

PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America
Pioneer Unit

February 2025

Volume 32, Number 6

February 2
Ground Hog Day

February 12
Snow Full Moon



February 14
Valentine's Day



February 17
Presidents' Day

MONTHLY UNIT MEETING

Date: February 13, 2025

Time: 9:30 a.m. Meet and Greet
10:00 Presentation

Location: Bethlehem Lutheran Church
412 South White Street
Round Top, Texas

Directions: From US 290, take Texas 237 south for 7.6 miles. Turn right onto Bauer Rummel (Round Top Road) and then left onto South White Street. The church and Fellowship Hall are at the end of the street on the right.

Program: Rosemary

Speaker: Pioneer Unit Horticulture Study Group

Angel: Julia Johnson

Lunch: Dishes from the Heart (with rosemary perhaps?)

Host Team: Betty Pior, Susan Bame, Courtney Kieke, Phoebe Lake, Cindy Nash, and Diana Reed



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Hopefully you didn't lose too many plants during our January freeze events. I lost a few that I expected to go, but the Rosemarys, mints, and lavenders are thriving and as happy as they can be. I would like the weather to stay cool but prefer no more freezes. They are just too troublesome to deal with.

A Month of Love — In 2022, I wrote a newsletter article describing the awesome month of February. February is so cool; I decided to repeat the message. February's basic theme is an amazing reminder of the importance of love. And revolves around love, kindness, gentleness, thinking of others, and having a really good time. Random acts of kindness can truly make the difference in another human's day. Often, I find it's the little things that matter most. So, here are some of the interesting observances associated with February. I hope you can enjoy some of them: American Heart Month, Black History Month, National Bird-feeding Month (my bird visitors are all for that), First Saturday – Ice Cream for Breakfast Day (yum!), February 9 – National Pizza Day, February 14 – Valentine's Day, February 17 – Random Acts of Kindness Day, and February 20 – World Day of Social Justice.

While I have been gardening for about 45 years and was acquainted early on with the importance of planting natives, I only knew the tiniest bit about the reasons why. When my husband and I determined it was time to move out of Austin, we decided that moving East was the best option if we wanted to have rain in our lives. The Hill Country was just too dry. Imagine my disappointment when a drought occurred all the way out to our area of the State. The extreme temperatures were unbearable.

Over the past year I became more intensely aware of the crisis our world faces and decided to delve into learning what I could do as a single individual to improve the ecosystem that surrounds me. I have learned many new concepts — like biodiversity, ecosystems, and keystone species. In his book [Bringing Nature Home](#), Doug Tallamy hit me square between the eyes with his statement "for the first time in its history, gardening has taken on a role that transcends the needs of the gardener. Like it or not, gardeners have become important players in the management of our nation's wildlife. It is now within the power of individual gardeners to do something that we all dream of doing: to make a difference. In this case, the 'difference' will be to the future of biodiversity, to the native plants and animals of North America and the ecosystems that sustain them." How cool is that! In each of our own plots of land, we can improve life for our insects, pollinators, and birds and collectively change the course of what's happening to our world.

In December, I made a big decision to sign up for Master Naturalist classes. I had been contemplating it for a while but couldn't decide. Did I have enough time to make such a commitment? But I finally decided: I will never have more time, and I really wanted to learn all they can teach me.

Forum, Plant Sale, and Thyme Well Spent Shop

Forum, Plant Sale, and Thyme Well Spent Shop preparations continue. The planning committee held their 2nd meeting January 28th. Much work has been accomplished, but there are many things still to do.

Forum — The Forum speakers have been determined:

Restoring Biodiversity to your soil with native plants – Stephen Brueggerhoff
Growing Central Texas Herbs – Cristen Andrews
The Science of Aromatherapy – Judy Griffin
The Healing Chemicals of Herbs – Autumn Schulze

Plant Sale — Julia Johnson, Madeline Johnson, and Phoebe Lake have been busy talking with plant suppliers and discussing ways to make the Plant Sale flow more smoothly and be more successful.

TWSS — Erica Menconi has talked with several members about TWSS sale items. Pat Cox will be holding some workshops to make products for us to sell at the shop. Join the fun and learn how to make great items with herbs.

Volunteering — Sign-up sheets were posted at the January Unit meeting for everyone to volunteer at the March Event. Many members signed up, but there are still many spaces available. We could use everyone's help. There are many areas that members can choose to volunteer; a few examples: setting up for the plant sale, cashiers (plant sale or TWSS), ticket writers (plant sale or TWSS), greeters and hostesses for the Forum, stuffing packets for the Forum attendees, working on needlework items, and many other areas. Many members have already stepped forward to say they are willing and ready to be active participants, and I know I can count on all of you. Thanks so much!

Looking forward to seeing you all at the February meeting,
Diana Sellers
Chair, Pioneer Unit



FROM THE PROGRAMS CHAIR

Hello from Programs!

I'm thrilled to share details about our upcoming program! Our very own Horticulture Study Group will be sharing their findings on Rosemary, which promises to be both educational and inspiring. Join us on February 13th at our newest meeting place, Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Round Top, located at 412 South White Street.

Some fun facts about the church itself are: that it was completed in 1866, and the sandstone used for construction was quarried from Cummins Creek. According to Wikipedia, it is one of the earliest stone churches built in this section of Texas and it is the oldest Lutheran church sanctuary in Texas. We will meet for social at 9:30 a.m. and the program will begin at 10:00 a.m.

See you there!
Tory Farley
Programs Chair

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Dear Herbies!

Spring is on the horizon, and I am going to be outside a lot this week. My strategy this year is to have only spring and fall gardens. It takes so much time and effort to try to keep plants alive during the hot summers we are currently experiencing. I'd love your thoughts about that!

I'm adding up volunteer hours to submit to Festival Hill, so please record your hours in Track It Forward! Our unit is so wonderfully active, and it's helpful for the community to see how enthusiastically we work for their pleasure and ours!

There were 37 members and two guests at our very cold January meeting: Shirley Wendt, guest of Serena Speaker, and Sherry Michie, guest of Julia Johnson. Sherry has attended three meetings and only needs to complete her volunteer hours at the Sensory Garden to become a member. Please introduce yourself and welcome these guests as you see them.

See you soon!

Cammie Beierle
Membership Chair

CULINARY GROUP

Mustard is mellowing for TWSS. We are all mellowing also. Our next meeting will be on February 5th with an emphasis on herbal Valentine's treats and some conversation about 'love potions'. All are welcome. Call or text me at 713-398-0994. Email blw1071@gmail.

Belinda Weatherly



ITEMS NEEDED



SEEDS: Please bring any seeds you have for the TWSS to the next meeting and make sure they are bagged and identified.

BOOKS: Please bring any garden books and current garden magazines to the March Forum prep meeting. We have a lot of books left over from last year so just bring your best ones!!

Thanks,
Noreen Barker

MINUTES OF UNIT MEETING
HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA PIONEER UNIT
January 9, 2025

The January meeting of the Pioneer Unit was held at St. John's United Church of Christ, Burton.

Julia Johnson, Pharmacy Garden Coordinator, showed a prototype for a webpage for the Pharmacy Garden which will enable users to learn about the plants in the garden. Volunteers are needed to research plant origins, medicinal uses, recipes, history and folklore, and other interesting facts on each plant. New signage and maps will be coming to the garden soon. Julia updated members on preparation for the Plant Sale. Volunteers are needed for setting up Monday through Thursday. Hospitality will be provided. Madeline Johnson and Julia are working with Henry Flowers to purchase plants. We need a Signage Chair for the sale. Responsibilities include being a point of contact to direct the placement of signs.

Tory Farley, First Vice Chair-Programs, introduced Jana Muniz-Huffman from Deeply Rooted Ranch in Burton. Her topic was "Culinary Conversations about Herbs: Our Relationships with the Plant Life Around Us." Jana invited us to shift our mindset from extraction to symbiotic relationship between ourselves and plants. She promotes a biodynamic approach in which plants are grown naturally while increasing the potency of nutrients. Her focus is on edible, native perennials. These perennials share nutrients with other plants via their roots. Jana recommended Bob Randall's Growing in Southeast Texas which can be found free online.

Cammie Beierle, Membership Chair, shared the meeting's attendance of 36 members and two guests.

Diana Sellers, Chair, presented the Treasurer's Report on behalf of Royceanna Kendall, Treasurer, with our bank balance of \$57, 915.67 as of December 31, 2024.

Serena Speaker, Sensory Garden Chair, announced a fruit tree pruning workshop to be held Tuesday, February 18th from 10:00-1:00 in the Sensory Garden. Stephen Brueggerhoff will be teaching.

Susan Bame, Rosemary/Archives Chair, updated members on progress of the archival project. Two volumes have been organized so far but more volunteers are needed. If you like history, please volunteer to help sort records. This can be done at home or with other volunteers.

Diana gave some reminders of upcoming workshops including hypertufa, butterfly ornaments with Cammie Beierle, and lotions. Time Well Spent has a sign-up sheet for volunteers. The Forum needs volunteers, including speaker angels.

A nice thank you note was received from the falconers who received monies from Pioneer Unit to further their education in falconry. They will be at our April meeting to update their progress.

Diana bragged about our website. At a recent meeting with HSA Leadership, they revealed they use the Pioneer Unit website as a resource. Ann Lugg has been instrumental in creating a user-friendly page.

The February meeting will be held at Bethlehem Lutheran located at 412 S White Street in Round Top.

A tasty lunch was served by Shawn Helm, Madeline Johnson, Mike Perkins, Betty Pior, and Jana Rinehart.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Hagler, Secretary

Pioneer Unit Board Meeting Summary January 7, 2025 Festival Hill

Present: Diana Sellers, Tory Farley, Cammie Beierle, Joanna Hagler, Susan Bame, Connie Gwyn, Carroll Edwards, Julia Johnson, Serena Speaker, Erica Menconi, and Linda Rowlett.

Minutes of October 2024 Meeting: Upon a motion duly made by Carroll Edwards and seconded by Susan Bame, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes as written.

Programs Chair, Tory Farley: Dr. Judy Griffin, aromatherapist, will be our speaker in May. Speakers for Forum and Unit meetings are being finalized.

Membership Chair, Cammie Beierle: The December meeting had 44 members and 10 guests. Vicki Wiste has completed membership requirements. Sherry Michie, Stephen Brueggerhoff, Bryce Bartek, and Amber Bartek are nearing completion of their requirements.

Treasurer's Report: Diana Sellers, Chair, reported Royceanna Kendall has filed necessary forms with the IRS to continue our 501-3C status. We receive praise for increasing our volunteer hours and giving. Upon a motion duly made by Cammie Beierle and seconded by Carroll Edwards, the Board voted unanimously to ratify the 2025 Pioneer Unit Budget.

Archives/Rosemary, Susan Bame: There has been little response for volunteers for the archival committee. Carroll Edwards volunteered to help.

Education: Diana reported on tentative field trips. Upcoming workshops include hypertufa, lotions, and butterfly ornaments.

Hospitality: Diana praised Connie Gwyn and Carroll Edwards for making the Christmas lunch and meeting a success.

Pharmacy Garden, Julia Johnson: First Friday Festival Hill volunteers have inventoried the structure of the greenhouse and found it to be good. Julia is working with Festival Hill to select carpenters or a contractor. A load of gravel will be purchased for walkways.

Sensory Garden, Serena Speaker: More volunteers are needed. The irrigation system needs to be revised to differentiate for each bed. Henry Flowers is providing colorful plants. Stephen Brueggerhoff will teach a fruit tree pruning workshop in February.

Newsletter/Listserv, Ann Lugg: Money will be saved with our online membership procedure as the company has reduced their prices for nonprofits. Ann continues to research ways to reduce advertising costs.

Thyme Well Spent, Erica Menconi: Board members discussed staffing needs in the TWS shop.

Continued on next page

New Business:

Diana led a discussion regarding credit card fees. Upon a motion duly made by Tory Farley and seconded by Julia Johnson, the Board voted unanimously to charge a convenience fee for credit and debit cards. Details about the convenience fee will be decided at a later Board meeting.

Julia will be highlighting the plant sale in the Fayette Community Foundation Newsletter.

Madeline Johnson and Julia are researching native plant nurseries.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanna Hagler, Secretary

WORKSHOPS

A tree trimming program will be offered on **February 18** at the Sensory Garden from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The workshop will be conducted by Stephen Brueggerhoff. Sign up is required. Look for the email on the listserv with the link for signing up.

Serena Speaker
Sensory Garden Chair

Members, an important part of our Herb Society 'mission' is to share our knowledge with others, especially our Pioneer Unit friends. Workshops are a great way to do that, not only to make items for TWSS but to share other herbal knowledge. I encourage you to not only attend workshops but also to think about leading one to share your skills. And also they are great fun!

In February we will have two workshops to make lotions and one to paint the beautiful butterfly stakes, all for TWSS. Details to follow by email.

NOTE: I have been in charge of the lotions table at Forum for many years and believe it is time for someone else to take over for Forum 2026. Come to a lotions workshop and you will see what's involved. None of our products are difficult to make, and I will give my successor as much help as needed. It's time to have a new leader and new products in addition to the old favorites! Please let me know if you're interested.

Thanks a lot,
Pat Cox
bmerlynne@cvctx.com

February Birthdays

February 3 — Tony Scanapico

February 17 — Barbara Solis

February 20 — Bonnie Lout

February 22 — Sara Holland

Editor's Note: Once again, my relationship with my computer failed me. I missed Cammie's birthday message that should have been included in the January newsletter. I am including it here.

Cammie Beierle (January 20) wrote the following lovely message and included the photo with her family: "When I moved here 7 years ago, I couldn't identify a basil, had never used oregano or thyme, had no idea what a trimmer was, and certainly had never canned jam (or mustard!). You all have taught me so much about herbs, in all stages -- soil to seeds to produce -- and I am so glad to be a part of this organization!! At our family Christmas celebration, I got lots of compliments on what was served, the pesto being the biggest hit. Thank you all for all the love!!!"





PLANT SALE

There will be signup sheets for the Plant Sale at the February meeting. We need helpers for set up days (Monday through Thursday) when we will be unloading and pricing plants, as well as setting up the tables and signage for the Plant Sale.

Also, we will need helpers during the sale to care for the plants, to talk to customers about their favorite plants for our area, write tickets, work at the cashiers tables, as well as the holding area and potting shed. Saturday evening we will need members to help with the tear down crew: disassembling tables, collecting plant signs, putting away wagons, saw horses, and directional signage. This is our major fundraiser for the year, and everyone's help is needed! Thank you for all you do!

Members-only Pre-Sale will be on Thursday after Set-Up is complete, with all plants at full price. Members-only Half-Off Sale will be on Monday following the plant sale.

Julia Johnson

POTTING SHED

Hypertufa and Bird Houses seem to be the only certain items for the Potting Shed this year. Please remember to bring your "ONCE LOVED POTS" to sell at the Potting Shed. PLEASE BRING THEM DURING "SET-UP" so they don't have to be transported numerous times. Also, maybe you have YARD ART that you would like to change or just pass on. Anything of this nature would be greatly appreciated as donations for the Potting Shed. We are looking for outdoor trinkets, etc. Thank you.

Caroll Edwards

HOSPITALITY

We will be providing coffee, tea, and water during Plant Sale set-up and also for workers during the sale. Anyone wanting to bring or send fruit, breakfast treats (granola bars), individually wrapped cheese (a hit last year), or anything homemade would be welcomed. Also, there will be sign-up sheets at the February meeting for this and for sandwiches and chips later in the day during the sale.

Let me know if you need additional information.

Thanks for all you do!
Caroll Edwards

HORTICULTURE STUDY GROUP

Lavender Growers Organizing

A group of 21 enthusiastic HSG members gathered on January 23 to learn more about the 2025 lavender study. Phoebe Lake explained the raised bed setup that each grower will build. She had photos of the raised bed that she had created to illustrate the process (see below). She highly recommended that we conduct a drainage test because lavenders require good drainage. This process involves digging a 1-foot hole in the ground, filling it with water, and seeing how long it takes to drain. The water should be gone within 24 hours. If not, then look for another location. This test should be done for both the raised bed and the ground planting.

Next, Phoebe talked about containers. The container-grown lavenders will be placed in 25-gallon repurposed feed tubs. Photos were used to illustrate how to cut the triangular shaped drainage holes that allow for water to flow from the side as well as the bottom of the container. To further assist good drainage, Phoebe recommends adding a layer of twigs and stems (or expanded shale) at the bottom. (Photos below) We left with the list of materials to purchase so that we could prepare for March planting.

During the last half of the meeting, Madeline provided a preview of the results from the 2024 Rosemary Study. A full report will be made to the Unit at the February meeting. The study rosemaries had made it through the January freezing weather in good condition.

The next meeting of HSG will be Thursday, February 27, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Madeline's home. More details on lavender cultivation will be shared and the group will be able to watch Madeline construct her raised bed.

Madeline Johnson



Photos by Phoebe Lake

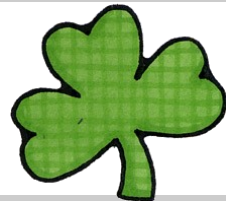


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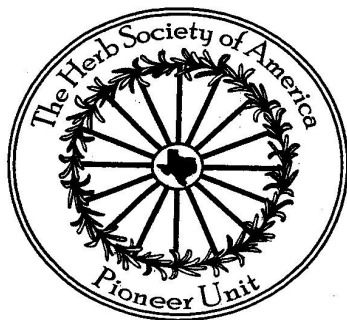


Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
CG = Culinary Group FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden	HSG = Horticulture Study Group HB = Herbal Blends					1
2	3	4	5 CG Menke House	6	7 FH Work Day 9-11	8
9	10	11	12	13 Pioneer Unit meeting	14	15
16	17	18 Tree Trimming Work Shop — sign up required	19 SG Work Day 9-11	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27 HSG at FH 10-noon	28	

March 2025



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30	31					



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Editor: Linda L. Rowlett, Ph.D.

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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

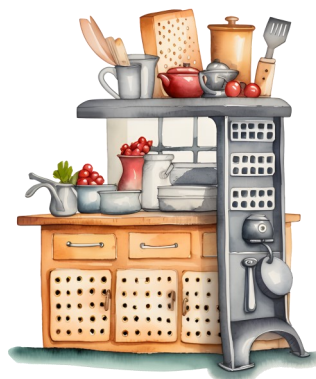
Vice Chair Programs—Tory Farley
Secretary—Joanna Hagler

Vice Chair Membership—Cammie Beierle
Treasurer—Royceanna Kendall

REQUESTED RECIPE

Blondies

1/4 cup butter
1 cup packed brown sugar
1 egg beaten
3/4 cup flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1/4 cup chopped pecans
confectioners sugar for dusting.



Preheat oven to 350°. Grease and flour an 8-inch pan

Melt butter in a sauce pan, add brown sugar, remove from heat, and stir until well combined. Stir in the egg. Sift flour and baking powder together and stir into butter egg mixture. Stir in vanilla and pecans. Pour into pan, bake 20 minutes.

Dust with confectioners sugar when cool. Cut.

Easy Peasy.
Belinda Weatherly