



PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America
Pioneer Unit

March 2015

Volume 22, Number 7

MONTHLY UNIT MEETING

Date: March 12, 2015

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

Location: Festival Hill Service Building, Round Top
Directions: Exit Highway 290 at Texas 237 (Round Top exit).
Travel south on 237. Turn right on Jaster Road and
left into the parking lot for the Service Building.

Program: Thyme Well Spent Workshop
Festival Hill Garden Work
[You will have a choice of labeling, pricing, and finishing
items for sale in the Thyme Well Spent Shop; or you
can bring your gloves and garden tools to work in the
gardens with Henry getting it ready for visitors. We will
break for lunch at 12 noon.]

Coordinator: Carla Lessard

Hosts: Louise Rice, Cathy Comiskey, Catherine Gardiner, and
Mary Ann and Oscar Hillegeist

Lunch: Lunch is being provided by Festival Hill if you signed up
in advance!

**Please bring cook books, books, and magazines that are garden
and garden design related or herb-related [no Southern Living
or Good Housekeeping] to the March meeting for the
scholarship table. All the money supports our national intern.**

March 5
Sap Full Moon

—
March 8
Daylight Savings
Time Begins



—
March 20
Vernal Equinox

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The Herbal Forum is soon to be upon us, and it is a great time for our wonderful group to shine. Many of us have spent much time in preparing items for sale in the Thyme Well Spent Shop, at the Gazebo, and even with propagating and growing a few additional plants for the plant sale. I think we are in great shape for this year, but as always we will need as many of you to help as possible.

- As part of the 20th Anniversary of the Herbal Forum we will be putting together a display of images, brochures, and interesting items from the past years. If you have any pictures or other items that you think would make great additions, then please let me know. We especially need items from the earliest years, so if you've been involved with the Herbal Forum from the earliest of days and have some items you are willing to let us use, I would greatly appreciate them.
- Another area with which I need a bit of help is the entry display. My idea this year is to have a "collage" of items featuring all of the past herbs of the year—20 in all plus this year's as well. I would like to incorporate past ideas from Herbal Forums into this as well. An example—Mary Reeves has offered to remake her anella (angel) in order to feature rosemary, so that herb will be taken care of. I've also remade a fairy garden that will feature oregano. A nice potted chair will feature another herb. If you have any ideas that would feature an herb and want to help in this regard, just let me know. If we have multiple hands at work along with multiple creative minds, it will be sure to be more fun and interesting. I can send you a list of possible herbs if you need it.

I hope by now that all of our members are signed up to help with the Herbal Forum in some regard. If you aren't, then please contact our Herbal Forum Coordinator, Carolyn Thomas, or one of the Herbal Forum committee chairs and do so as soon as possible.

Remember that we need cardboard flats for the plant sale! Either store them at home and bring them (preferably in trash bags) at the beginning of the event or during set up or bring them to me at Festival Hill and I'll store them until the event. We also need as many wagons for the plant sale as possible, so if you have one we can use please bring it and make sure that your name is on it somewhere.

On the Tuesday before the Herbal Forum (March 17) we will be putting the Herbal Forum packets together starting at 1:00 p.m. in Room 2 of the School Building, just down from the gift shop which is in room 9. Help is always needed with this project and is greatly appreciated.

Many thanks to all of you who came to help with the Sensory Garden work day last month. That garden is looking great and we managed to get the soil in two of the raised beds back to a higher level. While we were there, the Narcissus bulbs were in full bloom along with the winter honeysuckle and it won't be long until the roses are blooming too—the Green Rose was also starting to bud out. We will likely need another spring work session there, but will wait until after the Herbal Forum is over.

The Festival Hill gardens are also looking great and most have been cleaned up by now. At the March meeting we can use additional help to get the gardens ready for the following week if you would like to help garden that day. We'll need help with weeding, some trimming, and such. Many thanks in advance for any help you can give with the gardens.

Best wishes for another great Herbal Forum!

Henry Flowers, Unit Chair and Gardens Chair

MINUTES OF UNIT MEETING
HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
PIONEER UNIT (PU)
FEBRUARY 12, 2015

Henry Flowers, Chair, welcomed members to the meeting.

Tony Scanapico, Vice Chair Programs, introduced Clint Pustejovsky who presented a program on Texas Snakes -- Safety and ID. Clint exposed the truth behind many snake myths and gave us useful hints on how to identify venomous versus non-venomous snakes. There were many questions, and Tony said that Clint would be available to answer more at lunch.

Georgia Sowers, Membership Chair, welcomed visitors Pat Garrett, Virginia Smith, Ursula Brown, and Mary Reeves' two grandsons visiting from out of state.

Betty Prior, Hospitality, thanked speaker angel Wanda Hubbard and today's hostesses. Betty reminded members to put names on their lunch containers or on the aluminum foil for identification. She also announced that a sign-in sheet for the April field trip was available today. Members were also asked to sign up for work at the next meeting, March 12, which is Forum prep. For two hours of work, lunch will be provided at the Menke House.

Henry announced that Linda Rowlett will be holding a workshop on February 23rd at 1:00 p.m. to make grapevine wreaths.

Henry has three types of Forum flyers for people to distribute, and they are also available on the website.

Ginger Heath, Special Events, encouraged members to sign up for the Houston Museum District Field Trip on April 29th which is now open to members and affiliate members. The bus will hold 50 people, and 26 have already signed up. The trip will be opened up to guests at the March meeting.

June Smith announced that book club membership is dwindling and a new direction is needed for the club to continue. She asked members to think about whether they are interested and after the next meeting will see if there is enough interest to make the club viable. The club will need a new chairman, but June will continue to do book reviews for the newsletter.

The meeting was then adjourned for lunch.

Respectfully submitted,
Pat Cox, Secretary

2015 HERBAL FORUM

Pioneer Unit Plant Sale, Thyme Well Spent Shop, TWSS in the Garden, and Assistance with Herbal Forum

As this is our only fund-raising event for the year, we all need to get behind this project and make this year the best ever.

All time is counted as volunteer hours: Time spent on projects both in TWSS and Festival Hill Garden at the general meeting March 12, all items made in preparation all year to be sold, all time spent on set-up and tear-down, and working during the sale. Time spent working with Henry on Herbal Forum, such as being an Angel for presenters, counts as hours, too.

Forum Committee Chairs: As I talk to the Forum committee chairs I know that many of you have contacted one or more of the chairs to volunteer your help. If you have not signed up for a committee and have questions, please call or email Carolyn Thomas cthomas1138@aol.com. My job is to see that every member is informed and has a chance to volunteer at the Forum. Time worked at the Forum not only contributes toward your annual hours' commitment but, more importantly, rewards you with time working alongside other members, pride from being associated with such a celebrated event, and the privilege of enjoying some of the excellent programs and activities.

I also remind all **Pioneer Unit volunteers to wear their badges at the Forum and familiarize themselves with the brochure/programs/locations.** Our guests always have questions (such as, where is Menke House, what time does the plant sale close, where is registration, etc.). It is good to be prepared. Thanks to your enthusiasm and hard work, this Herbal Forum is slated to be another tremendous success ... and lots of fun.

Publicity: Publicity for the Herbal Forum Plant Sale and Thyme Well Spent gift shops has been sent to area newspapers and radio stations. Each member can help by contacting gardening friends and members of garden-interested organizations to remind them how special our plant and gift sales are.

TIMELINE

Plant Sale Prep: Plants are delivered at Festival Hill throughout the week preceding Forum. If you are in the area, please let Tony Scanapico know by calling 979-966-9408, as we always need help unloading plants.

Set-up for TWSS: Begins on Wednesday, March 17, so please contact Carla Lessard if you plan to help.

Set-up Committee: Set-up of the plant sale begins on Monday, March 16 and continues through Thursday, March 19, which is the most intense and important day. This involves setting up tents, tables and chairs; transporting the plants to their designated areas for display; placing signs; and a dozen other details so that we are up and ready for the public at 9 a.m. Friday.

Plant Sale Member Shopping: Our members are welcome to shop after we have completed set

up on Thursday afternoon (timing will depend on available help). We will "run a tab" for our members so they don't have to write a new check every time they find another much-needed addition for their gardens. As soon as your purchase is entered in the book, please take your plants home and be sure to settle up with me no later than 4 p.m. on Saturday so we can close the books. Thanks for your help!

Karen Cornwell

General Info about Herbal Forum:

- * Open for public sales at 9 a.m. Friday, March 20.
- * Henry Flowers will present *Overview of the Plant Sale Plants* at 10 a.m. Friday.
- * Plants will be sold until 5 p.m. Friday then everything needs to be watered and prepared for the next morning.
- * Sales start at 8:00 a.m. Saturday, March 21.
- * Close at 5 p.m. Saturday.
- * Tear-down begins at 5 p.m. (**not before**) and assistance from all is appreciated.
- Tear-down requires that all plants be moved to the greenhouse on the other side of Jaster Road and all tables, tents, signs and fixtures be removed and put away. Typically this is done in 1.5 to 2 hours depending on the number of volunteers who are kind enough to stay around and help with a big task at the end of a long weekend. This includes TWSS and TWSS in the Garden. Lynn & Alton Ehler

We are looking forward to two outstanding days with fabulous weather (**hold that thought please**). Thank you for all the preparation that has already been done and for the time and effort that will make this the great event that we are expecting.

Carolyn Thomas



Museum District Field Trip: More Information

March 12: Registration open for Guests (continued registration of Active Members and Affiliates)

April 9: Cut-off date for Registration.

(The above two dates are Pioneer Unit meeting dates.)

April 29: Field Trip Day

FAQ: Do we have to ride the bus to go on the field trip?

Answer: No, you do not have to ride the bus. You may join the group in Houston at the Museum of Fine Arts, Café Express, at 9:45 a.m, April 29.

Two options for 'non-riders':

Register and pay \$30 for entrance to 2 museums and lunch. Complete Registration Form and either mail to Susan Bame with your \$30 check, or turn it in to Susan at one of the next two meetings.

Be on your own for museums and lunch (some may have Museum memberships and prefer to handle their own entrance fees and lunch—but check your costs compared to our group cost)

"NON-RIDER" REGISTRATION FORM HOUSTON MUSEUM DISTRICT FIELD TRIP 4-29-15

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
 PHONE # _____ CELL _____
 EMAIL _____

FEE: \$30.00 'NON-RIDERS' (nonrefundable); those who plan to meet the group in Houston and will not ride the bus _____ CHECK

BOXED LUNCH CHOICES (PLEASE CHECK ONE) Includes cookie, chips and tea or water.
 _____ CHICKEN SALAD (basil, celery, glazed pecans, lettuce and Roma tomato on 9 grain bread)
 _____ TUNA SALAD (basil, celery, lettuce and Roma tomato on 9 grain bread)
 _____ CLASSIC BLT (thick bacon, lettuce, tomato on 9 grain bread)
 _____ ROAST BEEF (lean roast beef, lettuce and Roma tomato on 9 grain bread)
 _____ ROASTED TURKEY and SWISS CHEESE (lettuce and Roma tomato on 9 grain bread)
 _____ VEGGIE (fresh spinach, pickled carrots and onions, roasted tomatoes, hummus and fresh fennel with creamy parmesan dressing on toasted ciabatta bread)

Contact: Susan Bame: 4253 FM 2679 Road, Burton, Texas 77835-5521,
susanbame@icloud.com, 979-251-4208

MEMBER INFORMATION

Our February meeting was very well attended with the informative and fascinating presentation of Texas snakes. Our visitors were Virginia Smith, Janie Plummer's friend, and Ursula Brown, who was with Barbara Hemmer. Mary Reeves had her two teenage grandsons visiting from Tennessee with her. And of course Pat Garrett, our prospective new active member, was with her family friend Wanda Hubbard. Affiliate members present were Susan Abouhalkah, Mary Doebbeling, and Marijane Lipscomb, and we welcome all of you.

It's really encouraging to know about all the preparations for Forum going on throughout the year with items being prepared for the Thyme Well Spent Shop, Workshops, and help at the gardens. Members are turning in their hours regularly and volunteer efforts are greatly appreciated. Looking forward to seeing all of you at Forum this month and in the meantime enjoy the rest of the cool-cold weather until Spring arrives this month!

Herbally,
 Georgia Sowers
 Membership Chair



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- March 1 — Alton Ehler
 Susan Wood
- March 3 — Billi Parus
- March 9 — Susan Abouhalkah
 Susan Wittig Albert
- March 11 — Joan Jordan
- March 14 — Bob Sowers
- March 16 — Sandra Brown
 Beth Murphy
- March 18 — Cindy Rollins
 Ginger Hoffmaster
- March 20 — Frances Pittman
- March 30 — Mike Cox

Family Night and Sensory Garden Tours

We hope to plan another Garden Day for the children in April. The inconsistency of weather made outdoor activities with children more difficult to schedule. The children are waiting and would love to come back to visit our Sensory Garden!

A Family Night at the Gardens has been planned for Tuesday, May 5, beginning at 5:30 p.m. Lessons have been learned from last year to get the word out better, have more and different attractions, and the event promises to be a success. More details as the date gets closer.

Verena Aeschbacher.

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH



Our Volunteer of the Month for March 2015 is Cathy Comiskey! Cathy is very helpful with hosting Workshops in preparation for Forum through the year and is a great host team organizer for our March meetings with plenty of morning snacks. She has been with the Unit since 2007 and is surely a willing volunteer. Thank you for all your efforts, Cathy, and congratulations!

Herb of March– Anise (in particular its seed—Aniseed)

Anise is an annual member of the carrot family – the Apiaceae, to which other herbs such as dill, parsley, cilantro, fennel, chervil, and lovage belong. Its botanical name is *Pimpinella anisum*. The generic name *Pimpinella* is of an uncertain Medieval origin and the specific name *anisum* is Latin for anise. Anise is believed to be native to the Middle East.

In habit anise is very much like dill. It is a cool season annual that is sown directly by seed. It will reach a height of about 2 feet, likes full sun with a moist but not constantly wet soil, and it can withstand light frosts. Its blooms are very much like those of dill and its seeds are similar as well. In comparison to fennel seed (with which they are sometimes mistakenly identified) the seeds of anise are more rounded and about 1/2 to 1/3 in size, but which when crushed have a more powerful aroma.

Anise seems to be an important player in the play of herbs, but one that is often manipulating in the background, not at stage front. It is really the seeds (which are truly fruits) that are the main part of the plant that is used for flavoring and scent. Perhaps the biggest role that anise plays is in licorice candy. It gives the candy its distinctive flavor and aroma—the one that most people describe (improperly) as the flavor and aroma of licorice. If you truly know the herb licorice, you will know that it is an herb valued for its sweet roots, but also an herb which does not have much in the way of fragrance. Thus, in licorice candy it is the oil derived from anise seed that gives the candy flavor and fragrance.

Anise seeds (sometimes spelled aniseed) are also used in a variety of other products as a flavoring agent. They are used in many liqueurs such as: Absinthe, Anisette, Ouzo, Pastis and Raki. They are also used as a flavoring agent in root beers and are used to flavor ice creams, chewing gums, teas, pastries, and many meat dishes.

Most anise seed imported into America comes from either Turkey, Spain or China. The essential oil of anise (often and mistakenly confused with that of Chinese star anise—*Illicium verum*) mainly comes from China, Spain, and Guatemala. Anethole is the chief constituent oil of anise seed, and it has been shown to be antibacterial and antifungal, as well as having some insecticidal action – for which it is sometimes employed against houseflies.

Most books that talk about growing anise say that its seed should be sown in the spring. As I'm sure most of you know by now, cool season annuals of this family often do best if sown in our climate in the fall or early winter (especially true of cilantro), but I would suspect that if you were to sow seeds even now you may get a crop of new seed as the response of most plants in this family to warm spring weather is to rapidly bloom (bolt) and produce seeds. In the case of cilantro and dill this may not be desirable if you want to grow them for their leaves, but it can be a good thing if you are aiming at getting seed production.

The main essential oil of anise, in both its seeds and leaves, is anethole, which is similar in aroma and taste to estagole found in French tarragon and Mexican mint marigold and saffrole found in sassafras. Thus these different plants have similar, but not identical, aromas and tastes. Today most of the essential oil anethole that is produced in the world is actually derived from Chinese star anise, which is also interestingly a very important ingredient in the drug Tamiflu.

The main medicinal effect of consumed anise seed or essential oil is a carminative effect upon the digestive system. In India and other nearby countries it is common to chew on anise or fennel seeds following a meal. They can be eaten plain or are sometimes coated with sugar to make them a bit more agreeable. In Europe, candy-coated anise and fennel seeds are still popular. In southern France a candy known as Les Anis de Flavigny has been made at the Abbey of Flavigny since 1591. The original candies were anise seeds coated with anise-flavored cane sugar. When sugar beets were introduced into commerce a switch was made to this "whiter" sugar and in time other flavors were added to the sugar coating—my favorite is rose and the violet flavored one is quite unusual. Although it is likely much easier to just buy some anise seed for culinary use, it might be fun to sow some seeds in order to grow this venerable herb which today seems to be not as highly appreciated as it was in the past. Let me know if you do.



It is the policy of The Herb Society of America not to advise or recommend herbs for medicinal or health use. This information is intended for educational purposes only and should not be considered as a recommendation or an endorsement of any particular medical or health treatment.

Henry Flowers, Pioneer Unit Garden Chairman

A Step Back in Thyme: Colonial Williamsburg

2015 HSA Educational Conference and Annual Meeting of Members



2015 Schedule of Events

Kickoff Event	Wednesday, May 6	<i>Greenhouse Tour & Dinner</i>
Pre-Conference Tours & Marketplace Vendor Opening	Thursday, May 7	<i>(check for listings)</i>
Conference Lectures	Friday & Saturday, May 8-9	<i>(check for listings)</i>
Awards Dinner	Saturday, May 9	
Festival of Flavors and Fragrance	Saturday, May 9	<i>(check for listings)</i>
Post-Conference Tours	Sunday, May 10	<i>(check for listings)</i>


Reservations can now be made on line for Ed Con 2015 in Colonial Williamsburg. The conference hotel is The Williamsburg Lodge, and reservations can be made on line or by telephone.

SA Group Rate for Williamsburg Lodge:
\$189.00 plus tax (10.5%) plus \$2.00 per night tax. Guest rooms include complimentary WiFi and complimentary self parking

March 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 Herbal Forum	21 Herbal Forum
22	23	24 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	25	26 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	27	28 Herb Festival at the Wynne Home, Huntsville
29	30	31 FH Workday 8:30 to noon			BSG = Botany Study Group	FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden

April 2015

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



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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—Henry Flowers

Vice Chair Programs—Tony Scanapico
Secretary—Pat Cox

Vice Chair Membership—Georgia Sowers

Treasurer—Janie Plummer

Pioneer Unit
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