



# PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America  
Pioneer Unit

June 14  
Flag Day



—  
June 16

Fathers' Day

—  
June 21

Summer Solstice

—  
June 23

Rose Full Moon

—  
July 2

Board Meeting

Home of  
Linda Rowlett

June 2013

Volume 20, Number 10

## MONTHLY UNIT MEETING

Date: June 13, 2013

Time: 9:30 a.m. Meet and Greet  
10:00 a.m. Program and Meeting  
ANNUAL MEETING

Location: First Baptist Church  
9120 Poplar Street, Chappell Hill

Directions: From Highway 290, travel north on F.M. 1155 (Main Street). Take the second right onto Poplar Street. The church is on the right.

Program: Herbs in Landscaping

Speaker: Linda Wood (Bluebonnet Herb Farm)

Angel: Janie Plummer

Hosts: Kay Scanapico, Janie Plummer, Sandy Brown, and  
Marijane Lipscomb

Lunch: Herbal Delights

Book Club: Stone Flower Garden by Deborah Smith



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Hello, everybody!

As you know, this month's meeting will be our annual business meeting. While there is no formal business to conduct — no revisions to the bylaws or changes to policies — we will have annual reports available for you to peruse, and we will have some reports during the meeting as well.

I want to take this time to thank everyone for helping me muddle through this first year. We have a hard-working Board and group of committee members. Diana Reed's enthusiasm and careful planning have ensured a diversity of programs. Georgia Sowers has made certain that our membership information is up to date, and she has made organizing our volunteer hours easy. Karen Cornwell keeps careful minutes, and I am so grateful that she came up with a procedure of providing a summary of the Board meetings so that all members would be more informed. Janie Plummer provides us with a clear summary of our financial position — presented in such a way that even a non-financial person like me can understand. Carolyn Thomas keeps us on track by knowing all the rules and the procedures. You have all been great officers.

Our committee chairs and members keep everything running smoothly. You see their efforts all the time. The team of Pat and Mike Cox keeps us supplied with all the necessities for food service at our meetings. Lynn Ehler has been sending out cards and notes to our members, and she keeps all our records organized as well. Ginger Heath and Carolyn Thomas have organized the special events and workshops that have been so popular. Henry Flowers keeps us on our toes in the gardens — both by his leadership in the gardens themselves and by the information he puts in the newsletter each month. Verena Aeschbacher has been working with Brenham ISD to ensure that we assist the teachers in the Sensory Garden. June Smith, our retiring Communications Chair, developed a list of contacts for publicity that will be useful for years to come. She has also kept the Book Club going and will continue to do so. Susan Lake has brought us into the 21st century with a website and a Facebook page.

So many of you do so many different things to keep the Pioneer Unit the great organization that it is. We have great chairs for each aspect of the Herbal Forum, and hard-working members who make the Forum the wonderful event it is. We have our newsletter with the informative monthly articles. All of the regular columns are excellent, and many of you have written other articles that have educated us — for example, Joyce Lane's article about columbines that taught me so much in last month's Pioneer Paths.

Finally, there have been a few of you who have had some kind words for me when I really needed them — and not just my wonderful mother-in-law Dolores Rowlett! You have kept me going.

Thank you to every one of you for this year.

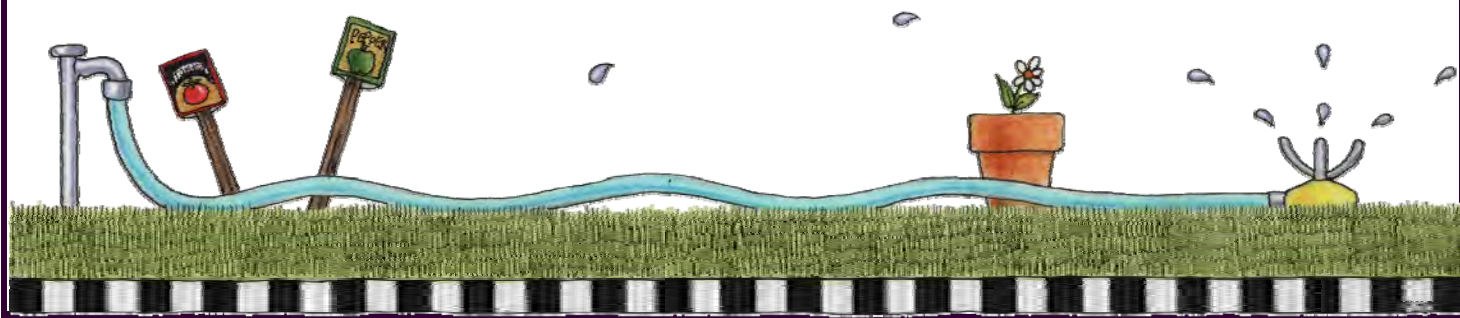
Linda L. Rowlett  
Unit Chair

## FROM THE PROGRAMS CHAIR

Our meeting with Marian Buchanan was quite informative. Her "Wicked Plants-A Walk on the Wild Side of the Garden" really made us all stop, think, and look around our homes and gardens. Our plants are very valuable to our lives and well being, but it was interesting to learn more of the history and use of some of the not so valuable plants and herbs! Or should I say "powerful" herbs and plants! Thank you again, Marian, for such a lively discussion.

Next month, June 13, 2013, we will meet at the First Baptist Church of Chappell Hill, 9120 Poplar Street in Chappell Hill. Linda Wood from Bluebonnet Herb Farm will speak to us about "Herbs in Landscaping." Please note that unfortunately the church double-booked for that week. Our meeting coincides with their Vacation Bible School and our usual meeting room will be transformed for their children's use. We will be meeting in the sanctuary and will have early morning snacks but **NO LUNCH**. Please do not bring a dish for lunch. I apologize for the inconvenience and change, but with the timing issue this was the best solution. See you then!

Diana Reed  
Program Chairman



MINUTES OF UNIT MEETING  
HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA  
PIONEER UNIT  
MAY 9, 2013

Linda Rowlett, Chair, opened the meeting.

Georgia Sowers, Membership, introduced visitors Jane Press, Ray Hamilton, Martha Connor, and Beverly Green. After welcoming the visitors, Georgia reported that she was still taking hours for Forum. Members were encouraged to email additional updates to her.

Linda noted that a Silent Auction item was available for viewing at the membership table.

Diana Reed, Programs, introduced Marian Buchanan, who provided members with an informative presentation about "Wicked Plants." Diana then began awarding several door prizes from the Thyme Well Spent Shop (TWSS). Door prizes from TWSS were awarded during the program.

Following the program, Diana thanked the hostesses for their efforts. She invited interested members to bring their program suggestions to a program committee meeting on May 22nd. Diana will be sending meeting details via the PU listserve soon.

Henry Flowers, Gardens, reported that a workday has not yet been planned for the Sensory Garden but that Festival Hill maintenance is ongoing. He said he is looking for a couple of volunteers to help cleaning up the pelargonium and mints. Henry noted that the Pharmacy Garden is looking good as it gets regular upkeep from Botany Club members. He said that regular pruning and maintenance are always beneficial to the gardens.

Kay Von Minden, TWSS, said she was always needing tomatoes and 8-ounce canning jars for next year's sale and asked that contributions be brought to her.

June Smith then announced that the Book Club will be meeting and discussing Wicked Plants and Widow's Tears following lunch.

The meeting was then adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen Cornwell, Secretary



## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

In May, we welcomed and introduced two first-time guests. Carolyn Thomas invited Ray Hamilton from Brenham to visit us, and Carla Lessard invited Martha Conner of Burton to join us. We were happy to have them both and hope they will return in June at our Annual Business Meeting. Kay Scanapico's friend Jane Press from Carmine joined us for her second visit this year and hopes to be with us in June. Also Linda Rowlett's friend Beverly Green from Industry attended for her third visit this year. We look forward to these visitors becoming members before the end of our 2012-2013 year. Our affiliate members Susan Abouhalkah and Marijane Lipscomb were at our meeting, as was Kay Scanapico's husband, HSA Member at Large Tony Scanapico.

Our renewals are coming in and are now due effective May 1. Dues amounts are the same as last year, \$67 for active individuals, \$98 for active joint members, and \$12 for affiliate individuals. Checks are payable to HSA Pioneer Unit and should be given to Membership Chair with your Renewal Application. This form is on the website [herbsocietypioneer.org](http://herbsocietypioneer.org) and in the April Pioneer Paths under the Newsletter tab on the website. If need be, you may also request a copy to be emailed to you from Membership Chair.

Another important item is Hours reporting to Membership. All hours up to now and through June are due in order that Membership may complete the Annual Report to HSA National and have a copy of same at the Annual Unit meeting on June 13. Many members have been reporting their hours and this is appreciated.

Thank you all for making my job easier, and if you have any questions regarding membership or requirements, please don't hesitate to contact me at [gzsowers@att.net](mailto:gzsowers@att.net) or by phone at [979-836-8228](tel:979-836-8228). Enjoy our beautiful weather. I look forward to seeing you at the June meeting.

Georgia Sowers  
Membership Chair

### JUNE BIRTHDAYS

June 1 — Henry Flowers

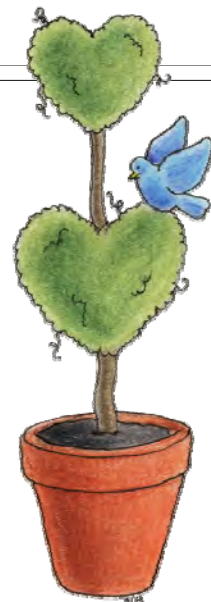
June 2 — Betty Powell

June 5 — Lucy Nehrkorn

June 6 — Melanie B. Short

June 14 — Ronda Herzog

June 24 — Marijane Lipscomb





## Herb of June – Basil

According to a survey by the Herb Society of America, basil is presently the most popular herb in the country, and in particular sweet basil sits at the top of the list. This is not surprising as basil has a myriad of forms and is such a wonderfully useful herb, especially when it comes to culinary pursuits

Sweet basil's botanical name is *Ocimum basilicum*. *Ocimum* is a Greek word for aromatic herb, and likely for basil in particular, which very well fits that description. The epithet *basilicum* and the common name of basil come from the Greek *basilicon*, which simply means "royal" or "kingly," a fitting description for this valuable herb. You say "bay-sil," I say "baa-sil" - "herb" or "erb" and "tomaytoe" or "tomaatoo," it really doesn't matter, just as long as you use it and delight in it.



Sweet basil is native to tropical regions of Asia and thus prefers warm and sunny growing conditions with adequate moisture. It is an annual herb and is easily grown from seed or cuttings. Like most of the major culinary herbs, it belongs to the mint family, the Lamiaceae, and has the characteristic square stems, opposite leaves, and somewhat tubular two-lipped flowers (which are highly attractive to bees). In thinking of its conditions for growing, think of those of the tomato – essentially the same and perhaps that is why the two make such a wonderful pairing in food. One of Madalene Hill's favorite pieces of advice to the novice herb grower was to not plant your basil until after Easter – a good bit of advice as basil needs temperatures over 60 degrees F to thrive and cool soil temperatures will cause it to pout.

In addition to sweet basil there are a myriad of types of basil – lemon basil, dwarf bushy basil, purple-leaved basil, clove basil, cinnamon basil, licorice/anise basil, camphor basil, bell pepper basil, holy (tulsi) basil, spicy Thai basil, and more. And within each of these groups there are likely to be many different varieties that are available. Under the heading of sweet basil, for example, you will find plain sweet basil, 'Genovese', 'Lettuce Leaf', 'Aussie Sweetie', 'Napoletano', 'Sweet Bush', and more. Whichever ones you choose to grow should suit your needs, but I always recommend sweet basil or one of its varieties as the best point from which to jump off into the great basil sea as it is the most useful, much like a good spearmint is the most useful of mints.

The ways in which basil can be used in the kitchen are many and varied, but a few things to keep in mind are that the oils in basil tend to volatilize at around 95 degrees F and thus it is best to add it fresh to dishes or do very minimal cooking; that it is difficult to dry well and loses much flavor in the process and is best fresh or processed by other means; and that when cut or damaged the leaves tend to oxidize and turn black, which isn't very appealing. Add basil to tomato sauces (after they've been cooked), as a garnish to dishes, to salads, jellies, ice creams, sorbets, beans, teas, cheeses, salads, as a garnish on vegetables, in yogurts, soups, vinegars, and especially as the base of pestos, for which basil has gained much renown. Purple leaf basil is great in vinegars and sorbets and I really love cinnamon basil in baked goods such as cookies and cakes (I know this defies what I've just said about not cooking it for long or at high temperature, so if you're curious ask me why it works) - if you have a copy of [Southern Herb Growing](#), check out the recipe for cinnamon basil and pistachio cookies - Yummy!!! One other culinary trend is to add the seeds to beverages. Much like chia seed (a *Salvia* and in the same family), they have a mucilaginous coating which swells in liquids and makes the beverage of great visual and textural interest.

Just above I mentioned processing it for saving and that drying isn't the best way. I learned from Madalene and Gwen that making an herbal oil may be the best way to preserve what you grow. To do this, place clean and dry leaves in a food processor and blend with a good oil such as olive oil. Add the oil just to

make a paste – the general ration is four parts leaves to one part oil. Once you have a good solid paste you can freeze it in a freezer container or place it in dollops on wax paper on a cookie sheet and then transfer it to a container once frozen. Then when you need some basil and it isn't in season, all that you need do is to thaw it out and savor it.

Basil has some medicinal uses, but the main one is that it helps to ease and improve digestion. It also has antibacterial properties and a crushed leaf can be applied to the skin for relief of insect bites and stings.

Basil makes a wonderful container plant as long as you keep it evenly watered. The recommendation is to remove flowers when they form. If you let culinary basil flower, they produce fewer leaves, which is what you want to harvest, and the flowering process may affect the oil content of the plant and thus the flavor.

Some varieties, especially lemon basil, are hard to keep from flowering and may set seed readily and sow themselves around in your garden. Some basil is grown because they have beautiful flowers and they aren't necessarily good culinary choices. One in particular is 'African Blue', white can grow to 3-4 feet in height and width and has lovely purple flower spikes. It is great for attracting bees and is also a wonderful addition to floral arrangements. It can be eaten, but it is not the most desirable of tastes. One more thing that you need to know about this one in particular is that it is sterile, so it won't produce seed and must be propagated via cuttings, which is very easy to do.

Another basil that I like to let flower is bell pepper basil. It is one that often behaves as an herbaceous perennial in our region and like most other basil it really prefers a bit of shade. It has lovely soft purple flowers which contrast with its glossy green leaves and it is another that readily self sows. Its tough leaves are harder to use in foods, but I have heard that one can muddle and use it to spice up a bloody Mary.

It is hard in such a short time to do justice to the great "sea of basil" so if you want to learn more, look in various herb books and glance through seed catalogs and you will assuredly learn a great deal - just don't let it overwhelm you. Do grow some sweet basil and give a few others a try every year to see what may be of great use to you. At the Herbal Forum every year we have a multitude of basil varieties available and it is no fluke that we sell more basil plants than any other group of plants, and the one that always sells best is the simple and wonderful sweet basil. I think that I may just have to go pick some right now and put it in a sandwich of toasted bread, garden fresh tomato slices, and some fresh mozzarella and say "Welcome summer!"

Henry Flowers  
Pioneer Unit Garden Chairman

## Upcoming Workshop

Susan Lake has agreed to do a small workshop in July on dehydration. As we anticipate another summer drought, that doesn't sound like a good thing, but dehydration is actually a valuable tool for veggie growers and lovers. Using her dehydrator, Susan preserves (without heating up the kitchen boiling canning jars or using valuable freezer space) a wide range of fruits, veggies, and herbs. The list is long: okra, apples, summer squash, cranberries, tomatoes, strawberries, grapes, onions, basil, peppers (both sweet and hot), citrus, and whatever else she finds in abundance. Sign up will be available at the June meeting.

Note: the date will be announced at the June Pioneer Unit meeting.

## GOT PICTURES?

Speaking of photographs — see next page — do you have photographs from any of the meetings or special events during the past two years? The District Gathering is coming up in the Fall, and we will want to have a scrapbook to show what our Pioneer Unit has been doing. There was no Gathering last year, so this will be a two-year scrapbook. However, I have not taken many pictures these past months, so if you have photographs I need your help.

Please do not email photographs, because the files I have received to date by email are too small to print a picture that is bigger than about two inches square. If you could give me prints, that would be great. If you would like to prepare a scrapbook page, that would be wonderful. I will purchase a 12-inch by 12-inch book, so a page that size or smaller would work.

Let me know how you want to help.

Linda L. Rowlett





## HSA PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

### Details of the Contest:

- \$25 entry fee per photograph entered
- Each entry accepted will receive a full-color copy of the calendar, which will be mailed in September 2013
- **The entries must be postmarked by June 7, 2013,** in order to be included in the 2014 calendar
- Selection for the top 12 photos and feature pages will be available for voting by The Herb Society of America members only online beginning **June 21, 2013**
- The top 12 photos will be featured as the "Herb Garden of the Month." All photos accepted for entry will be included in the 2013 calendar. The size and location will vary based on the final calendar design.
- The members whose photographs are chosen for "Herb Garden of the Month" will be notified by phone or e-mail.



### The Rules:

1. Photos must be of gardens only - no people or pets, please!
2. Only members of HSA are eligible to submit a photo. HSA units are welcome to submit a photo as a group. Current HSA board members and staff are not eligible to enter.
3. Photo(s) may be of private, member and/or unit maintained gardens. Photo(s) of public gardens are accepted if permission from the organization is needed and has been obtained from the public garden. Proof of authorization from the public garden is needed before the photo can be accepted.
4. Photo(s) must be submitted electronically by e-mailing [herbs@herbsociety.org](mailto:herbs@herbsociety.org). The photos must be accompanied by credit card information for the entry fee. Photos may be uploaded and entry fee may be submitted on the HSA web site.
5. Cell phone, Polaroid, or copyrighted professional photographs will not be acceptable. Photographs will not be returned and become the property of HSA.
6. When sending digital images provide sharp images (**highest resolution**) that are 300 dpi at a 5x7 format or larger and in JPEG (JPG) or TIFF format. **Name the digital files by your name (first and last name) or group name and the location of the garden.**
7. By submitting photographs you are granting HSA permission to use your image in this calendar publication and for promotion of the calendar during the 2013 and 2014 year.

## WICKED PLANTS by Amy Stewart



No unwary shopper should take into her home another innocent-looking houseplant, nor should a gardener put into the earth another seed or transplant without first reading Wicked Plants.

"Beware the sordid lives of plants behaving badly," writes the author. "A tree that sheds poison daggers, a glistening red berry that stops the heart, a shrub that causes paralysis, a vine that strangles and a leaf that triggered a war."

Be aware that danger lurks in common houseplants the likes of English Ivy, philodendron, diffenbachia, ficus and rubber trees, pencil cactus, peace lily, and other malevolent greenery. Frightening reactions from severe gastrointestinal problems, to serious skin irritation, to anaphylactic shock keep poison control centers on alert.

Stewart takes on more than 200 of nature's most appalling creations in an A to Z of plants that kill, maim, intoxicate, and otherwise offend.


"Beware!" the book warns, as it chronicles "The Sordid Lives of Plants Behaving Badly." Classifying plants as Deadly, Dangerous, Painful, Illegal, Intoxicating, Destructive, or Offensive, the author details more than 200 plants by name, botanical family, habitat, native country, common names, and plants in the same family. For example, joining Oleander in the Deadly category are its botanical cousins: Plumeria, the highly toxic Verbena, Periwinkle, and Yellow Oleander. Also listed as deadly are rhubarb leaves and uncooked cashew nuts, red kidney beans, green-skinned potatoes, and cassava.

"If this book entertains, alarms and enlightens you, I've done my job," the author writes. Do not experiment with unfamiliar plants or take a plant's power lightly. Wear gloves in the garden, think twice before swallowing a berry on the trail or throwing a root into the stew pot. And if you have small children, teach them not to put plant parts in their mouths. If you have pets, remove the temptation of poisonous plants from their environment.


Menacing botanical illustrations render a ghastly portrait of evildoers that may be lurking in your own living room, den, bedroom, or backyard. Drawing on history, medicine, science, and legend, this compilation of bloodcurdling botany will entertain, enlighten, and alarm even the most intrepid gardeners and nature lovers.

Review by June Smith

# June 2013

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	7 Deadline to submit photos to HSA	8
9	10 	11 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	12	13 Pioneer Unit Meeting	14	15 SG Workday 8:00 to 10:00 (tentative)
16 Fathers Day	17	18 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	19	20 HSA EdCon	21 HSA EdCon	22 HSA EdCon
23	24	25 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	26	27 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	28	29
30						

# July 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 PU Board meeting 9:00 a.m.	3	4 	5	6
7	8	9 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	10	11 Pioneer Unit Meeting	12	13
14	15	16 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	17	18 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	19	20 SG Workday 8:00 to 10:00 (tentative)
21	22	23 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	24	25 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	26	27
28	29	30 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	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.”

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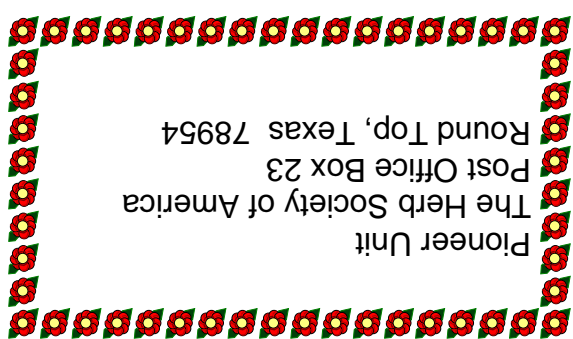
Chair—Linda L. Rowlett

Vice Chair Programs—Diana Reed

Vice Chair Membership—Georgia Sowers

Secretary—Karen Cornwell

Treasurer—Janie Plummer



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