume 32, Number 2

MONTHLY UNIT MEETING

- Date:** October 10, 2024
- Time:** 9:30 a.m. Meet and Greet
10:00 a.m. Presentation and Meeting
- Location:** Brenham Presbyterian Church
900 South Jackson Street, Brenham
- Directions:** Exit Highway 290 to Business 36 North (Day Street) into Brenham. Continue north to College Street. Turn left to Jackson Street, and the church will be on your left.
- Program:** Get Your Dye on and Live Wild
- Speaker:** Penny Nelson
- Angel:** Kathe Forrest
- Hosts:** Ann Allen, Leslie Conrads, Tess Hartman, Debi Thomas, and Dawn Wilson
- Lunch:** Harvest Hits



October 8
Board Meeting
10:00 a.m.
Festival Hill
School Room 9

October 17
Hunters Full Moon



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Just before I sat down to write my October news article, I decided to peek outside and see just how cool the temperature was. Three hours later I returned to my writing. The weather is perfect – nice cool northeast breeze, sunny day, and very low humidity. So refreshing. I took coffee out to the porch and watched all the butterflies whirling around my butterfly garden which I planted towards the end of Spring. The plants have really grown. I have Queens, Orange Sulfurs, Gulf Fritillaries, Eastern Tiger Swallowtails, Julias, and the occasional Giant Swallowtail and Pipevine Swallowtail. Very calming to observe these amazing insects.

Sensory Garden – the Sensory Garden Workday on Saturday, September 21st, was very successful. Six Pioneer Unit members and aspiring members came to clean up the garden – Serena Speaker, Susan Bame, Madeline Johnson, Courtney Keike, Stephen Brueggerhoff, and myself. In addition, a parent and 2nd grader Layla came to help. Caroll Edwards brought us sustenance which was very welcome. The Sensory Garden looks much better. I calculated that we put in about 17-18 hours of garden work time among all of us. There is more to be done, though. Serena is going to set up some regular garden workdays as Julia Johnson has done at Festival Hill.

Serena did a great job. Now that Serena has worked at the Sensory Garden, she has completed her Pioneer Unit membership requirements. Hurray!! She has excellent leadership and communication skills so will be perfect as the Sensory Garden Chair. Stephen Brueggerhoff has offered to present some instructive classes in the Spring on pruning the fruit trees we have in the Sensory Garden. We still need lots of Unit members to volunteer at the garden, and it doesn't necessarily mean getting on hands and knees to weed or plant. There are lots of different needs.

Many thanks to Kathe Forrest for serving as the interim Sensory Garden Chair for the past couple of months. I appreciate Kathe working to find us a Chair and helping to start the ball rolling to have a workday. Debi Meschwitz has developed a relationship with the Brenham School staff and developed an education program for the 2nd graders. Debi is conducting her first session with the 2nd graders on October 9th from 8-9:30 and is looking for helpers. Sounds like it will be lots of fun. Way to go, Debi!!

Harry Potter Event – Tuesday morning I visited with the Librarian at the Fayette Public Library to discuss the upcoming Harry Potter Event to be held October 15th from 4-6:00 p.m. It is going to be fabulous. Many groups are participating to make this an event to be remembered (Texas Parks & Wildlife, Texas Forrest Service, Dell Children's Hospital, and more). This is the 3rd time it has been held at the Library. I feel very honored that the Pioneer Unit is being asked to participate as the Herbology experts. Tory Farley participated last time as the Professor of Herbology, and the Library staff loved her. Great job, Tory!! Dawn Wilson has agreed to help me with this. I would really like a couple more Unit volunteers. The Librarian told me they had 300 attendees last time. Oh my!! I have been watching Harry Potter movies, reading Harry Potter books, and watching Harry Potter UTube videos (I'm dreaming Harry Potter). Lots to learn. The Herbology table needs to have a craft for the kids to do. I was talking with Linda Rowlett, and she suggested 'Dream Pillows'. Very cool. She has a lot of dried mint that I can have for the pillows. I was wondering if anyone might have other dried herbs (especially lavender) that they can bring to Dawn and me at our October Unit Meeting. We would appreciate it very much.

HSA South Central District – Catherine O'Brien, our new South Central District Delegate, attended our September meeting and told us about all the upcoming District activities:

Ozark Unit Fall Symposium, October 18-20. Topic: Wild Herbal Field Trip & Medicinal Plant Symposium!

Registration is required by October 3.

South Texas Unit, November 2, Herb Fair. <http://www.herbsociety-stu.org/annual-herb-fair.html>

Texas Thyme Unit in Huntsville hosts a Herb Festival on March 22, 2025.

Catherine also happens to be a Pioneer Unit Affiliate member. Her name and contact information are listed in the new Member Directory in the Affiliate section and also on page 22.

Meeting Fun - I love the Halloween holiday. The fun of make-believe and dress-up. If you attended our October meeting last year, you may recall I showed up in my sorcerer's costume. I will be wearing it again, with a few additions. Please join me in celebrating this crazy holiday if you dare, and wear your most outlandish costume!!

I look forward to seeing you at the October Unit Meeting,
Diana Sellers
Pioneer Unit Chair

FROM THE PROGRAMS CHAIR

September's meeting was so fun! I enjoyed the "lunch ladies," their back-to-school setup, and how much fun they were having!

The Horticulture Study Group's presentation gave us a positive "mintality" towards the refreshing herb mint.

Continuing with the fun, October's meeting will bring us a wildly colorful program. Penny Nelson will be sharing her perspective on dyeing with plants, and other organic materials, to create beautiful textiles. If you weren't able to catch her presentation at the past Forum, you don't want to miss this talk! She is very knowledgeable about her skill, and she is a great storyteller.

Kathe Forrest will also have a table set up with the different dyes that she has experimented with, ranging from avocado to coffee, tea, yarrow, and roses.

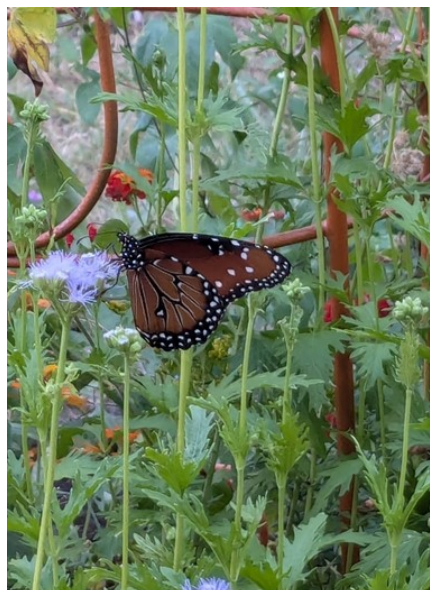
I am looking forward to seeing each of you at the meeting on October 10th in Brenham.

Tory Farley
Programs Chair

P.S. We continue to seek ways to provide educational and inspiring content; I am always open to suggestions.

Note from Kathe Forrest, Speaker Angel: Penny Nelson will be giving a presentation to the unit on using the natural world to dye fabrics and has asked me to set up a table of the different dyes that I have experimented with over the past year. They will range from avocado to coffee and tea, and of course yarrow and roses.

I will also have different dyestuffs such as alum that you use as a mordant and some different plants such as madder, woad, and Brazilwood to view as well as books to peruse.



Photos of Diana Sellers' butterflies

MINUTES OF UNIT MEETING
HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
PIONEER UNIT
September 12, 2024

The September meeting was held at Brenham Presbyterian Church, Brenham, Texas. Madeline Johnson led a presentation on mints which is the culmination of a yearlong study by the Horticulture Study Group. Members sampled tea and cookies made with mint while learning the results of the year-long study. Many interesting facts about mints were shared, including that there are nineteen pure species of mints from which all others are derived.

The business meeting began with Royceanna Kendall, Treasurer, reporting that the Unit has a balance of \$64,219.19 as of August 30, 2024. She likened the Pioneer Unit to her father's wheat farm. Like farmers, all our money is made in a short time and has to last the whole year. Royceanna said, "And like the wheat farmer, come rain or shine, wind or hail, we will work hard to make a success of it." Diana Sellers assured members they would receive financial updates throughout the year.

Cammie Beierle, Membership Chair, welcomed seven guests. Fifty members attended the meeting. Five-year pins were awarded to Tom and Barbara Solis and Tess Hartman.

Phoebe Lake, Scholarship Committee Chair, encouraged members to apply for the \$250 herbal scholarships. The money can be used to study a topic in depth. Individuals or a group may apply. After the study, the awardee(s) share with the Unit through a presentation, an article for the newsletter, or a display.

Julia Johnson, Festival Hill/Pharmacy Garden Chair, invited members to First Fridays at Festival Hill. The group meets behind the Menke House from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. October's focus will be propagating. Reminders will go out via email. Julia is also forming a committee to help with ideas to restore the greenhouse at Festival Hill.

Catherine O'Brien, our HSA South Central Delegate, introduced herself and shared events happening in other units. Catherine will be joining the Pioneer Unit as an affiliate.

Diana Sellers highlighted features of the new membership directory. She noted that chamomile is the herb of the year. Diana shared that Ed Con will be in San Antonio this year. The Pioneer Unit has been asked to participate in some manner.

Kathe Forrest and Debi Meschwitz reported progress on the Sensory Garden and the relationship with the neighboring school. A second grade teacher has volunteered to be our contact and will solicit parent volunteers to help work in the garden. A workday was scheduled. Serena Speaker volunteered to serve as lead for the garden.

Belinda Weatherly encouraged members to join the Culinary Group at their 10:00 a.m. meetings held the first Wednesday of the month. October's meeting topic is "My Favorite Cookbook" with a dish made from a recipe in the book. Everyone gets to taste a fabulous recipe, as well as peruse

prized cookbooks. Everyone is welcome to join the Culinary Group at Menke House at Festival Hill. Upcoming meeting focuses include:

November	appetizers
December	beverages
January	making mustard for Thyme Well Spent
February	Valentines inspired
April	My Heritage Meal
May	salads

The Business Meeting concluded with a fun activity. Members were asked to bring a picture of themselves from elementary school. Everyone guessed which member the adorable child in the picture grew up to be.

The theme for the meeting was "Back to School"; therefore, we had "school lunch ladies" rather than hostesses. The lunch ladies, including Linda Rowlett, Cindy Nash, Ann Lugg, and Leona Marshall, donned their uniforms and hair nets to serve a delicious lunch.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Hagler
Secretary



MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Hey, P.U. Members!

September's meeting was such a fun time! We had 43 members and 7 guests for a nice round total of 50 in attendance!! The guests were Vicki Wiste; Serena Speaker, who is now officially a new member(!); Maysoon Al-Hasso; Barbara White; Earl Mills; and 2 very brave young men wanting to inform us of their falconry club: Archer White and Roman White. Catherine O'Brien updated us on HSA happenings and mentioned the 2026 EdCon to be held in San Antonio.

I loved the energy and excitement in the room and look forward to doing it all again next week!!

See you soon!

Cammie Beierle
Membership Chair

EXCITING NEWS

2026 HSA ED Con to be held in San Antonio, Texas

Exciting Times - lots of great discussions are happening to begin preparing for the 2026 HSA ED Con. Members from each of the South Central District Units held their 2nd call with the HSA Officers to start the brainstorming process. There are many opportunities for each of us as individuals and as a group to participate. I would love to hear ideas from each of you. Cammie and I met with this group and felt very inspired to help make this a superb Texas event. We don't get many opportunities to attend an ED Con so close to home. I look forward to doing everything I can to make this a memorable experience. Let Cammie or me know how you would like to help. We can do something as a group, or you can join another group that interests you.

Some of you may have participated in 2012 when ED Con was held in Austin and can provide ideas and suggestions for things that worked and things that didn't.

What we know today:

Date - April 15-17, 2026

Hotel - the Holiday Inn on the River Walk

Theme – It's Spicier in Texas

What is Needed – lots and lots of Volunteers

Areas we discussed:

Finding Vendors

Finding donations for the Swag Bags

Obtaining Raffle items

Serving as greeters, selling raffle tickets, directing people, etc. during the event

Identifying speakers

Creating centerpieces for the tables in the General Session room

Finding organizations or businesses that would be sponsors for the event

Look forward to hearing from you,

Diana Sellers

Chair Pioneer Unit



Looking for a group of volunteers who would like to help research and develop plans for renovating the greenhouse at Festival Hill for use in growing plants for our annual Plant Sale, as well as offering storage and classroom space for HSA functions.

Please contact Julia Johnson to sign up!

aggieized@gmail.com

979-530-6645

EDUCATION

A workshop was held on September 25 to make pear relish for TWSS at Forum. This is a new item, very colorful in the jars, and we hope it sells well! Thanks to Diana Sellers, Patty Mills, Debbie Pruitt, and prospective member Barbara White who did lots of work chopping, etc.

We're in the process of planning a field trip for December 11 to Blackwood Educational Land Institute in Hempstead, a 33-acre teaching farm with large greenhouses, a herb garden, bees, chickens, a lake, and pretty grounds. We can take a tour and buy a box lunch at the farm. As soon as all the details are confirmed, I will send out a group email for sign-up.

Pat Cox
Education Chair

A Note from the Festival Hill Gardens Chair

Come take a stroll along the Festival Hill herb gardens this fall. Currently Roselle is booming with blooms and bright red calyx, and the blue butterfly pea vine and Turks cap are calling forth a bounty of pollinators. Come visit soon and bring a friend!

Julia Johnson



October Birthdays

- October 5 — Ginger Heath
 October 6 — Ann Lugg
 October 9 — Debi Meschwitz
 October 13 — Carla Lessard
 Catherine O'Brien
 October 17 — Pat Garrett
 October 23 — Jan Hughes
 October 27 — Betty Pior
 October 28 — Cathy Nitsch



Cathy Nitsch (October 28) wrote : "Seventy plus years and I still haven't met an herb I couldn't kill! Hope springs eternal though. Every year I keep the nurseries and our Plant Sale in business thinking this could be the year my "parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme" thrive. I really enjoy the Pioneer Unit because of all the lovely people I have met, and I keep thinking my black thumb might turn green if I would just listen to y'all's advice!

"The photo is of my Old Katy Road rose taken this past April."



THYME WELL SPENT SHOP

Do you need canning jars? If you are making jams, jellies, chutneys or relishes for the Thyme Well Spent Shop, please let Cathy Nitsch know so she can get an accurate count of how many we need to purchase.

You may email her at cathy.nitsch@gmail.com or call 281-235-5078.

October 2024



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 CG Menke House	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10 Pioneer Unit Meeting	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 HSA Webinar noon
20	21	22	23	24 HSG 10:00	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	CG = Culinary Group FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden	HSG = Horticulture Study Group HB = Herbal Blends

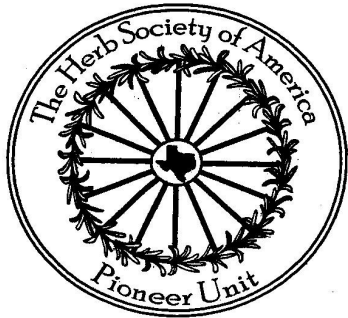


November 2024



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
CG = Culinary Group FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden	HSG = Horticulture Study Group HB = Herbal Blends				1	2 Herb Fair South Texas Unit
3	4	5	6 CG Menke House	7	8	9
10 17	11 18	12 19	13 20	14 21	15 22	16 23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30





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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."

Chair—Diana Sellers

Vice Chair Programs—Tory Farley

Vice Chair Membership—Cammie Beierle

Secretary—Joanna Hagler

Treasurer—Royceanna Kendall



Herbal Fiction Book Clubs

Herbal fiction is a fun book genre which includes mysteries or novels with herbs that are central to the plot or storyline. HSA has three clubs who are always welcoming members to join them. Select the book/time that fits your interest and schedule and join in!

Book Club Meeting Links – To access the book club links, you have to go the Member Login section of the HSA website. Below is the information you will find there:

Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://meet.goto.com/install>

[Book Club #1 Meeting Link \(new\)](#) Meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 2:00 p.m. ET

[Book Club #2 Meeting Link \(new\)](#) Meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month, 3:00 p.m. ET

[Book Club #3 Meeting Link \(new\)](#) Meets the 4th Wednesday of the month, 7:30 p.m. ET

To whet your appetite, here are the October choices for two of the book clubs. Book Club #2's choice is not listed on the HSA website.

October 9: [Apothecary Rose](#) by Candace Robb

October 23 - [Wild Witchcraft](#) by Rebecca Byer