



PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America
Pioneer Unit

February 2014

Volume 21, Number 6

February 14
Valentine's Day

February 14
Ice Full Moon

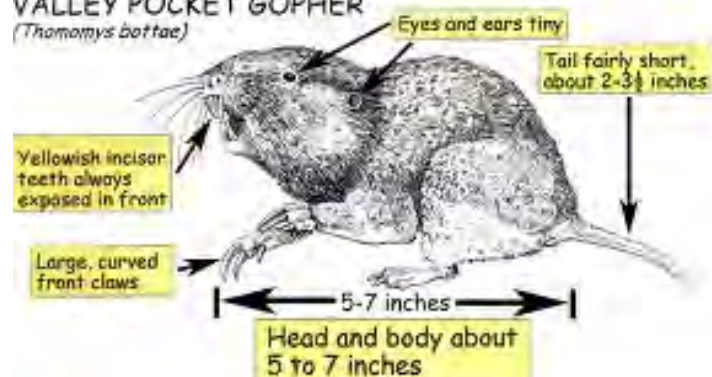


February 18
Presidents' Day

MONTHLY UNIT MEETING

- Date: February 13, 2014
- Time: 9:30 a.m. Meet and Greet
10:00 a.m. Program followed by Meeting
- Location: St. John's UCC
516 North Colorado Street
Burton, Texas
- Directions: Take Highway 290 west from Brenham to Texas 125 Spur West (East Mulberry Street). Head north to North Colorado Street. The church is at 516 North Colorado.
- Program: Critter Control — Gophers, Moles, Garden Pests
- Speaker: B. R. Koehler
- Angel: Kathy LeBlanc
- Hosts: Kay Von Minden, Lynn and Alton Ehler, and Mary Ann and Oscar Hillegeist
- Lunch: Chilis and Soups

VALLEY POCKET GOPHER
(*Thomomys bottae*)



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Hello, everybody!

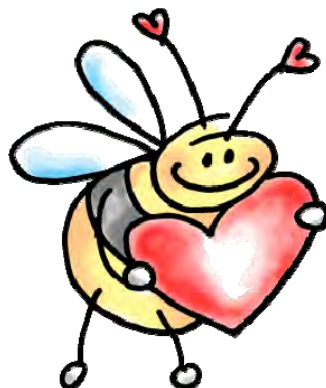
Your Pioneer Unit Board held a meeting near the end of January, and we made a number of decisions that will be of interest to the members. Karen Cornwell, our very competent secretary, will provide you with details in the next newsletter, but I want to call your attention to a number of items outlined in this newsletter. First, there is a two-page "orientation" summary of the functions of the positions on the Board and of some of the committee functions as well. Then there is an article about an upcoming field trip that I hope many of you can attend.

February has started out dreary and cold. The weather has not been good for working in the garden, but I am glad to say that my spinach plants and peas seem to be surviving so far. And of course the weeds keep growing.

If you are stuck inside, I hope you are working on something for the Thyme Well Spent Shop or the Gazebo Shop. As I noted last year, every one of you has something he or she can do to make the Herbal Forum the perfect event that it always is. You proved that last year, and I expect you will again this year. We will have sign-up sheets at our meeting next week, and I encourage you to volunteer rather than waiting to be called. In addition to drying herbs, please be saving the following items: (1) books and magazines for the Scholarship Table and (2) flats for use at the Plant Sale. You can bring the books and magazines to the March meeting or to the Forum along with any flats you might have.

Be sure to take a break from your Forum preparations to enjoy Valentine's Day. This year it falls on a Friday, so I get to spend the afternoon with my littlest loves, my grandchildren, before spending the evening with Douglas. I wish you a special day as well.

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



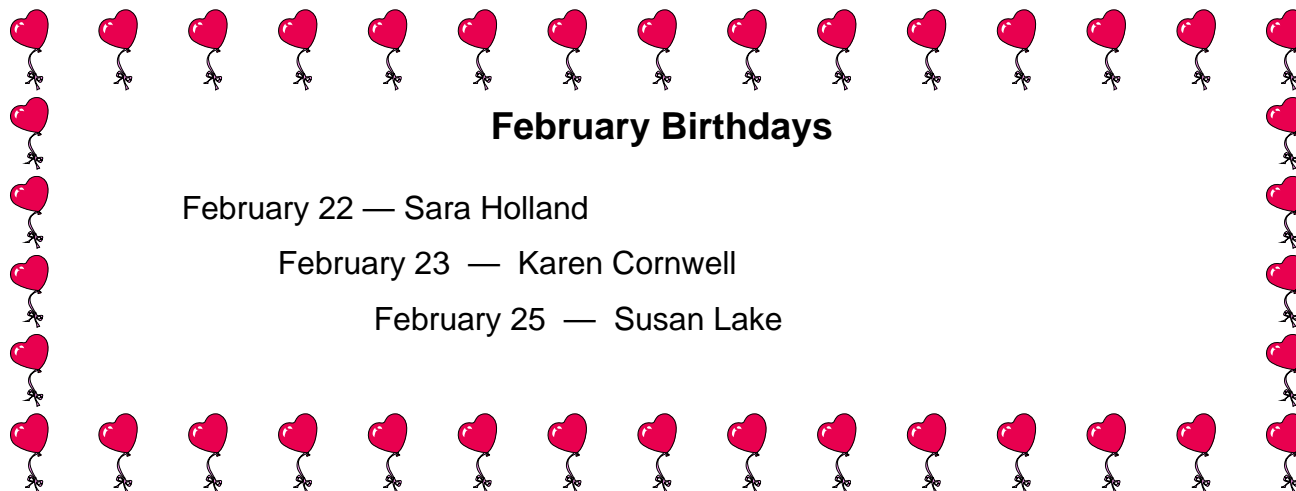
FROM THE PROGRAM CHAIR

The Pioneer Unit began our new year with a wonderful presentation by Dr. Lois Sutton. Lois sparked our interest in cooking and cookbooks from now and long ago. Her idea to journey on the internet to find the roots of herbs used in recipes will lead us to fascinating finds. Cookbooks have many stories of recipes and their origins. Her presentation made us all want to go home and cuddle up with a good cookbook for comfort and ideas! Thank you again to our long time HSA and Pioneer Unit member for a job very well done. We all left inspired and informed.

On February 13, 2014 we will welcome B. R. Koehler to speak to us about "Critter Control - Gophers, Moles, Garden Pests." This will be an interesting and much needed topic with Spring quickly approaching. We will meet at St John's UCC at 516 N. Colorado Street in Burton.

Looking forward to seeing you then!

Diana Reed
Program Chairman



February Birthdays

February 22 — Sara Holland

February 23 — Karen Cornwell

February 25 — Susan Lake

MINUTES OF UNIT MEETING
HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
PIONEER UNIT (PU)
JANUARY 9, 2014

Linda Rowlett, Chair, opened the meeting.

Diana Reed, Programs, introduced Lois Sutton, who provided an interesting program about "Herbal Cooking, Here and There, Then and Now." The presentation was gleaned from an extensive review of her collection of contemporary and historical recipe books. Following the program, Diana thanked Lois and the meeting coordinator and hosts. She reminded members that B. R. Koehler will be talking about "Critter Control – Gophers, Moles, Garden Pests" at the February meeting in Burton.

Linda called for announcements.

Georgia Sowers, Membership, introduced visitors Joanie Havlick, Carolyn Hayes, Susan Bame, and Phoebe Lake.

Diana said that there will be sign-up sheets at the next meeting for Forum volunteers.

Carla Lessard, Thyme Well Spent, reported that there is still a need for dried herbs and that they should be delivered to her clean, dry, and ready to package. She also noted that the January 14 jelly workshop is full, but there are still slots available for February 25.

Verena Aeschbacher, Sensory Garden Coordinator, reiterated her thanks to all volunteers who helped with BSD elementary programs. There will be a make-up session for 1st graders on January 16, from 8:30 to 10, and she asked for 3-4 volunteers to assist.

Henry Flowers, Garden Chair, reported that the Sensory Garden will need one more workday, primarily for replanting annuals. It has been scheduled for January 18 at 9 a.m. Henry also reported the installation of a memorial bench for Virginia Wehrung across from rosemary plantings at Festival Hill. In addition, a tree has been planted in memory of Mary Versfelt.

Ginger Heath, Special Events, asked members to put April 16th on their calendars. She said that the Special Events Committee has met and will be finalizing event plans soon. Further details will be disseminated at the next meeting and/or in the newsletter.

June Smith announced that the Book Club would be meeting after lunch.

The meeting was then adjourned for lunch.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Cornwell
Secretary

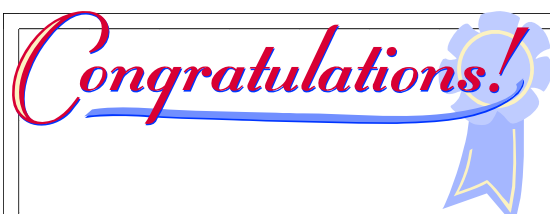
MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

At our January meeting we welcomed four visitors! Joanie Havlick from Round Top visited us with her friend Pat Cox and was a great help to the hostess team. Carolyn Hayes from Brenham visited with June Smith, and we hope to see her again too. And Susan Bame from Burton visited with her friend, our affiliate member Susan Abouhalkah (two Susan's together!). Phoebe Lake from Cypress came on her second visit with Diana Reed. (Phoebe only needs one more attendance toward becoming a new active member with us!) And last but not least Louise Rice's husband Ed visited again too. It was a pleasure meeting and visiting with these guests, and we welcome them to be with us again. Our affiliate members present included Susan Abouhalkah, Peggy Cook, Joan Jordan, and Marijane Lipscomb - it's always great to see you.

Time has literally flown by and we're already on the countdown to the last half of our membership year! It is appreciated that the hours are being reported timely, and it would be a great help toward annual reporting if members could log their hours up through the end of December 2013. Thank you for considering this, and please keep me posted if I can help anyone as to how their hours should be allocated on their sign-in sheets. Any questions or concerns may be addressed to gzsowers@att.net or called in to [979-836-8228](tel:979-836-8228).

Enjoy a Happy Valentine's Day and preparing for spring planting,

Georgia Sowers
Membership Chair



VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

Our active member, the always cheerful Dolores Rowlett, has been nominated and approved as our most recent Volunteer of the Month. Dolores is a willing volunteer and always glad to help with seed cleaning in her home through the year to prepare for Forum. She also helps the Hostess Team when she is available at our meetings. It's a delight to visit with this gracious lady. She is an active volunteer, even with some of her health issues in the last few years. Congratulations, Dolores, you deserve it!

Georgia Sowers

ORIENTATION

At our Board meeting in January, your Pioneer Unit Board decided to conduct a paper orientation for new members as an interim measure. This material might also be a refresher for some of us. We will then have an orientation luncheon sometime in August, probably on our August meeting date. Stay tuned for more details!

The following are brief descriptions about the duties of each of the Board members. Please get with any of us for more details.

Chair: My job is ring master for the group. I set the agendas and chair the meetings. I try to make sure we get anything necessary filed with HSA. I review all reports. I try to make everyone feel welcome and to show you all how important you are. The Chair is elected by the membership and serves a two-year term. Please call me with any questions or concerns.

Linda L. Rowlett — 281-757-1988 or lrowlett@coatsrose.com

Programs: The responsibility of the Program Chairman of the Pioneer Unit is to solicit ideas and suggestions from the membership for programs at our monthly meetings. In May of the preceding year, the Program Chairman contacts speakers and sets meeting locations. This information is then given to the yearbook committee for printing in the annual yearbook. At the beginning of each month, the Program Chairman confirms the location of the meeting and contacts the speaker for confirmation and any needs for the program. After presentations, the Program Chairman writes a brief article for the monthly newsletter summarizing the information and announcing the following month's speaker and meeting location.

Diana Reed — 979-826-0192 or boz1713@flash.net

Membership: The Membership Chair duties consist of maintaining volunteer records for members (active and affiliate). Membership also maintains applications of new members and renewal applications of members renewing each year. Visitors and guests, as well as new members, are greeted, welcomed, and introduced to the member body, with encouragement to members to get to know these individuals and interact with them. Membership helps the Yearbook Committee each year with the new yearbook and membership directory, as well as updating the organization of changes and corrections as they occur via the Pioneer Paths newsletter and the listserv and communicating these changes to Membership liaison at Herb Society of America (HSA) National. Membership submits an annual report to HSA National each year of total active members, meetings attended by each member, total of each member's volunteer hours, and amounts of non-reimbursable donations-contributions. This speaks to the importance of properly and promptly reporting all these hours and dollar amounts because they are a governing factor in HSA obtaining grants, as well as maintenance of the 501(c)(3) status enjoyed by Pioneer Unit and HSA National.

Georgia Sowers — 979-836-8228 or gzsowers@att.net

Secretary: The Secretary attends and provides documentation of all Pioneer Unit and Board meetings. Minutes and/or summaries are included in the Pioneer Paths newsletter and archived yearly.

Karen Cornwell — 512-567-3837 or karencornwell@rocketmail.com

Treasurer: The Treasurer handles the financial books of the Pioneer Unit, prepares quarterly statements of income and expenses, and prepares a budget every year for approval by the Board. The Treasurer writes checks as necessary and verifies the monthly statements of the accounts of the Unit.

Janie Plummer — 979-826-6418 or janiendoug@att.net

Past Chairman: The Past Chair assists at meetings of the Board, takes an active role in the committees and events, and is responsible for nominating the officers for the next term.

Carolyn Thomas — 979-251-8386 or cthomas1138@aol.com

Garden Chairman: The Pioneer Unit Gardens Chairman is in charge of coordinating the overall interactions of the Unit with the Unit-sponsored gardens and is often, but not necessarily, chairman of one of the gardens. The Gardens Chairman works with the Unit Treasurer and the Unit Board to establish yearly budgets for the gardens and oversees the purchasing of necessary items for the gardens. The Gardens Chairman also works with the Newsletter Editor to provide information about garden events and educational material relating to plants and the gardens for the benefit of the Pioneer Unit membership. This position is appointed by the Unit Chairman, approved by the Board of Directors, and serves on the Unit's Board.

Henry Flowers — 979-203-0163 or henryf@cvctx.com

Communications Committee: As you might imagine, this committee tries to get the word out to the members and the rest of the world about what our organization is doing. We do this using print resources such as newspapers, periodicals, and flyers. We also use digital tools to reach our audiences using our newsletter, Facebook (Pioneer Unit Herb Society of America), our website (www.herbsocietypioneer.org), and an automated email system. We also maintain a scrapbook to record our history. Susan Lake is the chair who manages Facebook and the website. Linda Rowlett does the email listserv, the newsletter, and the scrapbook. June Smith fills in as we need her. In addition Georgia Sowers helps with the website. It's an ongoing process and all members are actually part of the communication process as we need them to provide us with information and reminders.

Susan Lake — 979-421-9588 or gardener@susanlake.net

Special Events Chair: The Special Events Chair is responsible for the development and execution of field trips and workshops. Duties: (1) Appoint a committee to assist in carrying out the duties of the position, if desired. (2) Plan and execute field trips. (3) Plan and execute special workshops to benefit members. (4) Submit report for the Unit Annual Meeting, highlighting accomplishments for the year.

Ginger Heath — 979-278-3911 or gbh105@gmail.com



SAVE THE DATE:
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2014 (FIELD TRIP)

Initial plans are forming for a delightful day in Smithville and La Grange and at Rohan Meadery. Mitzi Van Sant, Landscape Designer, designed the Quilt Museum Garden in La Grange. She also has a lovely garden on a city lot adjacent to her 1929 bungalow home in Smithville. The Special Events committee proposes first going to Smithville to tour her garden of many roses, native plants, herbs, vegetables, and flowers. We will then travel to La Grange where Mitzi will talk about the designing of the Quilt Museum garden. Next, after an interesting garden morning, will be lunch (we're working on that) and the Rohan Meadery between La Grange and Round Top. We will tour their bee hives and come back inside for mead tastings. You all know what mead is....honey wine. The variety of meads are many, and you will taste a selected five for \$5, unless you have visited Rohan's at any time in the past and have paid your lifetime \$5 sampling fee (honor system).

This trip will be by caravan/car pools. Begin thinking about your neighborhood friends, getting your driver and carpool together. We will have signup sheets at the March and April meetings. Mitzi's website is: www.thefragrantgarden.com.

The drive from Round Top is approximately 45 minutes. Back to La Grange is 15-20 minutes. La Grange to Rohan's is 15-20 minutes. It is a very doable day with much variety. We hope you will reserve this date on your calendars and plan to come.

More updates as we finalize.

Ginger Heath
Special Events

WREATH MAKING: We are doing the rough pruning on our vines this coming Saturday, February 8th. I cannot take a day off during the following week for a wreath-making workshop, because I will already be taking a day off for our meeting. I am setting a wreath-making get-together for Tuesday, February 18, at 1:00 p.m. I will have a signup sheet at our meeting. We can sit outside, assuming the weather is good, and make as many wreaths as possible. I hope that many of you can attend.

I am trying to work with Mary Reeves to schedule a date for decorating some of our wreaths. When we get that settled, I will let you know.

Linda L. Rowlett
lrowlett@coatsrose.com





THYME WELL SPENT NEEDS

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

We still need dried herbs and other materials for the shop.

Carla Lessard
Co-chair for Thyme Well Spent
carlalessard@gmail.com
[979-289-5509](tel:979-289-5509)

SENSORY GARDEN - WINTER GARDEN

The three 1st grade classes who came to visit our Sensory Garden - those that were canceled last fall because of rain - had a great time exploring nature in the winter, by studying berries, seeds, and dried leaves. The trip was a great adventure for most of these children. A special thank you to Linda Rowlett and Cindy Nash, who took their time to give these children a blink into the wonders of nature.

For the upcoming Outdoor Learning Days in the spring, please come and join in these most rewarding events by sharing your enthusiasm and knowledge with upcoming generations.

Verena Aeschbacher
Sensory Garden Volunteer Coordinator

February Herb of the Month - German Chamomile

German chamomile is a wonderful cool-season annual herb that does very well in our winters here in Texas. It is a member of the aster family and has small white daisy-like flowers in the spring which are commonly harvested and dried to infuse into herbal teas. Although native to the Near East and eastern Europe, it is now naturalized across much of the European continent.

The genus name *Matricaria* is derived from the Latin word *matrix*, which means womb. This derivation is likely because the plant was typically used to treat feminine disorders. The specific name, *recutita*, refers to the similarity of the flower heads with domed yellow central disks and reflexed white rays to a circumcised penis. Who knew that this little unassuming plant was so sexy! The common name chamomile and botanical name of a cousin plant, *Chamaemelum*, come from the Greek *chamaimelon*, meaning "apple of the ground," in reference to the wonderful scent found both in its flowers and foliage which is reminiscent of fresh apples. In many grocery stores, especially those that cater to the Hispanic food trade, you will often see dried bundles of chamomile foliage and flowers marked with the name *manzanilla*, which simply means "little apple."

German vs. Roman chamomile: In catalogs and in reference books you will commonly see two different chamomiles listed. What is the difference? The two are actually quite different. German chamomile is a bushy, upright annual while Roman chamomile is a low, ground-hugging perennial. The two are slightly different in aroma and very different in chemical makeup, but are commonly used in the same way for culinary and medicinal pursuits. Because of its low-growing habit Roman chamomile (*Chamaemelum nobile*) has historically been used as a low groundcover in small lawn-areas and to cover the seats of sweet-smelling chamomile benches in Medieval times. In its most common use as an herbal tea, German chamomile is considered to be more pleasant and less bitter in taste than its Roman cousin. Another item of note is that Roman chamomile is much more likely to cause allergic reactions in those who suffer from ragweed-related allergies than is German chamomile. I personally find that German chamomile flowers more readily and is easier to grow and thus I prefer it.

German chamomile is also easy to cultivate. It is best sown from seed, which are very small, either directly where you want to grow it in the ground or a pot or in small nursery pots to be transplanted outside when it is large enough. Typically I find it very easy to direct sow in the ground and find the process of growing it in pots and then transplanting an unnecessary step. As the seed is small, I recommend sowing it on top of lightly tilled earth (a good sandy loam is best) and then watering in. This will wash the seeds into shallow crevices where they will germinate quite rapidly. The best time of the year to sow this plant here is in mid to late fall or pretty much any time in the winter as it is quite cold-hardy. Come the warm days of spring, it will stretch in growth and send up sprays of its small white flowers which you can harvest and use fresh or dry for tea. Drying the flowers will cause them to lose much of their volatile oils, so using them fresh or freezing them immediately for later use will preserve more of these active compounds. If you don't harvest all the flowers and allow some to mature and disperse their seeds, chamomile will normally come back on its own during the next growing season. In more northerly climes which have routine snow cover, it is often sown in the spring.

(continued on next page)

The main use of German chamomile is for medicinal purposes, especially for treating problems of the digestion and for stimulating the immune system. It is a bitter, sedative herb that can reduce inflammation, relax spasms, relieve pain, and promote healing. According to Deni Bown, it is used internally to treat nervous digestive upsets, irritable bowel syndrome, insomnia, motion sickness, and children's complaints such as teething and colic. Externally it is used to treat wounds, burns and sunburns, hemorrhoids, mastitis, and leg ulcers. It should be avoided if one is either pregnant or on anti-coagulant medications.

German chamomile is also used for some culinary pursuits. Its essential oil has been used in beverages (alcoholic and non-alcoholic), candies, chewing gums, baked goods, and ice creams. It is also used in cosmetics—mainly in shampoos as a conditioner and lightener, especially for blonde hair.

References: [New Encyclopedia of Herbs](#) by Deni Bown and [The Encyclopedia of Herbs](#) by DeBaggio and Tucker

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.

Henry Flowers
Pioneer Unit Garden Chairman



BOOK REVIEW: THE LOST GARDEN

I couldn't decide whether The Lost Garden by Helen Humphries was a book about a garden or about love and loss. As it turns out, it was about both. And in the telling, the author has spun a web of words as memorable as lines of poetry.

"We haven't left our lives. They have left us," muses Gwen Davis, a gardener who has been locked into research for ten years with the Royal Horticultural Society in London. Gwen has volunteered to leave her beloved London to head a team of Land Girls for the Women's Land Army of England to grow food for the war effort during the shortages of World War II. She arrives at the formerly grand estate Mosel in the north county of Devon only to find that her assigned Land Girls have already dug in and formed a happy alliance with a troop of Canadian soldiers billeted on the premises while awaiting assignment to the war front.

Gwen, lonely and introverted as the product of a loveless childhood, is hard put to turn the attention of the girls from dalliance with the soldiers to the hard work of planting potatoes. In the process, she opens herself to emotions that have long been frozen. "The past is a language I don't know how to read or answer," she acknowledges as she warms to the girls she renames as varieties of potatoes and to the CO of the Canadian soldiers.

In bringing the long-neglected gardens of Mosel back to productivity, she discovers the hidden lost garden — a tangle of flowers imbued with emotions tagged as longing, loss, and faith. She works to restore the trinity of the garden — in the soil and in herself.

In their glory days before World War I, the gardens of the estate employed 25 gardeners. Years of neglect have led to their decline. "The thing about gardens is that everyone thinks they go on growing, that in winter they sleep and in spring they rise," Humphries writes. "But it's more that they die and return, die and return."

Helen Humphries is also the author of Afterimage and Leaving Earth, both chosen as Notable Books by the New York Times. She lives in Kingston, Ontario.


Review by June Smith



February 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
BSG = Botany Study Group	FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden					1
2	3	4 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	5	6 FH Workday 8:30 to noon Vinegar workshop	7	8
9	10	11 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	12	13 Pioneer Unit Meeting	14 Valentine's Day 	15
16	17	18 FH Workday 8:30 to noon Wreath Making 1:00	19	20 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	21	22 Herbal Creations North Texas Unit Dallas
23 Newsletter Deadline	24	25 FH Workday 8:30 to noon Jelly Workshop	26	27 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	28	

March 2014

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BSG = Botany Study Group	FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden					1
2	3	4 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	5	6 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	7	8
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16	17 	18 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	19	20 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	21 Herbal Forum	22 Herbal Forum
23 Newsletter Deadline	24	25 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	26	27 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	28	29
30	31					



PIONEER PATHS

Volume 21

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

Pioneer Unit
The Herb Society of America
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