

PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America Pioneer Unit

February 2013

Volume 20, Number 6

February 14 Valentine's Day

February 18 Presidents' Day

February 25 Ice Full Moon

MONTHLY UNIT MEETING								
Date:	February 14, 2013							
Time:	9:30 a.m. Meet and Greet 10:00 a.m. Program followed by Meeting							
Location:	Brenham Presbyterian Church							
Directions:	1005 Green Street, Brenham From US 290, take Business 36 north. Turn left on College Street and then left on Green Street.							
Program:	Chocolate!							
Speaker:	Heide Vukovic							
Angel: Hosts:	Louise Rice and Henry Flowers Cindy Rollins, June smith, Susan Lake, Lucy Nehrkorn, and Barbara Hemmer							
Lunch:	Valentine Delights							



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Hello, everybody!

I hope February has started out well for you. Just two days in, the weather has been glorious, lifting to the spirits. On an early morning walk yesterday, I surprised about eight ducks on our very shallow pond. I looked up to see the "day moon" shining in the sky; just after 7:00, it was light, but we have entered a few days when the moon will show in the daylight. Then I wandered into the vineyard and made a wreath just for the fun of it — then returned to my herb garden and wove in rosemary branches. Later in the day, the grandchildren came over and spent the afternoon playing in the yard. So the tulips are still not planted, the newsletter is even later than I hoped, and some of my paid work did not get done until late last night — but I believe my priorities were right in line.

Speaking of wreaths, I want to be sure to remind all of you what a wonderful teacher we have in Mary Reeves. She led a wreath-making workshop at our vineyard a couple of weeks ago, and about eight of us made quite a few wreaths for sale at the Herbal Forum. Mary knows so much, and she is the perfect teacher: knowledgeable, patient, enthusiastic. I hope everyone had as much fun as I did.

And that leads me the Forum: there is plenty of information about our coming event in this newsletter, so I guess my job is to generate some enthusiasm. Every one of you has something he or she can do to make this the perfect event that it always is. I still have some fig preserves to make, and I haven't completely given up the idea of making some soap. (My paid work keeps getting in the way!) We will be asking everyone to sign up for some work time at the Forum itself — in addition to whatever you might be making for sale at Thyme Well Spent or the Gazebo. I can't wait to see what you have been doing.

Be sure to take a break from your Forum preparations to enjoy Valentine's Day. First, there is our meeting with Heide talking about chocolate. Heide does wonders with chocolate, and I expect we will learn some tricks from her. After our meeting, I hope that you have some time with your loved ones.

A sepal, petal, and a thorn Upon a common summer's morn— A flask of Dew—A Bee or two— A Breeze—a caper in the trees— And I'm a Rose!

Emily Dickinson

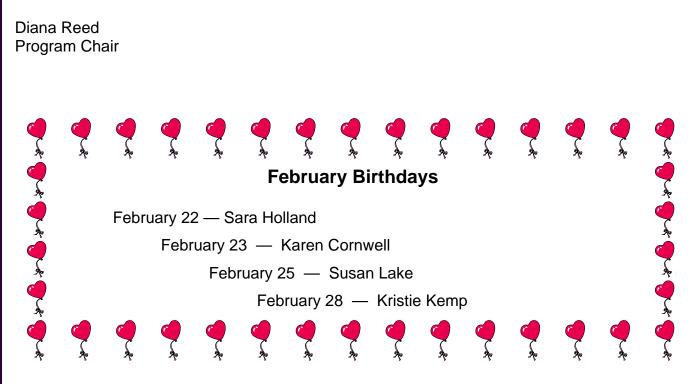
Happy Valentine's Day! Linda L. Rowlett Unit Chair



From the Program Chairman....

I missed you all at the January meeting! I was stranded in Joshua, Texas, at a sewing retreat. My plan was to be home on Wednesday evening, but the rains kept coming. Unfortunately, the retreat center is on a slight hill surrounded by very narrow low country roads; fortunately, we were on the hill! I did hear how wonderful Kim McDaniel from Gourmet Texas Pasta was with her presentation and pasta products. Thank you to Linda Rowlett for handling my duties that day! And thanks to all Pioneer members for making Kim feel so welcome.

On Valentine's Day, we will enjoy "Chocolate!" presented by Heide Vukovic. We will meet at the Brenham Presbyterian Church, 1005 Green Street in Brenham. This should be a wonderful morning. Hope to see you then!



Editor's Note: If you have materials for the Pioneer Paths, please get them to me three weeks before the meeting. That allows time for editing, composing, copying, and mailing in time for those who get their mail from the postman!

Linda L. Rowlett 281-757-1988 Irowlett@gmail.com or Irowlett@coatsrose.com

MINUTES OF UNIT MEETING HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA (HSA) PIONEER UNIT (PU) JANUARY 10, 2013

Linda Rowlett, Chair, opened the meeting.

Georgia Sowers, Membership, introduced visitors Pam Traylor, Alice Kyle, and Linda Lain. Affiliate members Joan Jordan, Patty Godfrey, Catherine Hall, Susan Abouhalkah, Marijane Lipscomb, and Pamela Murski also attended. Georgia reminded members that it was time to get their hours up-to-date and that a time sheet is available on the PU website.

Linda introduced the speaker, Kim McDaniel from Gourmet Texas Pasta. Ms. McDaniel provided an interesting program, including a review of products she produces.

Henry Flowers, Gardens, announced that January 19th will be a workday at the Sensory Garden. He also reported that the Forum program is nearly complete and copies will be available soon. Forum speakers and workshops have been finalized. A special presentation by Christine Moore, Curator of the National Herb Garden, is being planned for members following the Plant Sale. Henry also noted that Forum sign-up sheets will be available at the next meeting, as will be program brochures. PDF files will be sent to membership and be available on the PU website.

Susan Lake, Pioneer Unit website, reported great headway. She noted that Forum materials will be available on the website and that information about Pioneer Unit meetings is being posted on Facebook.

Linda Lain, former President of HSA, congratulated the Unit for its expanded communications and noted that the Guide to Elderberry should be out soon. She also said that calendars were available on the HSA website at a discounted price of \$8.95. The Herb Society has also begun developing a herb-of- the-month program based on the calendar.

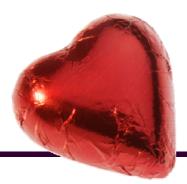
Lynn Ehler, Archives-Rosemary, noted that any donations of greeting cards would be much appreciated as the supply was low.

Kay Scanapico, Scholarship, reported that several scholarship applications had been received and that she was heartened by membership interest in educational efforts of the Pioneer Unit. Funding limitations allowed only two scholarship to be awarded. She encouraged members to donate gardening books at any time during the year, noting that sales provide scholarship funds.

Tyme Well Spent: Cathy Comisky, who is coordinating tea-making efforts, announced a February 6 Tea Party at 10 a.m. in Burton (the January newsletter has information). She also reported a need for mint (dried or not). She is working on another project filling donated canning jars with various dry mixes. Cathy will have fabric scraps at the March meeting for decorating tops. Contact Cathy for recipes.

The meeting was then adjourned for lunch.

Respectfully submitted, Karen Cornwell Secretary



SIGN UP FOR HERBAL FORUM AT FEBRUARY MEETING

There will be sign-up sheets at the February meeting for the following committees at Forum. Please come with thoughts for the committees that you want to work on. This is our only fund-raising event and all members are needed to participate in some capacity.

<u>Check-in / Registration</u>: (Chair: Ann Allen) Greet and direct registrants, hand out registration folders as they arrive, and provide room keys to those who are spending the night at Festival Hill. Workers are needed on Friday and on Saturday morning.

<u>Decorations:</u> (Chair: Needed) Responsible for decorations for the front entrance and the stage of the concert hall, for arrangements at the Hospitality table in the Thyme Well Spent Shop, on the luncheon tables, and on the Afternoon Refreshments table.

<u>Hospitality:</u> (Chair: Joyce Lane) This group supplies refreshments (muffins, cookies, and such) for the hospitality table located in the TWS Shop. Usually coffee, water and juice or lemonade are served. Workers are needed on Friday from 8:30 to 6:00 and on Saturday from 7:30 to 4:00 to keep the table supplied and to greet guests and serve.

<u>Set-up:</u> (Chairs: Lynn and Alton Ehler) Set up tables and coverings for use by the Demonstrators, Speakers, and Presenters and any props to be used for workshops. The work also includes setting up indoor signs, lights, easels, etc., and coordinating the take down, putting away and cleaning up. Help is needed on Thursday, Friday, and during the events on Saturday.

<u>Thyme Well Spent</u>: (Chairs: Carla Lessard and Kay Von Minden) Responsibilities include helping to set up the shop area early in the week, arranging items to be sold, helping customers as needed, and writing sales tickets. At the close of the Forum on Saturday, helping to close down the shop and packing all the items for storage. All items for the TWSS are handmade, and the shop is open to the public.

<u>Plant Sale:</u> (Chairs: Henry Flowers, Tony Scanapico, and Sue Edmundson) Helping customers to locate plants at the sale, writing up their tickets, taking payments, as well as helping customers to get plants to the car as needed. Help is also needed in keeping the plants stocked, straightened, and watered. This sale will be open to the public. Help with set up is needed on Thursday and tear down on Saturday at the end of the event.

At the February meeting there will be discussion of the Herbal Forum with more details. You can ask questions at that time and most of the chairmen should be on hand to answer questions about their specific areas. If you are not able to be at this meeting, you can contact Henry Flowers with questions or with your preferred area for participation. Once everyone is signed up on the lists, the committee chairs will be in contact to arrange work times.

If you have an interest in chairing the <u>decorations committee</u>, please contact me and I can discuss with you what is involved. It is a great area to display your creativity and have some fun as well.

Many thanks in advance for all of your help to make this event another success!

Henry Flowers Herbal Forum Director

National Herb Garden

This year at the Herbal Forum we are very lucky to have Chrissy Moore, director of the National Herb Garden, as one of our presenters. As most of the Pioneer Unit members do not get a chance to see the presentation in the concert hall, we have arranged for Chrissy to do a special presentation for us Saturday evening following the event. This will be at the Festival Hill chapel, and we will start by having a catered meal, sponsored by the Pioneer Unit, and then the program. There will be more information about this coming soon, but for now please plan to set aside that time for the meal and to listen to a wonderful presentation about a garden we should all learn more about. Here is a bit of information gleaned from our national web site about the garden:

The National Herb Garden was a gift from The Herb Society of America to the American people. It stands as one of the finest examples of how a diverse group of people and organizations working together can achieve a dream. For over twenty years, the National Herb Garden has fulfilled The Herb Society of America's mission to promote the knowledge, use and delight of herbs.

The garden includes hundreds of species and cultivars of herbs used for everything from perfume to cooking to medicine to flower arranging. Every plant is labeled, and interpretive signage helps the visitor understand the herbs in context with their history and use.

Constructed on a two-and-a-half-acre site at the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., the garden was completed in 1980 after fifteen years of planning and fundraising by a group of dedicated Society members. In the end, \$200,000 was raised by The Society and was matched by a \$200,000 grant from the U.S. government.

More than two decades later, The Herb Society of America is still committed to the success of the herb garden. Funds from The Society support a garden intern and HSA members from the area volunteer frequently. Recent enhancements in lighting, irrigation, signage, and walking paths keep the garden beautiful and accessible to all.

For more information and to take a virtual tour, go to The Herb Society of America's web site at <u>www.herbsociety.org</u> and on the home page click on the "resources" tab and go down to National Herb Garden. There are various links there to more information as well.

Henry Flowers Garden Director at Festival Hill



NATIONAL NEWS

Did you know that you can check out books from HSA? Here is a list of the newest titles at your HSA Library:

Garden Spells by Sarah Addison Allen

Green Witchcraft: Folk Magic, Fairy Lore & Herb Craft by Ann Moura

Hungry Plants by Mary Batten

Menopause Without Medicine by Linda Ojeda

Monster Plants: Meat Eaters, Real Stinkers, and Other Leafy Oddities by Barry Rice

The Practical Encyclopedia of Garden Pests and Diseases by Andrew Mikolajski

Preserving: The Canning and Freezing Guide for All Seasons by Pat Crocker

Rodale's Vegetable Garden Problem Solver: The Best and Latest Advice for Beating Pests, Diseases, and Weeds and Staying a Step Ahead of Trouble in the Garden by Fern Marshall Bradley

Thoreau's Garden: Native Plants for the American Landscape by Peter Loewer

Wicca Craft: The Modern Witch's Book of Herbs, Magick, and Dreams by Gerina Dunwich

The World's Healthiest Foods: Essential Guide for the Healthiest Way of Eating by George Mateljan

The Missouri Botanical Garden...did you know?

The 2013 Educational Conference and Annual Meeting of Members will take place in St. Louis, June 20-22. The Missouri Botanical Garden (MBG) will be one of the highlights for many of us attending. The gardens, the library, and the nature center are "must sees" during your visit. To get everyone excited about EdCon 2013.....did you know?

• Charles Shaw who founded MBG came from England to start a hardware business in the early 1800's.

• Charles Shaw published a book <u>The Vine and Civilisation</u> in 1884. Upon his death in 1889 he had over 2,000 bottles of wine in his cellar.

• The Palm House was constructed in 1913 and the first Missouri Botanical Garden Bulletin was published and available publicly for gardeners.

• The Linnean House is the oldest continually operating greenhouse west of the Mississippi River and houses the camellia collection.

- The Shaw school of Botany was established in 1885.
- Dr. Edgar Anderson was named the Garden Director in 1954.
- The St. Louis Herb Society established an herb garden in 1963.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

At our January meeting, we welcomed Pam Traylor, Cheryl Easley's friend, on her fourth visit with us. Pam has become our newest active member. And we enjoyed a great turnout of affiliates and HSA members at large. Affiliates were Susan Abouhalkah, Peggy Cook (helping as hostess), Patty Godfrey and Catherine Hall (visiting together from New Braunfels), Joan Jordan (who came with Linda Lain, HSA past president and active member of South Texas Unit), Marijane Lipscomb, and Pamela Murski (who brought her friend and HSA member at large Alice Kyle). Welcome to you all!

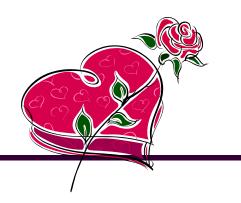
Our former District Delegate for South Central District, Mary Doebbeling, has joined Pioneer Unit as an affiliate member, and we look forward to seeing more of her. Her address is P. O. 817-475-6069: Box 83. Cleburne. Texas 76033: phone is and email ourthymegarden@yahoo.com. Mary's birthday is January 7. Our affiliate member Sara Holland referred her. Her contact information will be in next year's yearbook. Please be sure to welcome her and make her feel at home.

Our former Chair and the current Secretary of HSA National, active member Sue Edmundson, has moved to New Braunfels. Her contact information is 1816 Cypress Rapids Drive, New Braunfels Texas 78130; home phone <u>830-837-5872</u>. Sue's cell number <u>979-203-3322</u> and email <u>sueedmundson@yahoo.com</u> remain the same. Please update your yearbooks and her contact information will appear in our 2013-2014 Yearbook and Membership Directory. We wish Sue and her husband Dean happiness in their new home and will welcome her when she can be with us.

We're also more than halfway through our 2012-2013 year, so now is a good time to report your volunteer hours and unreimbursed donations to date. These can be emailed to Membership Chair Georgia Sowers at gzsowers@att.net, phoned to 979-836-8228, texted to 281-486-6006, or mailed to 607 Ross Street, Brenham Texas 77833-2764. You can download an online version of the timesheet at our website by following this link: http://www.herbsocietypioneer.org/category/member-information/.

We look forward to seeing all our members. For newer members, if you have any questions about membership requirements, activities, guidelines for reporting hours and attendances, Board members and/or Committees, please be sure to inquire of Membership Chair or other active members. We are more than happy to help and guide you. Hope to see you at "Chocolate!" presentation on Valentine's Day at Brenham Presbyterian Church.

Georgia Sowers Membership Chair <u>979-836-8228</u> Home <u>281-486-6006</u> Cell <u>gzsowers@att.net</u> Email



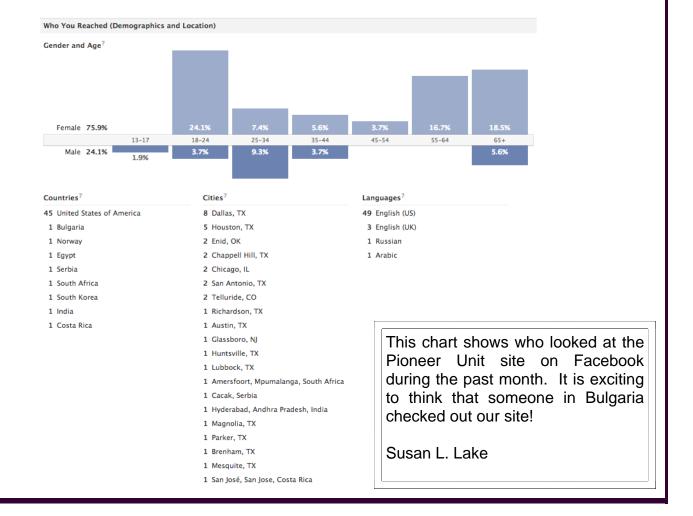
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Please let me know if you are working on items for the shop.

I need three workers to label and price jellies on February 11th, 8:30 a.m. at St. John's Church in Burton.

If you are willing to help package herbs, a sitting job, on a date to be determined, contact me.

Carla Lessard Co-chair for Thyme Well Spent carlalessard@gmail.com



<u>Herb of the Month – February</u> Rose-Scented Geranium – *Pelargonium graveolens*

Madalene Hill was very fond of pointing out the scented geraniums that we house in pots on the front terrace of Menke House from spring into fall at Festival Hill. She would also point out (and likely chastise me for the above title) that they are not properly called geraniums (albeit close cousins), but are truly *Pelargoniums* as their botanical name implies. No matter what we call these lovely plants, they were always dear to her, as they are to me and many others as well.

What is it that makes them so alluring? I think that it basically comes down to their aromas – so varied and often pungently intoxicating. They can smell of many other plants, such as lemon, mint, lime, pineapple, coconut, and, of course, rose, which is what I'll focus on here as it has been deemed herb of the month for February by HSA. February is a month that we associate with roses due to their association with St. Valentine's Day. With the rose we mainly utilize the petals of the flower for scent and color, but with the rose-scented geraniums it is mainly the leaves that we utilize (although the flowers are pretty and useful as well). The rose geranium is as useful as the rose in many aspects.

Almost all Pelargonium species have their origins in southern Africa and *P. graveolens* is no exception. It is what I would call a "tender perennial" plant. If protected from harsh cold, it will survive for many years. Thus we keep it and most of our *Pelargonium* collection in containers so that we can protect them in the winter. It has an upright and sprawling habit and may root where its stems touch the ground. Its leaves are finely cut and are covered with small, soft hairs. The stems are somewhat fleshy and can get woody toward the base of the plant. The flowers are five-petaled, lavender-pink in coloration, and borne in small clusters in the spring or early summer.

To propagate it and other "pellies" at Festival Hill, we take tip cuttings in the fall. These cuttings are usually about 4-5 inches long, and we remove all but the top two leaves – save the rest for cooking or dry for teas and potpourri. They are then stuck in a pot containing a loose potting soil and placed on benches in the greenhouse. We don't put them in humidity chambers as we have learned that they more often rot than root if the humidity is real high – remember that they are from southern Africa, which has a Mediterranean-type climate. In 3-4 weeks they are normally rooted and are then potted up. At present we have many which we will sell at the Herbal Forum. Unfortunately many herb growers no longer sell pellies or they have a very limited selection, so thankfully we are able to grow many of our own – especially the rose-scented ones.

We grow rose-scented types such as 'Attar of Roses', 'Round Leaf Rose', 'Lady Plymouth', 'Snowflake', 'Dr. Livingston', and 'Candy Dancer', but the one I am focusing on is 'Rosé' – commonly known as 'Old-Fashioned Rose'. It is the one that we like to use most for culinary pursuits. It is great in jellies, liqueurs, vinegars, fruit salads, and a variety of desserts such as cookies and the well-known rose geranium pound cake. In all of these items the leaves are used to infuse a wonderful flavor and aroma. In the case of the pound cake, this was traditionally done by greasing the cake pan and then lining it with rose geranium leaves before pouring in the batter. When the cake was cooked, the flavorful essential oils would come out of the leaves and infuse into the cake. But there are two problems with this method – firstly the leaves turn brown and thus are not pretty to look at and either have to be removed totally or removed and replaced with fresh leaves, and secondly the oils only infuse a certain distance into the cake and thus only the outer areas get the wonderful flavor. Thus Madalene and Gwen Barclay started to promote the incorporation of the leaves into the batter to get a better taste throughout. This can easily be done by putting some of the sugar of the recipe into a food processor with the desired number of leaves and then processing them until very finely chopped. Add this "green" sugar into your cake and you are good to go and won't have to deal with brown, cooked leaves. (continued on next page)

I love to use this method to add rose geranium to cookies and to other cakes as well. If you are in a pinch and need to make a cake and don't have all the ingredients for a scratch cake, yet may have a boxed cake on hand (preferably a yellow or white one), then you can greatly enhance it by incorporating some finely chopped rose geranium leaves. You can put some into the icing as well. I'll admit that I did this once as I didn't have enough flour but did (for a reason I forget) have a boxed yellow cake mix on hand. I added the geranium leaves (which really mask the "box cake taste") and put on a cream cheese frosting with finely chopped leaves as well. I thought that it tasted pretty good and that I was being quite clever, until I was asked for the recipe and had to confess that it wasn't totally "home-made."

The flowers are also quite edible and make a beautiful addition to salads or as decoration on cakes and other pastries. Like violets they are good candidates for making candied flowers

Every year a pot of rose-scented geranium is a must at my house and it is kept near a door for easy access. They can tolerate full sun, but do best if they get some shade, especially in the afternoon. Routine trimming and removal of dead leaves, with an occasional feeding of a slow-release or organic fertilizer will keep them happy and growing well. When the most intense heat of the summer comes upon us, they may go "summer dormant" – essentially going into a standstill where there is little growth. At this time it is good to be careful not to overwater them or they will rot. Let them get somewhat dry between watering and don't water heavily. This not only applies to the rose-scented geranium, but to most scented and ornamental varieties as well.

The rose-scented geranium, *Pelargonium graveolens*, was first introduced into Europe through Kew Gardens in 1774 by the botanist Francis Masson. During the next century the scented varieties became popular as potted plants in the parlors of fine homes. Hostesses would occasionally brush the leaves (we call it petting the pellies), which would release the fine aromas into the room (a nice thing when canned air fresheners didn't exist and the streets were full of horse manure and lots of other foul-smells). They also became valuable for use in potpourris and tussie-mussies and the essential oils were extracted for perfumery and cosmetics.

In the language of flowers, the rose-scented geranium symbolizes "preference," and I hope that you will grow it, use it, and that it will become one of your most preferred plants. It certainly is one of mine!

Henry Flowers

Garden Director at Festival Hill and Pioneer Unit Garden Chairman



THE SAMURAI'S GARDEN By Gail Tsukiyama

Tranquility rests in the heart of the Japanese gardens which form the backdrop for Gail Tsukiyama's gentle account of three emotionally locked main characters who reach for love and acceptance. The daughter of a Chinese mother and a Japanese father, Tsukiyama uses the Japanese invasion of China during the late 1930s as the setting for her unusual story about a 20-year-old Chinese painter named Stephen who is sent to the family's summer home in a Japanese coastal village to recover from a bout with tuberculosis.

Here he is cared for by Matsu, a reticent housekeeper and a master gardener. Over the course of a remarkable year, Stephen learns Matsu's secret and gains not only physical strength, but also profound spiritual insight. Matsu is not only the samurai of the garden, he is the samurai of the soul, a man devoted to doing good and finding beauty in a cruel and arbitrary world. Stephen is a noble student, learning to appreciate Matsu's generous and nurturing way of life and to love Matsu's soulmate, gentle Sachi, a woman afflicted with leprosy.

While each of the characters of the book have traversed his or her own difficulties and hardships, bringing each of them to experience his or her own individual loneliness and sorrow, each of them are people who possess the tools necessary to survive in spite of the world.

What the story proves even more than simply telling their personal tales is that in finding the kind of relationships and love that they find with each other, they not only survive but find true happiness and purpose. "We aren't so different, human beings and plants," Matsu philosophizes. "We are all part of one nature and from each other we learn how to live."

Review by June Smith

Book Club Announcements

There will be NO Book Club at the February 14. Neither will there be a Book Club meeting at the March 14 meeting because of workshops for Herbal Forum.

Because of tie-ins to scheduled programs, the following books will be discussed on these dates:

April 11Spanish Dagger
by Susan Wittig Albert
Wicked Plants
by Amy StewartBooks scheduled for discussion later in the year are as follows:
June 13
July 11
No August meeting
September 12The Stone Flower Garden
by Audur Ava OlafsdottirJune Smith
Book Club ChairTo be determined

February 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	6 Tea Making Workshop	7 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	8	9
10	11	12 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	13	14 Pioneer Unit Meeting	15	16 SG Workday 8:00 to 10:00 (tentative)
17	18	19 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	20	21 BSG 8:30 to noon	22	23
24	25	26 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	27	28 FH Workday 8:30 to noon		

March 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	6	7 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	8	9
10	11	12 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	13	14 Pioneer Unit Meeting Workshop for Forum	15	16 SG Workday 8:00 to 10:00 (tentative)
17	18	19 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	20	21 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	22 Herbal Forum	23 Herbal Forum
24	25	26 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	27	28 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	29	30
31					BSG = Botany Study Group	FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden

PIONEER PATHS

Volume 20



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—Linda L. Rowlett Vice Chair Programs—Diana Reed Vice Chair Membership—Georgia Sowers Secretary—Karen Cornwell Treasurer—Janie Plummer

