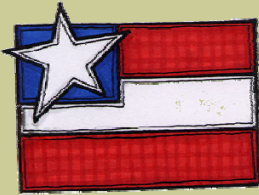




PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America
Pioneer Unit

June 14
Flag Day



—
June 19
Fathers' Day

—
June 20
Rose Full Moon
Summer Solstice



June 2016

Volume 23, Number 10

MONTHLY UNIT MEETING

- Date: June 9, 2016
- Time: 9:30 a.m. Meet and Greet
10:00 a.m. Program and Meeting
ANNUAL MEETING
- Location: St. John's United Church of Christ
516 North Colorado Street, Burton
- Directions: From Highway 290 head north on East Mulberry Street
(Texas 125 Loop) in Burton; turn right on North Colorado
- Program: Bottoms Up: A Brief History of Herbal Brews
- Speaker: Susan Wittig Albert, Ph.D.
- Angel: Cathy Comiskey
Hosts: Pat Garrett, Wanda Hubbard, Susan Bame, Mary
Doebbeling, Sue Edmundson, Louise Rice, and Lois
Sutton
- Lunch: Herbal Delights



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

It seems like yesterday that I wrote my first of these articles, and I just realized that this will be my last one. Time has really flown, and I appreciate all the support that you have given me in the past two years that I have served as Pioneer Unit Chair.

I believe that the past two years have been successful ones for our unit—our fundraisers, the Herbal Forums, have been successful; our membership has continued to grow; we've had wonderful programs on a wide variety of topics; we're continuing to support the gardens we have chosen to work with; and as I leave office I feel that we have great morale and camaraderie and that we are in great financial shape heading into the future.

All of this could not have been done without the support of our board members.

The Officers of the Pioneer Unit Board include:

- Tony Scanapico, First Vice Chair in charge of Programs
- Georgia Sowers, Second Vice Chair in charge of Membership
- Pat Cox, Secretary
- Janie Plummer, Treasure (and newly elected HSA Treasurer)
- Linda Rowlett, Past Chair and Nominating Committee

Standing Committee Chairs on the Board include:

- Lynn Ehler, Archives and Rosemary
- Ginger Heath, Education-Special Events
- Gardens, myself
- Communications, Susan Lake
- Plant Sale, Karen Cornwell
- Thyme Well Spent Shoppe, Pat Cox and Louise Rice (and Carla Lessard in the 1st year of this term)
- Herbal Forum Coordinator, Carolyn Thomas

Sub-Committee Chairs are extremely important too!

- Betty Pior, Programs-Hospitality
- Karen Springer, Education-Scholarships
- Verena Aeschbacher, Gardens-BISD Sensory Garden
- Linda Rowlett, Communications-Newsletter, Listserv & Scrapbook
- Susan Lake, Communications-Web-Site & Publicity
- Barbara Hemmer, Plant Sale-Gazebo

Thank you all for serving the Pioneer Unit over the past two, and in the case of many of you for many years previously and for some of you as well for continuing to serve beyond this term!!! I appreciate greatly all that you have done.

Thank you as well Unit members for helping with the Herbal Forum, serving as meeting hosts or speaker angels, for helping with the gardens, for helping to make so many wonderful items for the Thyme Well Spent Shoppe and for being what I consider to be the best Unit in the Herb Society of America.

Best wishes as well for those who have chosen to lead us into the next two years, and I hope that you will give them the same level of support that you have given me and the current board. Please be sure to come to the June meeting, our annual business meeting, and vote and show your support.

With much gratitude,
Henry Flowers, Pioneer Unit Chair

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

June 1 — Henry Flowers

June 2 — Betty Powell

June 5 — Lucy Nehrkorn

June 11 — Candi Glancy

June 14 — Ronda Herzog

June 24 — Marijane Lipscomb



Seed Alert

It's almost officially summer and all those lovely flowers in your yard are going to start producing seeds. Please collect some for the Pioneer Unit to sell next year. We only make ten packages of most seeds so it doesn't have to be a huge project. The process is easy. Just gather them, clean out as much "trash" as you can, put them in some kind of container (glass is good but not required), label the container with your name and the name of the flower, and give them to Susan Lake. If you can get a photo of the bloom to send to her, that's nice too. Remember to record the time you spent collecting to add to your unit hours. THEN go on to enjoy your garden.

Susan Lake

FROM THE PROGRAMS CHAIR

Hi everyone — Because this is my last article as Vice Chair for Programs, I want to thank everyone for supporting our programs. I also want to thank our Pioneer Unit Board of Directors and particularly our Unit Chair, Henry Flowers, for the support the Board has provided by increasing the programs' budget funding line. This change enabled the Unit to afford the costs associated with our programs. The Board's ability to provide the increase has come about because of the financial success of the Herbal Forum at Round Top. So, then coming back "round robin," our success with our programs can be attributed to the hard work by our members and those non-member friends of the Pioneer Unit in carrying out the Herbal Forum. That work raised the funds we need for our Unit's operating expenses, to include programming. And, I should add, provided funding to support the Unit's community herbal education activities. KEEP UP THE GREAT WORK!!!

Now, regarding our June program, Susan Wittig Albert is still our speaker and St. John United Church of Christ in Burton is still our meeting place. However, Susan may be bringing a time machine, or more simply, photos and a talk, to tell us about ancient ritual drinks like pulque (and not-so-ancient Black Drink), beers before and after hops, and liqueurs. The title for her talk is "*Bottoms Up: A Brief History of Herbal Brews.*" I'm thinking it'll be exciting learning about what was done by our ancestors with what they had on hand, before our current times of mass productions.

Susan is always interesting because of the way her research takes her into the depths of each area her books cover. She has several fictional series of books and a number of non-fiction books. Her website www.susanalbert.com is a great way to get to know about her and her books. From it you can then go to the individual series' websites. She'll be bringing books to sell and she'll autograph them for you while she's with us. For those of you who use e-books, her books are available that way also.

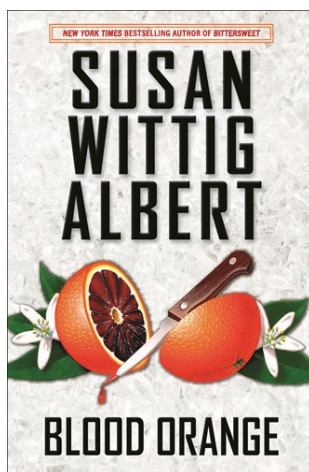
I want to particularly point out her most current books, Blood Orange from her China Bayles series and her Loving Eleanor, both 2016 releases. For detailed information on these books, check her websites. I've read both and enjoyed them. The China Bayles series is a great way to learn about the herb that's the central focus plant of each book. In the case of Loving Eleanor, she brings history to life and makes the book's topic easy to understand and learn about.

I also want to mention Susan's series about the life of Beatrix Potter. Next month, July, is the 150th anniversary of the birthday of Beatrix Potter. As a child, did you read, or had read to you, the Peter Rabbit tales? Those were her stories. The South Texas Unit's recent fund raiser/educational program, this past April, was about the life of Beatrix Potter. It was an excellent program. Helen Mann, formerly of the Houston British Consulate's office and part of the cast on Houston's PBS station's followup show to Downton Abby, talked about life back in the times of Potter. She was followed by Linda Lane, a member of the South Texas Unit and a past President of our Herb Society of America's national organization. Linda did a wonderful talk on Beatrix

Potter. Then there was an English themed lunch. Following lunch, in what program planners call the "snoooooze" hour, came our own Henry Flowers. Henry did a program entitled "Mr. McGregor's Garden." He kept everyone enthralled. To me, a gardener, it was the highlight of the day. Everyone loved his program. Perhaps he can be talked into sharing "Mr. McGregor's Garden" with us. One of the references Henry used for his talk was Martha McDowell's Beatrix Potter's Gardening Life. It's a fun, fascinating read. I started reading it on my Kindle Fire, because of its color photos and prints, Then I decided to switch to our iPad, which has the Kindle app. The iPad allowed me to increase the size of the photos and drawings of the plants, gardens and even the garden sketches, to see the details. And if you have an e-reader, Amazon, perhaps Nook have available Beatrix Potter, The Complete Tales. I don't have a Barnes & Noble Nook, but I would think the books would be available that way also. If you haven't read them recently, download them onto your Kindle or Nook for a fun read. Then download and read Susan's Beatrix Potter series to get to know Beatrix Potter, especially when she went to the Lake District. As Susan does in her series with her story characters, she brings Beatrix Potter to life, and you'll feel that you've gotten to know her. Another reason for reading Susan's Beatrix Potter books is that she'll take you away to the Lake District in England. That would make for a pleasant way to spend a forthcoming Texas summer's day.

Again, thank you for your support of the programs and your hard work in supporting all of the Unit's activities.

Tony Scanapico
Vice Chair, Programs



MINUTES OF UNIT MEETING
HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA PIONEER UNIT
MAY 12, 2016

Henry Flowers, Chair, opened the meeting, welcomed attendees, and introduced Tony Scanapico, Programs Chair.

Tony Scanapico introduced Chris Wiesinger, author of Bulb Hunter and owner of the Southern Bulb Company. Chris presented an interesting program highlighting his background and experience collecting and growing heirloom bulbs.

Following the program, Betty Pior, Hospitality Chair, conducted the door prize drawings. She also thanked angel Lynn Ehler and hostesses Cheryl Easley, Alton Ehler, Joyce Lane and Lucy Nehrkorn for their handling of coffee, snacks, and lunch preparations.

Georgia Sowers, Membership Chair, introduced visitors Mary Sockwell, guest of Euphanel Goad, and Peggy Trochta, guest of Betty Pior.

The Sensory Garden had a very successful program recently and another program is being planned for the second week in October. Anyone interested in providing some much needed assistance, please contact Verena Aeschbacher. Susan Bame noted that she and Cindy Nash have been watering the garden weekly but will need additional help for the increasing summer needs.

Henry Flowers noted that ten Unit members attended the 2016 Annual Meeting of Members in Asheville, North Carolina. It was the best representation of our group at the annual meeting in years. Fun was had by all! He noted that our own Janie Plummer was elected as National HSA Treasurer during the meeting. We are all very proud! This year's speakers focused on local resources, including medicinal plants from the North Carolina area. Ed Con (also an every other year event held in conjunction with annual meetings) will be held next year in Little Rock, Arkansas, May 3-7, 2017.

Henry also noted that members have been having issues growing basil this year, and he would be able to obtain additional plants from Don Andrews and provide to members at cost. He suggested that any requests be sent to him via email.

The next Herbal Forum is scheduled for March 17-18, 2017, and the herb for 2017 is coriander.

The meeting was then adjourned for lunch.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Cornwell
Acting Secretary for the Meeting

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

We enjoyed having two prospective members at our meeting in May. Peggy Trochta was there for her second visit with member Betty Pior, and Mary Sockwell was with her friend, our member Euphanel Goad. It was also a pleasure to see our affiliate member Joan Jordan, and thank you all for coming again.

Our renewals were due last month, and about a dozen are still up for renewing. Due to time constraint of the Treasurer's Report due at this month's Annual Unit Business Meeting, please mail your renewal checks to Janie Plummer at 123 Pin Oak Lane, Hempstead, Texas 77445-9312. Active members \$67, Joint Members \$98, and affiliate and Life Members \$12. Janie's contact information is also in this year's Membership Directory. If convenient, you may email your Renewal Form to Membership at gzsowers@att.net or bring it with your payment to our meeting this month at St John's UCC in Burton on June 9th. Renewal forms have been in the April and May newsletters and at our meetings. A few will be available this month.

The weather may improve this month to dry our gardens for tending after the torrential rains of the past few weeks. Volunteer hours are being totaled through the end of June for Membership's Annual Report, and thank you all for reporting. Questions or comments about Membership may be directed to the link above, or you may call me at [979-836-8228](tel:979-836-8228) and I'll be happy to help. I look forward to seeing you all at our meeting this month.

Herbally,
Georgia Sowers
Membership Chair



VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

This June 2016 we recognize Barbara Hemmer as our Volunteer of the Month! Barbara is a steady presence in the Gazebo at our annual Plant Sale and Herbal Forum, always helpful to customers and everyone. She also helps frequently in various workshops throughout the year to keep things rolling on Forum preparation. Thank you, Barbara, for all your efforts. The Unit is grateful to have you as our member!

June Herb of the Month - Holy Basil

What is it that you said, Robin? Was that "Holy Basil, Batman"? Well, maybe not, but wouldn't it have been better than "Holy Graf Zeppelin, Batman" or one of his other "Holy _____, Batman" utterances? I certainly think so because I happen to like herbs, and holy basil is a wonderful one.

Have you ever grown holy basil? We have it at the Herbal Forum plant sale every year. I don't ever order lots of it as I do with sweet basil or 'African Blue'. It is definitely not one of the more glamorous such as 'Genovese' and isn't as cute as 'Pistou', but it is a basil with much merit and much history.

Holy basil botanically is *Ocimum tenuiflorum*, but it has also been known as *Ocimum sanctum*. Commonly it also goes by names such as sacred basil, *kraphao*, *tulasi* and *tulsi*. It has its origins in India, Sri Lanka and Malaysia, the general area that is considered to be the origin of the genus *Ocimum*. There are two basic forms of holy basil—the green form which is known as *Krishna tulsi* and a purple leaf form that is known as *sri tulsi*. More commonly you will encounter the green form. At Festival Hill we grow the green form in the India bed of the pharmacy garden. Holy basil has medicinal, culinary and other economic uses.

Like most basil, holy basil loves heat and a routine level of moisture. It is easily propagated from seeds and if you have a plant you can also easily make root cuttings. I find that it usually reseeds itself in the same area from year to year, but not as avidly as does lemon basil. This basil does not get very tall and readily branches. It is softly hairy, and the green form often has purple-tinged veins. The purple form often shows quite a bit of green in its coloration and is not nearly as richly colored as purple basil such as 'Osmin' or 'Amethyst'. Two other distinct qualities are the overall light pubescence (hairiness) of the plant and its pungent, unique aroma that is best experienced as it is difficult to describe.

Medicinally the whole plant can be used for a variety of purposes. It is mainly considered to be an adaptogen, helping the body to react to a variety of situations in order to help achieve homeostatic regulation, mainly by lowering blood pressure and blood sugar levels. It has been used for a wide varieties of illnesses such as influenza, colds, pleurisy, asthma, headaches, rheumatism, diabetes, low libido, diabetes, and more. It is also used to help increase physical endurance. In Ayurvedic medicine it is often combined with black pepper, ginger and honey in order to lower fevers and prevent infection.

For culinary pursuits the leaves are used in salads, preserves, fruit dishes and sweet breads. This must be an acquired taste as I find it a fairly odd flavor. As with some other basil, the seeds have a mucilaginous coating (like chia seeds, chia being a type of *Salvia*) and can be soaked in water to make a cooling drink. I would say that it is likely that the most common culinary use is to make an herbal tea. You can actually buy this at HEB in the tea section. Look for a product simply called "Tulsi." Plain tulsi is okay, but the one with lemon and ginger added is much better and is a great tea when you feel under the weather.

Other uses include:

- use of dried stem pieces as beads and amulets, especially in rosaries or prayer beads
- seeds are made into tonics
- oil is used as a mosquito repellent and topical antibiotic

And finally you ask "Just why is it holy?" It is so called because it has an important role in the Vaishnava tradition of Hinduism. In that tradition, devotees perform rites of worship which involve holy basil plant and leaves. It is commonly grown in the gardens around their homes and is revered as an elixir of life.

I would bet you that Batman didn't know all of that!

References: [The Encyclopedia of Herbs](#) by De Baggio and Tucker and [The New Encyclopedia of Herbs](#) by Deni Bown

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 Chair



Sri Tulsi

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

Henry Flowers

Botanical Name/Etymology: *Dipteryx odorata* (Aubl.) Willd.

Dipteryx is derived from the Greek *dis* "double" and *pteron* "wing" in reference to the wing-like upper lobes of the calyx.

Family Name: Fabaceae (Leguminosae) - Pea Family

Common Name(s): Tonka bean, Tonkin bean, Tonquin bean, cumaru.

The name "tonka" from the Caribbean language known as Galibi, spoken by natives of the region of French Guiana, and translates simply as "bean."

Origin: Central America and Northern South America

Growth Habit: Tree up to 25-30 meters in height with a trunk diameter up to one meter. Leaves are alternate and pinnate with three to six leaflets. They are glossy, dark green and leathery.

Chemistry (if known – especially active essential oils): The seeds contain a high level of coumarin, which gives them an aroma similar to that of sweet woodruff. Coumarin is bitter in taste but has a pleasant odor, likened to that of sweet hay, which has prompted the use of tonka beans in perfumery. If consumed in large doses, it can cause liver damage and can also paralyze the heart. As a food additive its use is controlled by many governments, including that of the United States, which has forbidden its use since 1954. Prior to that ban, coumarin was a common flavorant in items such as cream soda and artificial vanillin. In large doses coumarin was shown to cause liver damage in lab rats (as was safrole from sassafras). Coumarin is also found in other herbs such as cinnamon, lavender, and licorice.

Plant Part(s) Used: seeds- which are black and wrinkled and have a brown interior

Culinary Uses: Tonka beans can be used as a vanilla substitute, and in France they are often employed in desserts and stews, in addition to perfumery. The use in food in the US has been banned since 1954. Despite that ban, many "avant-garde" chefs are using them in their foods today. To use tonka beans, the beans are normally shaved in the same way that one would do with a nutmeg seed. Connoisseurs of tonka beans say that the main aroma is that of vanilla (from the coumarin), but that other aromas such as cherry, almond and cinnamon also come through. The taste is compared by some to a vanilla caramel with dark honey. According to one source, one bean's shavings are enough to flavor about 80 dishes and one would need to consume 30 tonka beans in order to achieve a lethal dose of 1 gram of coumarin. This would be an equivalent amount of consumption that would relate to a lethal dose of nutmeg and other similar spices.

Medicinal Uses: A chemical derivative of coumarin, 4-hydroxycoumarin, is the basis of the anticoagulant drug warfarin, but coumarin itself does not have anticoagulant properties. Warfarin is a main ingredient in Coumadin, a popular anticoagulant drug.

Warnings: The US and other governments deem the consumption of tonka beans to be dangerous. Other governments, such as that of France, disagree and allow its use in food. Whether you choose to ever consume it is up to you.

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Dipteryx odorata with unripe fruit



Tonka Beans

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

As the immediate past Chair, it has been my duty to serve as the head of the Nominations Committee to select a slate of nominees for the positions of Officers of the Board. As you may or may not know, the Officers of the Board include the Chair, the First Vice Chair (Programs), the Second Vice Chair (Membership), the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Past Chair. The Officers of the Board are proposed by the Nominations Committee and voted on by the members of the Pioneer Unit present at our annual meeting in June every even-numbered year. The other members of the Board, who are the chairs of the various committees, are appointed by the Unit Chair and must be approved by the Officers of the Board.

I apologize because I will not be present to submit the proposed Officers of the Board to the Unit, but that task will be handled by my main cohort on the Nominations Committee, Diana Reed. [Early June seems to be the only time of year that we can get away from the Vineyard when all of the grandchildren are out of school and enjoy a whole-family vacation.]

The proposed slate of Officers of the Board who will be presented for your consideration and vote at the June 9th annual meeting:

Chair: Karen Cornwell
1st Vice Chair - Programs: Phoebe Lake
2nd Vice Chair - Membership: Georgia Sowers
Treasurer: Lucy Nehrkorn
Secretary: Pat Cox

The Nominations Committee thanks these five persons for agreeing to donate their time and attention to the Pioneer Unit. We all lead busy lives and are involved in many things. Giving of your time to the Unit is very generous.

Thank you.
Nominations Committee
Linda L. Rowlett

A note from the Editor: It occurs to me that there may be someone out there who would like to edit the newsletter. While I am happy to continue to take that responsibility, if there is someone else who would like the job, I don't want you to think you have to wait for me to die before you get a chance.



If you would like to edit the newsletter, please give me a call and let me know.

Linda L. Rowlett
281-757-1988

June 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
BSG = Botany Study Group	FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden		1	2 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	3	4
5	6	7 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	8	9 Pioneer Unit Meeting Annual Meeting of the Members	10 	11
12	13	14 FH Workday 8:30 to noon HSA Webinar	15	16 FH Workday BSG 8:30 to noon	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		

July 2016

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	8	9
10	11	12 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	13	14 Pioneer Unit Meeting	15	16
17	18	19 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	20	21 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	22	23
24	25	26 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	27	28 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	29	30
31						



PIONEER PATHS

Volume 23

Editor: Linda L. Rowlett, Ph.D.

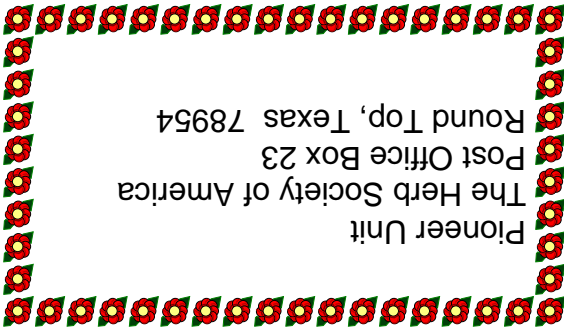
Pioneer Paths is a publication of The Herb Society of America, Pioneer Unit. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$10.00 per year.

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
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