



# PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America  
Pioneer Unit

October 2012

Volume 20, Number 2

## MONTHLY UNIT MEETING

October 16  
Board of Directors  
Meeting  
Home of  
Henry Flowers

—  
October 29  
Hunter's Full Moon

—  
October 31  
All Hallows' Eve



Date: October 11, 2012

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

Location: Industry United Methodist Church  
1914 Main Street, Industry, Texas

Directions: From Highway 290 in Brenham, take Highway 36 south, Turn right on FM 109, then right on Main Street in Industry (just before you reach FM 159). The church will be on your right.

From Bellville, take FM 159 west. After you pass FM 109, turn right on Main Street. The church will be on your left.

From Fayetteville, take FM 159 east. Turn left on Main Street. The church will be on your left.

From Round Top, take FM 1457. When you reach FM 159, turn left, then left again on Main Street in Industry. The church will be on your left.

Program: Grapes are Herbs Too!  
Speaker: Douglas Rowlett

Angel: Linda L. Rowlett  
Hosts: Kay Von Minden, Cheryl Easley, Joyce Lane, Lynn and Alton Ehler, Catherine Gardiner, and Euphanel Goad

Lunch: Sandwiches and Finger Foods with Grapes

After: Book Club and Vineyard Tour

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



I wonder if everyone is as anxious for cooler weather as I am. At I sit on the patio or — more often — work in the garden, I appreciate the temperatures in the 80's instead of the 90's. But I am looking forward to the 70's even more!

We are seeing some signs of autumn in the vineyard and the herb garden. Leaves on the vines are browning. I was delighted to find that our newest vines, where we had removed all the spring fruit, produced a small crop, and I was able to harvest some September grapes and make some jelly. Lavender is blooming. I hope to find some time to sit in the gazebo and make some lavender wands.

Of course, I am always trying to "find some time" and not having much luck. However, I am lucky to be working with all of you great people in the Pioneer Unit. Many of you have made some time to assist the Unit in so many ways. And you know we will be asking for even more of your time as we get closer to the Herbal Forum. I hope that everyone can find something that would be fun to do as well as productive for the Forum. I would love to have high tea and make teas, to prune grape vines and make wreaths, to sit and enjoy my garden as I embroider. With any luck, I will actually do some of these things and get to share some time with some of you in the process.

Until then, enjoy your autumn and be safe.

Linda L. Rowlett  
Unit Chair

## FROM THE PROGRAMS CHAIR

At the September meeting, we all enjoyed John Ferguson, founder of Nature's Way Resources. His information on composting, mulch, and recycling choices was most interesting. We all left the meeting contemplating how to enhance the "Soil Food Web" on our own properties. We so appreciate him joining us and sharing his knowledge.

You won't want to miss our meeting on October 11, 2012. We will have a wonderful, informative program presented by Doug Rowlett of Paradox House Vineyard. He and Linda have a beautiful, productive vineyard in Industry, Texas. He will educate and entertain us with the fact that "Grapes are Herbs Too"!

After lunch, we will have the opportunity to visit Paradox House Vineyard for a brief tour.

Please note that we will be meeting at a new location: Industry United Methodist Church at 1914 Main Street in Industry, Texas. Our lunch menu will be sandwiches and finger foods with grapes.

Diana Reed  
Programs Chair



MINUTES OF UNIT MEETING  
HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA  
PIONEER UNIT  
September 13, 2012

Linda Rowlett, Chair, opened the meeting.

Georgia Sowers, Membership, introduced three former members attending as guests.

Diana Reed, Programs, introduced John Ferguson, who provided a very informative talk about the soil food web and building healthy soils using the benefits of organics. He also brought example text displaying some resources for further topic information. He provided the name of his company's website ([natureswayresources.com](http://natureswayresources.com)) and responded to questions following the discussion.

Following the program, Georgia noted that 2012-2013 membership cards and yearbooks were ready and available to members.

Carolyn Thomas, Past Chair, reported that she had a couple of slots available for the September 25th Hypertufa Workshop. She also asked that members contact her if they were interested in the October 25th Propagation Workshop. Carolyn noted that there would be a tool maintenance workshop, most likely in January.

Carla Lessard, Thyme Well Spent, reported a number of resources needed for the Thyme Well Spent Shop, including anyone available to assist with making teas and labels for jams, teas, and other products.

Henry Flowers, Gardens Committee, reported that 1) he brought flower seeds from the South Texas Unit for those interested, and 2) he will be overseeing the Sensory Garden upkeep and plans to have one workday a month. The first workday is scheduled for September 22. He encouraged anyone interested to attend. Verena Aeschbacher also requested assistance for making the education project successful, noting that she had been in communication with the school. The plan to focus on one garden a semester will likely include classes on Wednesdays or Thursdays. The first day will likely be toward the end of October. The school will decide which days are appropriate according to the school schedule. Please contact Verena if you are interested in working with the children. Verena reported that she is hoping to update the list of plants in the garden.

Linda shared the thank-you note that the Pioneer Unit received from the youth group that helped with the tear-down of the plant sale after the Herbal Forum.

The meeting was then adjourned for lunch.

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen Cornwell, Secretary



## THYME WELL SPENT SHOP

The Thyme Well Spent Shop needs a member to head a group to make tea for the shop. We have the recipes: all you have to do is make the tea, put it in jars, and label.

Contact Carla Lessard  
[carlalessard@gmail.com](mailto:carlalessard@gmail.com)  
 Phone: [979-289-5509](tel:979-289-5509)

Editor's Note: Think of the fun of gathering a group for high tea — drinking tea while making teas!



## BRENHAM ISD SENSORY GARDEN

Watch the newsletter and listserv for information about work days and educational programs at the Brenham ISD Sensory Garden.

Henry Flowers will schedule work days, generally on Saturdays.

Verena Aeschbacher will schedule the educational opportunities with the school children, generally on Wednesdays or Thursdays.

## October Birthdays

October 1 — Mary Versfelt

October 5 — Ginger Heath

October 12 — Cynthia Mueller

October 13 — Carla Lessard

October 14 — Mary Ann Hillegeist

October 21 — Janice Stuff



## From the Horticulturist at The Hill

October is a wonderful month of transition - one in which we hope to get more rain and some cooler weather. It is also a great time to put a lot of plants into your gardens. October is always a great month to plant a lot of winter vegetables - leafy greens such as kale, chard, spinach, mustard, collards, lettuce, and cabbage. It is also a great time to get other vegetables such as carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, kohlrabi, beets, and radishes planted.

In the herb department you can also get a lot planted - parsley, cilantro, chervil, dill, fennel, lovage - all those wonderful carrot family herbs are prime candidates to either direct seed or to plant seedlings. Perennial herbs such as sage, thyme, savory, and rosemary are also good choices for planting now. If yours didn't fare well through the summer, consider replanting soon and don't wait until spring.

There are also many wonderful ornamentals that can be planted now if your garden is looking a bit drab or if you just want to have something cheerful through the winter. Dianthus, calendulas, snapdragons, borage, and alyssum will provide some color through the winter if it doesn't get too cold and a lot of color come early spring. Ornamental kale and cabbages will look great all through the winter and are great for filling in containers or next to a patch of curly parsley; just keep an eye out for caterpillars if there are warm spells and treat with Bt if you find any. Pansies and violas make for some of the best winter and spring color, but I suggest that you wait until November or December to get them in the ground as we can still have some warm spells in the early fall and they can pout or just die from the sense that you've put them in pansy hell and they don't want to suffer any more. (Believe me, I've lost many a pansy from getting antsy and putting them in too soon!) If you are putting pansies or violas in pots, I'd suggest that you start with a clean pot and new potting soil. These little guys are troopers when it is too cold out for you and me, but warm spells and a few root pathogens can cause them to wilt and rot before your eyes. At Festival Hill we use Color Star fertilizer on our pansies and other potted flowers and have had great success. It is produced in Bellville and can be found at many local nurseries - but not likely at the big box stores.

At present I'm planning not to move the potted plants into the greenhouse until early November. We have a lot of weddings at Festival Hill this month, and we did well to wait until that same time period last year, so we'll do so again. I'll either put more information in the November newsletter and/or send out information via the listserve when we have a better idea of the date.

Since the Botany Study Group has started to help maintain the Pharmacy Garden at Festival Hill, it is steadily looking better and better. I've written a profile of sesame for this newsletter as we have a nice planting of it in the Pharmacy Garden at present. I didn't have room in the Africa bed, so we sowed seeds in the Asia bed. It bloomed through most of the summer and is now covered with seed pods, which we are anxiously waiting to mature so that we can collect the seeds. If you stop by to look at it, you may want to check out the turmeric in the India bed, which is blooming and quite healthy. The Mexican oregano (in the Mexico bed, of course) has also done very well this summer, and I hope to harvest its leaves for drying and possibly selling at the Herbal Forum.

A few wonderful additions to our potted plant collection are specimens of cinnamon (the true cinnamon from India), frankincense, and myrrh. I've especially been wanting frankincense and myrrh plants and finally found a source. They weren't cheap, but I think that they will be great additions because they are so historic. Perhaps I'll bring them to the December meeting when we will be at Festival Hill.

Enjoy the autumn and try something new in your garden this season (kohlrabi or chervil are great suggestions if you've not tried them yet).

Henry Flowers  
Horticulturist at The Hill



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

**Botanical Name/Etymology***Sesamum indicum* (syn. *S. orientale*)**Family Name**

Pedaliaceae

**Common Name(s)** — sesame, benne (African), gingili, sements (ancient Egyptian), til, ajonjolli, tahini (ground paste), halvah. The botanical and common names of *Sesamum* and sesame are believed to be derived from the Arabic work for the plant and seeds: simsim.

**Origin** – Native to Africa, but has been grown in India and the Near East for thousands of years and thus the specific epithet which would lead us to believe it is native to India.

**History** – Sesame seed is considered to be the oldest oil seed crop cultivated by mankind (though some argue that linseed was produced earlier). It is mentioned as sements in the Egyptian Ebers papyri (a 65-foot-long scroll listing ancient herbs and spices discovered by the famous German Egyptologist, Ebers – dating to c. 1500 BC) and was grown in both Egypt and Babylonia between 2200 and 538 BC. An excavated site near Yerevan, Armenia, produced jars of sesame seeds that are from c. 900-600 BC, as well as elaborate equipment for the extraction of oil. It is one of the plants that was found in the tomb of the pharaoh Tutankhamen (1370-1352 BC).

**Growth Habit** – Upright annual from 2-6 feet in height. It loves heat and is drought tolerant. **Leaves:** broadly lanceolate, opposite, and with an entire margin. They are around 2 inches wide and up to 5 inches long, but noticeably smaller as they progress up the plant to the flowering tips. The foliage has a notable pungent aroma. **Flowers:** white, about 1 inch long, and tubular – perfectly sized to fit bees, which are their pollinator. The flowers may also be yellow, purple, or blue depending upon variety.

**Fruit:** the seed pod is a capsule which has four grooves and contains many seeds.

**Growth (Cultural) Requirements** — Well-drained, sandy soil in full sun with warm temperatures. Seed should be sown when the soil temperature is above 65°F. Requires approximately 100 days to mature.

**Propagation** – directly sown seed.

**Folklore** – In Scheherazade's telling of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves in One Thousand and One Arabian Nights, the term "open sesame" is used to open up the sealed cave where a group of thieves resides. It is believed that this term is a reference to the fact that a dry sesame seed pod will burst open at the slightest touch.

**Chemistry** – Seeds are rich in protein, unsaturated oil, vitamins B<sub>3</sub>, E, folic acid, and minerals, especially calcium (which is notably in a form that is easily absorbed by the body). The seeds are approximately 55% oil, comprising mainly oleic and linoleic acids, and 26% protein. (Chevalier)

**Plant Part(s) Used** — Seeds (mainly), leaves and roots (medicinal).

**Time of Harvest** – Seeds are collected when ripe (seed pods turn brown) and stored whole, pressed for oil, or ground into paste (tahini).

**Culinary Uses** – The seeds are most commonly toasted before use to enhance flavor. They are commonly used whole in breads, savory dishes, cakes, cookies, and a variety of confections – even molded with a sugary bonding to make a variety of shapes. The seeds are also commonly ground to make a paste called tahini, which is a base flavoring for hummus. Tahini is also used in combination with whole sesame or other nuts and honey to make a sweetmeat known as halvah. The seed oil is used for cooking and adding flavor to dishes such as stir-fries. It is very popular in Japan and is noted for its long shelf life: it is slow to become rancid. This is likely due to its high content of two antioxidants – sesamol and sesamium. (Simpson and Ogorzaly) The black sesame seeds have a more potent taste and are commonly utilized in the cuisines of Southeast Asia.

**Other Uses** – The oil is used in both soaps and emollients. It was also historically used as a lamp oil, especially in Egypt and the Near East.



## MEMBER INFORMATION

At our September meeting, three of our former members attended, including Connie Gwyn, guest of Sue Edmundson, who wasn't able to join us, and hosted by member Cathy Comiskey; Alice Kyle with affiliate member Pamela Murski; and Norman Hubbard with his member wife Wanda. Affiliate members Peggy Cook and Marijane Lipscomb were with us as well, and we welcome all of you.

Our new yearbooks are in, and they really look nice. We also have our new membership cards from HSA. For those of you who missed our meeting in September, your membership cards are now in your yearbook and will be available next month. As always, if you have questions about hours, renewals, changes, corrections etc., you may email me at [gzsowers@att.net](mailto:gzsowers@att.net) or call [979-836-8228](tel:979-836-8228). Speaking of changes, will you all please correct your new yearbooks for affiliate member Ann Schrock's email address, which is [aschrock1@att.net](mailto:aschrock1@att.net). Thank you all and enjoy a beautiful fall season.

Georgia Sowers, Membership Chair



## NATIONAL NEWS

On Friday, September 14, 2012, the HSA website and headquarters e-mail programs were moved to a new internet provider. This move was undertaken in an effort to provide our members with a better website and to be more cost effective.

Access to the Members Only section of the HSA website and headquarters e-mails was disrupted from Friday, September 14 at midnight, until Monday, September 17 at 1 p.m. (eastern time). If you sent an e-mail to headquarters staff during this time, the e-mail may not have reached HSA, so please resend.

Some members have continued to have issues with the login for the Members Only section of the HSA website from Monday, September 17 through Thursday, September 20, 2012.

As of 11 a.m. (eastern time) September 20, 2012, all website and e-mail issues have been resolved.



## **AMERICAN GROWN: The Story of the White House Kitchen Garden and Gardening across America by Michelle Obama**

The first American gardening book was written in the 1790s in Virginia. Among the latest is the lavishly illustrated coffee table-size book American Grown by the country's First Lady, Michelle Obama. "I first got the idea to plant a vegetable garden at the White House in my kitchen in Chicago," she writes, after a pointed suggestion from her pediatrician to improve the diet of her two daughters, Sasha and Malia.

It didn't take long for her to make it happen. In April 2009, Mrs. Obama broke ground with the help of 25 fifth-graders from inner-city Bancroft Elementary School in Washington, the National Park Service, and White House chefs. But everything did not go smoothly. The pumpkins didn't grow. Beautiful melons were tasteless. The birds got all the blueberries. The president was leery about having a beehive near his basketball court.

Mrs. Obama invites us to learn gardening right along with her. "I was like any other novice gardener with a pot out on the windowsill or a small plot by the back door," she writes, recounting how she regularly inspects the garden's progress in the company of White House dog Bo. She also opens the door to White House garden history. There is a Thomas Jefferson bed that grows heirloom peas descended from the former president's Monticello residence. There are photos of the first White House kitchen garden – a modest Victory Garden planted under the supervision of Eleanor Roosevelt. And there is the Children's Garden created under Lady Bird Johnson at a secluded place toward the lower part of the South Lawn. Just below that sits the new Kitchen Garden.

The garden, which has become Michelle Obama's focus since her husband took office, led to the first lady's "Let's Move" initiative targeting childhood obesity. One in three of our kids are overweight or obese, she has said. And in pre-enlistment physicals, roughly half of military recruits, both male and female, have weak bone structure and rotten teeth.

Among potential solutions, American Grown makes a strong statement for community gardens, particularly in the nation's low income food deserts, and school gardens to encourage children to become active outdoors and to grow and eat fresh vegetables. Enticing recipes by White House chefs using fresh garden produce point the way to a healthier way of eating.

"It is definitely a passion – getting our kids in this country eating healthy, helping families make good choices about how they eat and stay active – and this book is a way to talk about our journey, but also talk about the challenges we face as a nation around health," Mrs. Obama said in a TV interview.

All proceeds from the book go to the National Park Service.

Review by June Smith



**5th Annual Herb Celebration Day  
Hill Country Unit of HSA**

**Friday, October 19, 10:30 am - 1 pm**

Dr. William Welch, speaker: "Heirloom Plants in the Landscape"

Herbal lunch and speaker - \$18

Held at the Wimberley Presbyterian Church Wimberley, Texas

Also herbal wreaths, swags, herbal vinegars, soup wreaths, garden art, and botanical prints for sale. Silent auction.

RSVP Linda McDowell [lindamcdwll@yahoo.com](mailto:lindamcdwll@yahoo.com) (512.847.7987)

**South Texas Unit  
of  
The Herb Society of America**

*Our 40<sup>th</sup> Annual* **HERB FAIR**

**Friday, October 19, 2012**

*Open only to patrons who have made \$20 or more in pre-purchases*

**4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.**

**Saturday, October 20, 2012**

Open to the general public

**7:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

Hermann Park Garden Center

(on Hermann Park Drive across from Miller Outdoor Theater)

***Sumptuous Herb Harvest Supper***—October 4, 2012, Thursday, 5:30 p.m.  
***Herb Harvest Fall Festival***—October 5 and 6, 2012

Ozark Folk Center State Park  
1032 Park Ave  
Mountain View, Arkansas 72560


Phone 870-269-3851 or Fax 870-269-2909

Reservations for Cabins at Dry Creek: 1-800-264-3655


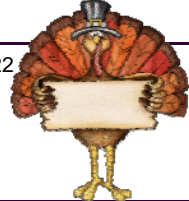
Read all about us! Sign up for News from the Folks at [www.ozarkfolkcenter.com](http://www.ozarkfolkcenter.com)

# October 2012



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	3	4 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	5 Herb Harvest Fall Festival	6 Herb Harvest Fall Festival
7	8	9 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	10	11 Pioneer Unit Meeting	12	13
14	15	16 Board Meeting 9:00 a.m.	17	18 BSG	19 Hill Country Unit Annual Herb Day Celebration	20 South Texas Herb Fair
21	22	23 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	24	25 FH Workday 8:30 to noon  <b>Propagation 10:00</b>	26	27
28	29	30 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	31 		BSG = Botany Study Group	FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden

# November 2012

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



## 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

