



PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America
Pioneer Unit

January 2015

Volume 22 Number 5

January 1
New Year's Day

January 4
Wolf Full Moon



January 5
Twelfth Night

January 22
Board Meeting
Menke House Parlor
Festival Hill
(9:00 a.m.)

MONTHLY UNIT MEETING

Date: January 8, 2015

Time: 9:30 a.m. Meet and Greet
10:00 a.m. Program followed by Meeting

Location: Brenham Presbyterian Church
900 South Jackson Street, Brenham, Texas

Directions: From Highway 290 in Brenham, take Business 36 north, turn west on College Avenue, and then south on Jackson Street.

Program: Principles of Landscape Design

Speaker: Dr. Bill Welch

Angel: Jane Press

Hosts: Louise Rice, Cheryl Easley, Ronda Herzog, Joyce Lane,
Karen Springer, and Pam Traylor

Lunch: Soups, Salads, and Desserts



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome all to 2015! This will undoubtedly be a great year. The Herbal Forum coming up in March will be the 20th anniversary of that event. It is hard to believe that we've been doing the event that long, but we have. For that event we are planning a retrospective table to display the event over the years. If you have any pictures of the past events that you might like to lend (we can copy them and return them), I would appreciate it. We especially need pictures from you long-time members who were around in the early days of the Herbal Forum and the Pioneer Unit. Anything you can offer from your archives will be greatly appreciated, and we will dig into the Pioneer Unit and Festival Hill's archives as well.

Sara Holland and I just recently wrapped up our initial work on the HSA's Essential Guide to Savory—Herb of the Year 2015. We thought it might be 30 pages long when we started, but it ended up at 58! Once it is edited and revised by the Herb Society's editorial staff, it will be digitally available for download or one may be able to get a printed copy from HSA headquarters. It has been a lot of work and we are glad to have it mostly over.

I hope the Herbal Forum brochure will be available soon as well. I'm under pressure to get it out sooner this year, and it just needs a bit of tweaking and that will happen. Our main presenters will be Susan Belsinger and Tina Marie Wilcox—enthusiastic and very knowledgeable herbies.

I wish you the best in this new year—may it be a bright and blessed one.

Henry Flowers, Pioneer Unit Chair



FROM THE PROGRAMS CHAIR

We're off to an exciting 2015 start for meeting programs. Our January meeting speaker, Dr. Bill Welch, is not only a top rated Texas A&M horticulturist, with both an MS and a doctorate in that area, but has, as a basis for his career, undergraduate studies as a landscape architect. When I approached him on doing the program "Principles of Landscape Design," his immediate reaction was that I was asking him to explain a four-year college program in one hour. I know he's going to be able to do it and as in the previous programs I've seen him do, this one will have lots of useful, very practical information.

For those of you who don't know Dr. Welch, he has written a number of very useful books. He'll be bringing a number of them with him for sale. I'd like to comment on three of them. His Perennial Garden Color book is one of my favorites. We have (or had) one copy of the book but two cover jackets. I got the book before our move from the Dallas area to Round Top. (I should mention that when I first get a book I'll remove the cover jacket so I won't mess it up while I'm constantly reading and rereading the book from cover to cover.) This occurred just before the movers came to pack us and place our belongings in storage. Our place in the Dallas area had sold and the house in Round Top wasn't yet finished. The copy of the book got packed in one box while the jacket got packed in another. Off to storage in the moving company's warehouse all the boxes went. As is typical with household storage in a moving company's warehouse, boxes get packed into large containers which, in turn, are placed in different locations throughout the warehouse wherever they have the space for each container. Just our luck, lightning caused the warehouse roof to catch on fire. The roof fell in and the contents of the warehouse began to burn. When the fire was finally put out, everything in that area of the warehouse was either burned or completely water soaked and ruined. They later delivered the "remains," which we had to sift through. Fortunately a good number of our boxes were in parts of the warehouse where there was lesser damage. Though it was a dismal affair, I told Kay to look at it from the standpoint that if one is to have a fire, it's best that it be outside the house. When we unpacked, we found the jacket to Perennial Garden Color, but the book was lost. It was one of our first replacements, resulting in our having two jackets and one book. Of Dr. Welch's other books Antique Roses for the South is an excellent resource to have. Photos of floral arrangements by our own Henry Flowers grace the book. Another favorite is one Dr. Welch co-authored with Gregg Grant of Stephen F. Austin's horticulture department. It's entitled Heirloom Gardening in the South. There's lots and lots of good information in that book. He has other resource books and writings, many of which we also have. When he's finished with his program, I'm sure you'll be interested in looking them over.

Our meeting will be at the Brenham Presbyterian Church. If you're not familiar with it, it's located in the Blinn College area of Brenham. As mentioned on the first page of the newsletter, the address is 900 E. Jackson Street.

Hope y'all have a blessed and joyous New Year. See you at the meeting,

Tony Scanapico, Programs Chair



MINUTES OF UNIT MEETING
HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
PIONEER UNIT
DECEMBER 11, 2014

Henry Flowers, Chair, welcomed members to the Christmas meeting.

Tony Scanapico, Vice Chair, reminded members that lunch will be in the Menke House. Tony then introduced Dr. Matt Turner, the multi-talented author of Remarkable Plants of Texas. Dr. Turner presented a fast-moving and fascinating program which educated us on uncommon uses for many of our common native plants.

Tony thanked the speaker and said he would be signing copies of his book in the chapel after the meeting. Tony also thanked the December meeting hosts.

Henry asked Georgia Sowers, Membership Chair, to introduce the guests, who were Carolyn McNellie, Mary Sockwell, Cordell Levien, Paul Waller, Pat Hoffmaster, and Affiliate Members Susan Wood, Peggy Cook, and Mary Doebbeling.

Henry then welcomed new member Frances Pittman to the Pioneer Unit.

Carolyn Thomas announced that a workshop on mustards will be presented by Ann Allen and Sara Holland on January 29 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in Kaffe Kaffeine at Festival Hill. There is room for six and a waiting list will be kept. Please contact Carolyn to sign up. Carolyn also encouraged members to buy Dr. Turner's book which she said would be a valuable addition to any library.

Henry reminded those who had not yet done so to sign up for door prizes. He said that Mary Reeves has been collecting pine cones from the grounds at Festival Hill and encouraged members to do the same to use for decorations.

Door prizes were then given out, including a savory plant which will be Herb of the Year 2015.

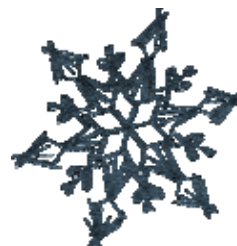
Georgetta Welch announced that volunteers are needed to make jellies and the workshops will be one day in January and one in February. Please contact Georgetta or Kay Scanapico to sign up.

Linda Hartson said she needs volunteers to help paint glasses and napkin rings for Forum.

The meeting was then adjourned for lunch.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Cox, Secretary



MEMBER INFORMATION

Our December meeting was a great success, attended by numerous active members; affiliate members Peggy Cook, Mary Doebbeling, and Susan Wood; prospective member Pat Garrett; visitors Carolyn McNellie and Mary Sockwell who attended with their friend Euphanel Goad. Paul Waller attended with our speaker Dr Matt Turner, active member Catherine Gardiner was joined by her daughter Pat Hoffmaster, and our long-time friend Cordell Levien was with us as Carla Lessard's guest. Welcome to all of our visitors and guests! Chair Henry Flowers welcomed and introduced our newest active member, Frances Pittman, who was brought to our Unit by active member Ginger Heath.

We're now beginning the second half of our year for membership, and several opportunities such as Forum Prep workshops and garden days will be available to accumulate volunteer hours. Thank you for keeping Membership advised of your time, and if any questions, as always, please contact me at gzsowers@att.net or [979-836-8228](tel:979-836-8228). Other of our members will be happy to help too. Thank you all and enjoy a happy 2015!

Herbally,
Georgia Sowers
Membership Chair

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- January 1 — Carolyn Thomas
- January 7 — Mary Doebbeling
- January 18 — Verena Aeschbacher
- January 19 — Oscar Hillegeist
- January 26 — Georgia Sowers
- January 27 — Cindy Nash
- January 28 — Euphanel Goad



*****New Active Member*****

Frances Pittman became our newest active member in December 2014, introduced to us by active member Ginger Heath. She is from New Orleans, and with her husband John moved to their ranch in Round Top 14 years ago. They are the happy parents of two married daughters and five grandchildren. Frances is active in the Round Top Library and enjoys horseback riding in competitive trail riding, gardening with vegetables, herbs, and flowers and a small fruit orchard, and still enjoys dancing on a more refined basis. She is most enjoyable to visit with and shares many common interests with us, so let's get to know her and make her feel right at home. Frances's address is 6345 Wynne Lane, Round Top TX 78954-5223, phone numbers 979-249-3922 and cell 979-249-6530, and her email is oldoaksranch@cvctx.com. Her contact info will be in new yearbook in 2015-2016. Welcome Aboard Frances!

*****Volunteer of the Month*****

Congratulations to Kay Von Minden as our Volunteer of the Month for January 2015! Kay is one of our earliest and very dedicated members. She works diligently behind the scenes, so to speak, contributing numerous hours to sewing and turning out beautiful projects in preparation for Forum from year to year. Kay is one of the backbones of the Thyme Well Spent Shoppe and is always helpful with advice when needed. She also is a great help to the other members who participate in jelly and herbal concocting workshops. We appreciate you, Kay, thank you!



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

Name: Carolyn Thomas Date: December 18, 2014

Botanical Name/Etymology: *Diospyros virginiana* - roughly translates to "food of the gods from Virginia"

Family Name: Ebenaceae – Ebony family

Common Name(s): Persimmon, eastern persimmon, possumwood, American ebony and Florida persimmon. The name Persimmon comes from the Lenape Indians who referred to it as *pasimenan*.

Origin: Common persimmon range from Connecticut south to Florida and west to approximately 97 degrees longitude through Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas. It does not grow in the main range of the Appalachian Mountains nor Allegheny Plateau. Best development in rich bottom lands of the Mississippi River and tributaries and costal river valleys.

Growth Habit: Persimmon trees grow from 15 to 50 feet tall with crooked, drooping branches forming a round-topped crown. It is fast growing as seedling but moderately slow as a mature specimen. The unique bark and distinctive leaves are helpful as identification when not in fruit. The bark divides into thick, gray-black blocky squares about 1½ inches across in a mosaic pattern. The elliptical leaves are smooth-edged, with pointed tips and bases which grow alternate up to 3 inches broad and 6 inches long. The dark green glossy upper surface contrasts with the lighter underside. Inconspicuous flowers potentially bloom from March through May. Flowers are useful in the production of honey. The 2-inch diameter reddish-orange fruit remains on the tree after leaf fall. The pulp is very astringent when not ripe, but after a frost in the fall, when the fruit turns yellow orange, the flesh is pleasing in taste when ripe in September to November. Berries usually contain 1 to 8 flat, brown seeds but sometimes seedless. The bark borer (*Agrilus fuscipennis*) infests living persimmon and the persimmon borer (*Sannina uroceriformis*) tunnels in the stems and taproots of young trees.

Propagation: Seeds (I was told by a Washington County native that the opossums had to swallow the seed and pass them to germinate – not so sure about that), and cutting or grafting. Usually spread by birds and animals.

Folklore and History: "If it be not ripe it will draw a mans mouth awrie with much torment; but when it is ripe, it is as delicious as an Apricock," wrote Captain Johan Smith about the orange fruit the settlers in Jamestown discovered. On the far side of starvation, the resourceful colonists learned (with the advice of their native host) how to find the pucker fruit to help them through the winter months when the larder was otherwise bare.

Time of Harvest: Fruit harvested late in fall and best taste after freeze.

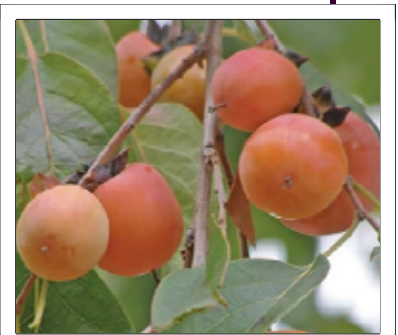
Culinary Uses: The fruit was appreciated by early settlers and explorers, being mentioned in writings of De Soto in 1539, Jan de Laet in 1558, and John Smith of the Jamestown Colony. The fruits have been used in jam, nut bread, wine, puddings and vinegar. Confederate soldiers boiled persimmon seeds for coffee. The dried leaves make an excellent tea with high percentage of vitamin C.

Medicinal Uses: The inner bark and unripe fruit are sometimes used in treatment of fevers, diarrhea, and hemorrhage. Native Americans applied unripe persimmons in poultices to treat burns and boiled the highly astringent cambial inner bark to make a decoction they used as a gargle for sore throat and as a mouth rinse for thrush, which is a yeast infection. The same decoction was used externally as a wash for warts and skin cancer. Traditional American herbalists boiled unripe fruit to make astringent decoctions to treat gastrointestinal bleeding.

Other Uses: The wood is heavy, hard, strong, and very close grained. Because of its hardness, smoothness, and even texture, it is particularly desirable for turnery, plane stocks, shoe lasts, shuttles, and golf club heads. Indelible ink is made from fruit. Persimmon is valued as an ornamental because of its hardness, adaptability to a wide range of soils and climates, its lustrous leaves, its abundant crop of fruits, and its immunity from disease and insects. It has been introduced into Europe. The tree is suitable for erosion control on deeper soils because of its deep root system, but this same characteristic makes it difficult to plant.

Miscellaneous Information: Texas is the only state where the two species of *Diospyros* are native. The smaller, black-fruited Texas persimmon inhabits the southern half of the state and northern Mexico, and the larger, orange-fruited common persimmon grows in the eastern half. For hundreds of years the common persimmon was prized for the fruit, even into the 1940's, but now few are aware of the fruit or have any idea of what to do with it. It has become a quaint relic of our grandparents' pantry.

Bibliography: Matt W. Turner, Remarkable Plants of Texas, 2009 UT Press; USDA Forrest Service; Wildmanstevebrill (website); Charles P. Allen, Trees, Shrubs and Woody Vines of Louisiana.



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.

Herb of January – Savory

Welcome 2015! It seems like just a few weeks ago that I wrote that about 2014. My, how time flies. It just goes to prove that we should savor the here and now before it is gone. And speaking of savoring things—savory is the herb for this month and the year as well. Doubtless you will learn more about savory as the year progresses, but I'll here give you just a glimpse at this ancient and underutilized herb.

Savory, unlike rosemary or dill, does not belong to one genus. It is a name that over many centuries has been applied to a wide variety of herbs. Many of those herbs have at one time been a member of the genus *Satureja* and many still are, but many now belong to other genera such as *Calamintha*, *Clinopodium*, and *Micromeria*. That is all a bit confusing, and you can learn more about it once HSA's Essential Guide to Savory is released (hopefully soon), so here I will concentrate on what are undoubtedly the two most important culinary herbs in the group—summer and winter savory.

The botanical name of summer savory is *Satureja hortensis* and that of winter savory is *Satureja montana*. The name *Satureja* is believed to have been applied to this plant by Pliny in the first century CE. Controversy revolves around the origin of the name. Some say that it was a term relating the plant to the mythical satyrs (half-man/half-goat) who ate the plant to stimulate their extraordinary sexual appetites and some say that it is a derivative of the ancient Hebrew name za'atar, which has been applied to all oregano-scented plants of the eastern Mediterranean. We may never know the truth, so you choose which story you like. The term *hortensis* means "of the garden" or simply that the plant is cultivated, and *montana* means "of the mountains."

The main difference between summer and winter savories is that summer savory is an annual and winter savory is an evergreen perennial. Another difference is that summer savory is a bit milder in aroma and flavor than winter savory and is generally the more preferred for culinary purposes.

To grow summer savory, one needs to sow seeds in the spring once the ground is warm. Summer savory readily germinates and will grow to a height of about a foot. Before it starts to flower, use its leaves fresh or dry them for later use—it is an herb that dries quite well. Both of these savories contain high levels of carvacrol and thymol, the essential oils associated with oregano and thyme respectively, and thus they can be used in culinary dishes as substitutes for or in addition to those herbs. One of summer savory's traditional uses in Europe, especially in Germany, is to enhance any dish that contains legumes—beans, lentils and such. It enhances their flavor and helps to promote their digestion and possibly allay any gassiness that may result from their incomplete digestion. Because of this long-standing use, summer savory is known as *bohnenkraut* (bean herb) in Germany. In our hot and humid climate, summer savory can be fickle and hard to grow. It usually won't survive our summers, so in my opinion it is best to sow it in spring, harvest it and use it fast or dry it for later use.

Winter savory is much easier to grow in our climate and remains evergreen year-round. It is a low, mounding plant that is usually less than a foot tall and wide and has whorls of small white flowers in the late spring or early summer. Because it is evergreen, it can be harvested for use at

any time and there is little need to dry it. Its younger leaves will be more tender and less pungent, while the older ones will be quite a bit stronger in flavor. Give it a nice situation in full sun with good drainage and occasional watering when it is dry, and it should do fine for you. It can also be grown well in a container. Trim it back on occasion to stimulate new growth.

I hope that you will grow and use savory in this upcoming year and learn more about its interesting history. In the Essential Guide to Savory you will find quite a few recipes to try, so take a look at it once it is released. The editors (Sara Holland and myself) hope that you will find it both useful and informative.

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.

Best wishes and please savor the New Year!
Henry Flowers, Pioneer Unit Garden Chair



THIS 'N THAT

HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA: The Winter Newsletter from HSA is currently available on the website. Click on What's New on the banner menu, and then you will have to enter your password to gain access to the newsletter and other Members Only materials.

Under What's New, you can also find fascinating Science Articles with interesting information about a number of herbs, the lives of bees, and California grapes, to name a few.

Don't forget that EdCon will be held in Williamsburg, Virginia, May 7 through 9, 2015. Registration will be available in February, including group rates for the conference hotel.

Wreath Making Workshop

A wreath making workshop will be scheduled for late January or early February, depending on when we rough-prune our vines. If the weather is amenable, we could sit outside and fashion wreaths for Thyme Well Spent. There will be plenty of material for everyone to make a wreath to keep and one for the Pioneer Unit. Ideally we would then later have a workshop for decorating the wreaths.



Let me know if you are interested in either wreath-making or wreath decorating — or both!

Linda L. Rowlett

NOTE TO COOKS: Apparently the hostesses sometimes have difficulty determining which pans and dishes belong to which cook. If you take food to the meeting that will need heating or washing, please make sure your name is on the dish or serving spoon.



January 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
BSG = Botany Study Group	FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden			1 	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 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	23	24
25 	26	27 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	28	29 FH Workday 8:30 to noon Mustard Workshop 10:00 to noon	30	31

February 2015

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	21
22	23	24 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	25	26 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	27 BSG = Botany Study Group	28 FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden



PIONEER PATHS

Volume 22

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.

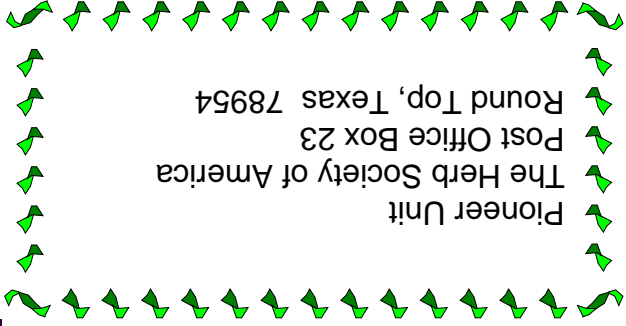
The Mission Statement of The Herb Society of America: "To promote the knowledge, use, and delight of herbs through educational programs, research, and sharing the experience of its members with the community."

Chair—Henry Flowers

Vice Chair Programs—Tony Scanapico
Secretary—Pat Cox

Vice Chair Membership—Georgia Sowers

Treasurer—Janie Plummer



Pioneer Unit
The Herb Society of America
Post Office Box 23
Round Top, Texas 78954