



PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America
Pioneer Unit

November 3

Daylight Savings
Ends

(fall back one hour)



November 11

Veterans Day

November 17
Frosty Full Moon

November 28



November 2013

Volume 21, Number 3

MONTHLY UNIT MEETING

Date: November 14, 2013

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

Location: Round Top Retreat,
Andreas Road at Krause Road
Round Top, Texas

Directions: From Highway 290, take Texas 237 south, turn right on
Jaster Road (toward Festival Hill); turn right on Krause
Road then left on Andreas Road.

Program: Elizabeth Endicott — A Pilgrim's Story

Speaker: Mary Margaret Mann

Angel: Carolyn Thomas
Hosts: Euphanel Goad, Carla Lessard, Sue Edmundson,
Henry Flowers, Ginger Hoffmaster, Kay Scanapico,
and Georgetta Welch

Lunch: Thanksgiving Assigned Favorites

Book Club: The Garden of Evening Mists (Tan Twan Eng)



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Hello, Everyone!

I hardly know where to begin. This newsletter is running late, because I am as busy as all of you. While I love Autumn and think this is the most wonderful time of the year, it is also the busiest. I can hardly believe that Christmas is getting close. I have put away the ghosts and goblins and put out the turkeys and pumpkins for their short stay.

We held a Pioneer Unit Board of Directors meeting on October 23rd and made a few important decisions. At the coming meeting, we will be announcing a proposed amendment to the Bylaws, to be voted on at our December Unit meeting. We are proposing to change the requirements for new members so that all prospective members will have to work two hours at each of the Unit's gardens (rather than the current requirement for three hours at the Festival Hill gardens). This change will give equal importance to both of our gardens (and any future gardens the Unit might decide to maintain) and will introduce all new members to both of our gardens. The proposed new language will be set forth in writing for your consideration in the December newsletter.

The Board discussed workshops and field trips. Susan Lake is preparing a survey that you will find on the Pioneer Unit webpage. We hope all of you will take a few minutes to visit the webpage and take the survey so that we can have your opinions to consider when making plans for field trips. In addition, if you have ideas for workshops, please let me or anyone on the Board know. The more group efforts that we hold, the better we will know each other, the more fun we will have, and the more we will accomplish.

The Board also decided to recognize a "Volunteer of the Month" each month, and you can find the first article in this newsletter. If you know of someone who has done significant work for the Unit, please let one of the Board members know so that we can provide recognition of extra efforts.

That said, at this season of Thanksgiving, I hope that you all know that we are thankful for everyone's efforts on behalf of our Unit. Your work in the gardens and on projects for the Herbal Forum, your decorating and cooking for our meetings, your smiling faces with friendly words — all of these things are much appreciated, and I thank you all very much.

Have a wonderful Autumn and a blessed Thanksgiving!
Linda L. Rowlett
Unit Chair

When the night winds whistle through the trees and blow the crisp brown leaves a-crackling
down,
When the autumn moon is big and yellow-orange and round,
When old Jack Frost is sparkling on the ground,
It's Thanksgiving Time!

From "Thanksgiving Time" by Langston Hughes



FROM THE PROGRAMS CHAIR

We welcomed Leslie McConachie last October 10 to Brenham Presbyterian Church Hall. Leslie was a very inspirational and knowledgeable presenter. Her ingredients, recipes, and thoughts on cooking really made our members "think" about cooking and the art of cooking. It was so kind of her to bring several recipes for us to try on our own, as well as sample after the presentation. I'm sure we all will do our homework and ask June Smith (Leslie's mom) for her world famous biscuit recipe. I hope it will be included in this newsletter!

On November 14, 2013, we will meet at the Round Top Retreat Center to listen to Mary Mann's one woman presentation of "Elizabeth Endicott-A Pilgrim's Story." Mary is a fascinating story teller, and we are guaranteed to be swept away on the Mayflower in preparation for the Thanksgiving holidays!

Please remember to bring your assigned Thanksgiving favorite dish.

Looking forward to seeing and visiting everyone in this beautiful Autumn season!

Diana Reed
Program Chairman

Scholarship Awards for Members Announced

The scholarship committee selected two members, Henry Flowers and Sara Holland, as recipients of the annual member scholarships of \$125.00 each.

Henry plans to use the funds for study and to present a program on "Useful Plants of South America." The program will include an overview of the culinary, medical, and economically important plants of the South American continent.

Sara plans to research and study the culture of Brazil, concentrating on how herbs and spices are used in Brazilian cuisine. Her research will include an interview and cooking lesson with a Brazilian chef who lives in Austin. Funds will be used for research and for purchasing the spices/herbs used in the presentation of a culinary program on Brazilian cuisine.

Congratulations to these two members. We will look forward to two very interesting programs!

Kay Scanapico
Scholarship Chair

MINUTES OF UNIT MEETING
HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
PIONEER UNIT
October 10,2013

Linda Rowlett, Chair, opened the meeting.

Georgia Sowers, Membership, introduced visitors Natalie James, Outdoor Coordinator at BISD; Carol Kolar; and Alice Kyle, Member-at-Large.

Diana Reed, Programs, introduced Leslie Smith McConachie, who presented information gleaned from 20 years experience at Any Thyme Events, her catering company in Dallas. Following the program, Diana thanked the hostesses and reminded members that the topic for November's gathering at the Round Top Retreat Center will be "Elizabeth Endicott – A Pilgrim's Story."

Linda called for announcements. Pat Cox, Hospitality, asked members to sign-up according to category (vegetable, etc.), so that Thanksgiving luncheon offerings will be varied.

June Smith, Book Club, indicated that there would not be a meeting today, but that she highly recommended The Garden of Evening Mists by Tan Twan Eng for discussion at the November meeting.

Kay Scanapico, Scholarship, announced two scholarship winners this year, Sara Holland and Henry Flowers. Both are researching different South American topics.

Henry Flowers, Garden Committee, thanked all Sensory Garden helpers and reported on a workshop being planned for making mosaic letters for the garden. More information will follow as it becomes available. Henry also reported that the greenhouse move was delayed due to a scheduled event at Festival Hill and is tentatively scheduled for the 3rd weekend in November.

Natalie James, BISD, said that she was excited about the education opportunities with the Sensory Garden and that a K-1st grade program has been scheduled for the end of October or early November. Anyone willing to share their expertise with the kids can contact Verena Aeschbacher about volunteering.

Linda thanked everyone who provided auction/raffle items for the District Gathering in Huntsville. She mentioned that district attendees shared opinions about the change in the Ed Con/District Gathering schedule and other topics. Linda said that she will be glad to visit with anyone with specific questions about activities and presentations during the meeting.

The meeting was then adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Cornwell, Secretary

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

We had a great turnout of active and affiliate members at our October meeting. Natalie James, the Brenham ISD Outdoor Coordinator, was invited to join us by Linda Rowlett. Natalie is an enthusiastic presence, and she spoke to us about plans for the garden areas at the schools and upcoming events for the school children at the Sensory Garden sometime late October or early November. Affiliate member Pamela Murski and Member at Large Alice Kyle visited and brought their very close friend Carol Kolar. We welcome these visitors, and we also enjoyed seeing affiliate members Susan Abouhalkah, Peggy Cook, and Catherine Hall in October.

Most all of the yearbooks and HSA membership cards have been distributed to the members and affiliates, with only about five or six to be picked up in November. Additional yearbooks are available for \$2 each. Finally, as to signing up for events, Pat Cox has sign-up sheets available for the assigned Thanksgiving dishes at the November meeting. She may be contacted at [979-249-5700](tel:979-249-5700) or [713-899-2817](tel:713-899-2817), or email to bmerlynne@cvctx.com.

If you have any questions or concerns about membership or volunteer plans, please call [979-836-8228](tel:979-836-8228) or email to gzsowers@att.net and I'll be happy to help you.

Enjoy the cooler fall weather!

Georgia Sowers
Membership Chair

November Birthdays

November 2 — Cheryl Easley
November 4 — Jacqui Highton
November 9 — Nancy Crisman
November 19 — Lois Sutton
November 21 — Sandy Plasek
November 24 — Barbara Hemmer
November 26 — Diana Reed



Herb of the Month: Sage for November

November 7th, 2013, is the 100th anniversary of Madalene Hill's birth. It is a lucky and very appropriate coincidence that sage happens to be the herb of the month as Madalene loved sages (both culinary and ornamental), was honored by HSA as a Golden Sage (a 50-year member), and was influential in finding and helping to spread the word about the best culinary sage for our region. It is also great, and likely not a coincidence, that the herb most associated with this month is culinary sage as it is a common flavoring in bread dressings at the Thanksgiving table, but please don't limit your use of it to that specific time and dish.

Members of the genus *Salvia* are part of the Mint Family (Lamiaceae) and often go by the common name of "sage." There are many ornamental sages, quite a few medicinal ones, and a handful that are suitable for culinary purposes. The main culinary sage is *Salvia officinalis* and for the rest of this article will simply be referred to as "sage." This venerable plant of great aroma and taste is native to southeastern Europe—most notably the Dalmatian coast of Albania and the former Yugoslavia, where much of the dried sage marketed worldwide is harvested. The name *Salvia* was first recorded by Pliny the Elder in the 1st century AD and is derived from the Latin *salvere*, meaning to "save" or "heal," a reference to the plant's medicinal uses. In time the name was corrupted to *sauge* in French and *sawge* in Old English and thus the name of sage today.

At nurseries you may find a variety of sages to purchase. There is a purple leaf form (*S. off.* 'Purpurascens'), a lovely golden-edge one (*S. off.* 'Icterina'), and one of purple, green, and white variegation (*S. off.* 'Tricolor'). You will more commonly find the silver-leaf forms such as common sage, dwarf sage (*S. off.* 'Compacta'), and one with large rounded leaves known as 'Berggarten'. These are all of interest, but most don't survive long in our hot and humid climate. Like lavender, sage is often attacked by root pathogens when stressed by heat and too much moisture in the summer and can quickly give up the ghost. Of all the ones I've mentioned above, 'Berggarten' (which means "mountain garden" in German) may be the best. Yet, one that is better, and remarkably so, is a variety known as 'Newe Ya'ar' - and I'll come back to it in a bit.

Before going further it is necessary to mention a bit about the character of this plant. It is an evergreen (or evergrey in most cases) perennial. Like most other member of the mint family it has square stems, opposite leaves, and the leaves are normally entire and have fine serration on the margins. In many cases the leaves have a velvety and wrinkly appearance. Some varieties produce racemes of lavender-blue flowers in mid to late spring. These flowers have the typical bilabiate flower shape characteristic of the family. *Salvia officinalis* can be grown from seed, but most cultivars do not produce viable seed and if they do the seed are not likely to come true. Thus the best way to propagate sage is by cuttings—hardened tip cuttings are what we prefer. At Festival Hill we often take cuttings in late fall or through the winter. It is best not to let the propagation soil dry out, but being too wet will result in rot. The cuttings should also not be kept in a highly humid environment, which is not favored by the plant and will lead to poor results. If you have a large mother plant and only want to start a few new plants you may find it easiest to use the layering method of propagation. In cultivation it prefers full sun and good drainage, and will do well in a container. It does not normally thrive under irrigation systems.

Now let's get back to 'Newe Ya'ar'. This variety was bred in Israel for the cut herb trade and is a cross between *S. officinalis* and *S. fruticosa*, another culinary sage commonly called Greek sage. Madalene and Gwen came across this jewel while preparing for a culinary demonstration at a large supermarket in Houston. They were given a package of "oregano," and Madalene noted that it was sage and not oregano and also that it was a sage different in appearance to what she knew. Thus she set it aside and took it home and rooted the cuttings. She grew it on under the moniker of "silver sage" and was impressed by the plant. In an investigation to find its proper identity, a number of friends helped to trace its



origins all the way back to Israel and its breeder Eli Putievsky. It turned out that the Israeli Agriculture Department has an herbal research station called Neve Ya'ar (pronounced Neh-veh Ya-ar) and that scientists there were working on breeding improved herbs (higher yields and with improved flavor) for cut herb production. After breeding and selecting for hardiness, high leaf production, high oil yield, and a good oil flavor for many years, clone number 4 was singled out as very promising and named after the research station and put into production. It is amazing that it made it all the way to Texas, but thankfully it did.

Over time this sage variety has proven to be the most satisfactory in our climate. At one time we had to view sage as being a short-lived perennial or even as an annual, but now we can grow it for the long-term. When happy, it can get quite large—about 3-4 feet tall and across. It will normally let you know when hard pruning is needed—most notably in the winter when it starts to put up a lot of new growth from the base. At that time I like to prune all the old growth away and allow it to put out fresh new growth. Save and dry the older leaves. Personally I find that the fresh tastes remarkably different from the dried and that both are good, just different. When using dried take a leaf and rub it between your fingers until it crumbles into small bits—you will have what is called "rubbed sage," and you don't have to chop it with a knife. Fresh is easily chopped into a chiffonade or into tiny bits to suit whatever you want to do with it.

For culinary purposes sage is valuable far beyond its use in flavoring Thanksgiving dressings. Like rosemary you can tuck some branches into the cavity of a whole chicken or turkey before cooking and the flavor will infuse into the meat from the inside. With the same fowl you can tuck leaves under the skin or blend it with butter and do so as well. In addition to poultry, sage can be used to flavor most other meats and it's notable in its use as a flavoring in sausages. It is also used to flavor soups (especially chicken soup), cheeses, sauces, and stews. A browned butter flavored with sage makes a wonderful accompaniment for many vegetables such as squash, sweet potatoes, and beans and is great when simply tossed over some warm pasta. A fashionable and tasty garnish can be made by taking clean, dry sage leaves and dipping them in flour and whipped egg white and finally frying them in hot oil.

Sage definitely deserves to be used more than it is, but I often hear a complaint that it is too strong or too bitter. Perhaps there is a reason for this. Most people purchase dried sage in a bottle. Much of that dried sage is commonly Greek sage, and it can be rather more pungent than common culinary sage. Sage also has a high level of essential oils, and if it is not stored properly (put in too much heat or light) then those oils can degrade and become rancid. Thus the sage you use may be not be good in the first place and will adversely affect whatever dish you put it in. I suggest that you try fresh sage instead, or at least some freshly dried sage. If you don't have any at home, then you are welcome to get some from the gardens at Festival Hill. We always have plenty to spare, and you normally don't need a great deal of it anyway. If I remember to do so, I'll bring some freshly dried as well as some fresh sprigs to the next Pioneer Unit meeting and you can take them home to cook with.

In addition to being a venerable culinary herb, sage has long been used for its medicinal qualities. It is currently used internally, most commonly in the form of an infusion (tea) or tincture, for treating indigestion, inflammation of the mouth and throat, excessive sweating (especially that associated with peri-menopause or tuberculosis), and as a relief of inflammation resulting from the use of a prosthesis. It is also used externally, mainly in topical lotions, to treat insect bites and a variety of infections as it is strongly antiseptic. According to Dr. Aggarwal in his book Healing Spices, sage in the diet may help to improve memory, improve one's mood, and also help to stave off age-related memory loss.

Be a wise sage: grow it, use it, and enjoy!

Henry Flowers, Pioneer Unit Garden Chairman.

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.

BRENHAM ISD SENSORY GARDEN

Please sign up for SENSORY GARDEN DAYS WITH KINDERGARTEN CLASSES

We need more help on Wednesday, November 20, so please sign up for these 2 hours with the children! To all who have signed up to help introducing the children to the wonders of nature, thank you very much! We can plant unforgettable memories in these children! Please bring your name tag.

The scheduled days are:

Wednesday, November 13, 8.30 AM to 1.10 PM, lunch break from 11 to 12 (Please bring a brown bag lunch.)

Thursday, November 14, 8.30 to 10.30 AM (If you can come, there will still be time for lunch at the Pioneer Unit meeting.)

Wednesday, November 20, 8.30 to 10.30 AM (We need more help this morning, so please sign up if you can arrange it.)

Thursday, November 21, 8.30 to 10.30 AM

Verena Aeschbacher
Garden Coordinator



Pioneer Unit Volunteer of the Month

The first named "Volunteer of the Month" is new member Cindy Nash who lives in Chappell Hill with her husband Robert. Cindy watered at Festival Hill this summer and then became attached to the Sensory Garden with her visit at our clean-up day in August. When we asked for volunteers to water twice a week to keep the new plants going, she volunteered. At the second clean-up day she brought her husband Robert who is an avid gardener and Master Gardener. While watering and weeding once a week, she saw that there was a need for a new hose, so with Henry's blessing she bought and installed a new hose and storage box, which makes the job much easier and keeps the area looking better.

Congratulations, Cindy, and congratulations to members of Pioneer Unit for getting an active new member.

Pioneer Unit Board of Directors



The Herb Society of America, Pioneer Unit
Botany Study Group Data Sheet

Botanical Name/Etymology: *Passiflora incarnata*

Passiflora is a genus of about 500+ species of flowering plants, the namesakes of the family Passifloraceae.

Family Name: Passifloraceae

Common Name: Passionflower, Apricot Vine, Maypop, Ococee, Holy Trinity Flower

Origin: Nine species of *Passiflora* are native to the USA, found from Ohio to the north, west to California, and south to the Florida Keys. Most other species are found in South America, Eastern Asia, and Southern Asia, New Guinea; four or more species in

Australia; and a single endemic species in New Zealand. *Passiflora* itself is not found in Africa, where many other members of the Passifloraceae family occur.

Growth Habit: Hardiness Zones: USDA Zones 6-9. Stems are round, trailing, climbing, and tendriled. Leaves are alternate, simple, stipuled, deeply palmately 3 to 5 lobed, 6-8 inches long, 3-5 inches wide, and serrated. Flowers are complex. They are purple, and 1.5 to 3 inches wide, 5-sepaled and 5-petaled and fringed petals. Flowers are bowl shaped and surrounded underneath by 2-3 circles of pink-purple, needle-like segments, which are wheel-shaped, flowering June through September. Can be 5 to 20 feet long. Fruit are yellow pulpy edible, ovoid 2-3 inches long with numerous seeds.

Growth Requirements: Unlike the more tropical cousins, this particular species is hardy enough to withstand the cold down to -4°F before its roots die. It is a frost-tender annual or herbaceous deciduous perennial tendriled climbing and trailing vine and wildflower. Requires direct sun for at least half the day.

Propagation: Seeds or cuttings (root or stem).

Plant Part(s) Used: The leaves attract butterflies and are used as food plants by the larva of the Gulf Fritillary. Young tendrils are eaten by wild turkeys. Deer resistance is moderate. They are cultivated for their beautiful flowers and fruit. Leaves, flowers, stems, and roots are used for medical uses.

Time of Harvest: Flowers, leaves, and roots, anytime. Fruit – fall, September - November

GRAS? (generally regarded as safe) no (but it is in Europe)

Culinary Uses: Yes: mainly in tea for its calming effects.

Medicinal Uses: *Passiflora* has been scientifically studied. In initial trials for treatment of generalized anxiety disorder, maypop extract performed as well as oxazepam but with fewer short-term side effects. Leaves and roots have a long history of use among Native Americans in North America and were adapted by the European colonists. The fresh or dried leaves of maypop are used to make a tea that is used to treat insomnia, hysteria, and epilepsy, and it is also valued for its analgesic properties. It is used in sedative tea mixtures with other calming herbs.

Other Uses: Used in containers, conservatories, and greenhouses.

Sources for Seed or Plants: Plants are often found at local nurseries.

Bibliography:

www.Wikipedia.org

Garrett, Howard 2004 *Texas Gardening the Natural Way*, Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press
Plants Database Center <http://plants.usda.gov/java/>

How the Passionflower got its name: When Christian missionaries arrived in South America in the 16th century, they found a plant which they felt was a good omen for their mission. They called it the passion flower because to them it symbolized the death of Christ. The five sepals and five petals of the flower, which are similar in appearance, represent the disciples without Peter and Judas. The double row of colored filaments, known as the corona, signifies the halo around Christ's head or the crown of thorns. The five stamens and the three spreading styles with their flattened heads symbolize the wounds and the nails respectively. The vine's tendrils resemble the whips used to scourge Christ.

Karen Springer, October 2013

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GRANDMA'S BISCUITS

Little old "Grandma" worked at the famous San Jacinto Inn, turning out hundreds of feather-light biscuits daily, standing on a 100-pound can of lard to reach the counter.

2 cups flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
4 teaspoons sugar
¼ cup shortening
¼ cup milk

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Combine flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar. Cut in shortening; add milk and stir lightly. Dough will be very soft. Drop by heaping tablespoons onto an ungreased baking sheet. Bake 10 minutes or until tops brown lightly. Yields 12.

Large ones make great shortcakes.
Provided by June Smith





Christmas Lunch

Lunch for our December meeting will be at Festival Hill. We will be taking reservations and money at the November meeting.

November 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
BSG = Botany Study Group	FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden				1	2
3	4	5 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	6	7 FH Workday 8:30 to noon Madalene Hill's Birthday	8	9
10	11	12 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	13	14 Pioneer Unit Meeting	15	16
17	18 Pelargonium Workshop	19 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	20	21 BSG	22 Newsletter deadline	23
24	25	26 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	27	28 Give Thanks 	29	30

December 2013

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



PIONEER PATHS

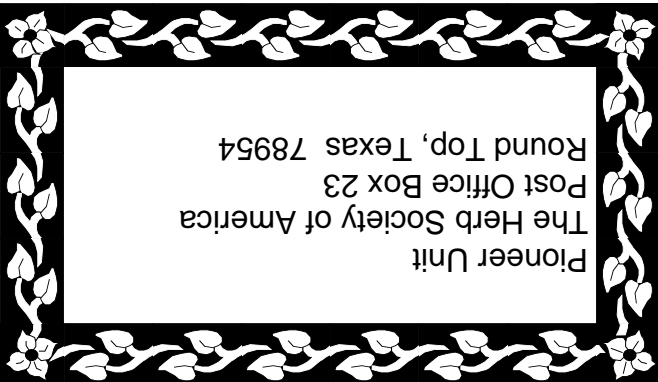
Volume 21

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—Linda L. Rowlett Vice Chair Programs—Diana Reed Vice Chair Membership—Georgia Sowers
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Pioneer Unit
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