



PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America
Pioneer Unit

February 2017

Volume 24, Number 6

MONTHLY UNIT MEETING

- Date: February 9, 2017
- Time: 9:30 a.m. Meet and Greet
10:00 a.m. Program followed by Meeting
- Location: St. John's United Church of Christ
516 North Colorado Street
Burton
- Directions: Take Highway 290 west from Brenham to Route 12 north into Burton. At North Brazos Street, turn north and continue to East Texas Street. Turn right and go one Block to North Colorado Street.
- Program: Lavenders
- Speaker: Cathy Slaughter of Gabriel Valley Farms
- Angel: Pam Traylor
Hosts: Linda Rowlett, Susan Bame, Mary Doebbeling, Royceanna Kendall, Marijane Lipscomb, and Tony Scanapico
- Lunch: Food from the Heart

February 10
Ice Full Moon

February 14
Valentine's Day



February 20
Presidents' Day



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Hello, everybody!

January was certainly an interesting month weather-wise, but we've not yet had much of a winter unless you count short spurts of plant-killing freezes and some cold rain. The weeds seem to be doing well enough, but the gardens are looking a bit ratty. Even so, my thyme definitely has a hardy soul!

Your Pioneer Unit Board held a meeting near the end of January, and we are ramping up for Forum. If you don't see the summary in this month's newsletter, it will be in the March version. In the meantime, if you happen to be stuck inside, I hope you are working on something for the Thyme Well Spent Shop (TWSS) or the Gazebo. As always, every one of you has something he or she can do to make the Herbal Forum yet another special event. There are lots of opportunities to be involved BEFORE Forum, such as gathering and packaging seeds, gathering and drying herbs, participating in condiment preparation workshops, crafting, sewing and embroidering, and donating items for the Silent (National Intern) Auction, just to name a few. Also, please be saving the following items: (1) books and magazines for the Scholarship Table and (2) flats for use at the Plant Sale. You can bring books and magazines to the February meeting or drop them off at Festival Hill along with any flats you might have gathered.

Bring any questions with you to the next meeting. As a short add-on, we will have a very brief tutorial on all things Plant Sale. It will be an excellent opportunity to find out how it all works. Please don't miss picking up a handout.

Stay tuned for more information about EdCon in Little Rock, Arkansas, May 3-7. I understand that we will get an update when registration information is available on the HSA website, sometime early in February.

Have a wonderful, happy Valentines Day with your sweetheart, friends, and family!

Karen Cornwell
Unit Chair



FROM THE PROGRAM CHAIR

Greetings from cold and snowy Lexington, Kentucky! I am attending the annual conference of the Southern Sustainable Agricultural Working Group, commonly referred to as SSAWG. For twenty years this grass roots organization has been working toward a more sustainable farming and food system. I'm headed home with lots of ideas! The work of the Herb Society of America shares some of the same values and lists as part of its mission to promote herbs as valuable, useful and essential parts of our lives.

But back to the Pioneer Unit:

Molly Fowler, aka The Dining Diva, was a delightful start to the new year. We all enjoyed her cooking demonstrations and, even more, taste testing the dishes she prepared!

In February we look forward to having Cathy Slaughter of Gabriel Valley Farms speak to us. Her topic will be Lavenders, which can be challenging to grow in central Texas. I was once told "you have to fool Lavenders into thinking they're in the south of France!"

Did you know....

The Herb Society of America was started in 1933 when a group of six women approached a Harvard Professor about learning and researching herbs.

Thanks, ladies!

Phoebe Lake
Programs Chair



**MINUTES OF UNIT MEETING
HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA PIONEER UNIT
January 12, 2017**

Karen Cornwell, Chair, welcomed members to the first meeting of 2017 and announced a short orientation meeting after lunch which was open to all.

Phoebe Lake, Vice Chair Programs, introduced speaker Molly Fowler, a well-known author, television presenter, and cooking instructor, who presented a program entitled "Cooking with Herbs for Savory and Sweet" and shared lots of delicious samples.

Georgia Sowers, Vice Chair Membership, welcomed guests Sharon Bischofshausen who has attended the plant sale several times, Peggy Trochta (guest of Betty Powell and Betty Pior), and also new active member Kathe Forrest.

Karen reminded everyone that the Herbal Forum will be here before we know it (March 17 and 18), and asked for everyone to sign up to help at either the plant sale or Thyme Well Spent Shoppe, or both.

Henry Flowers said the Forum flyer is on the website. He will have copies of the flyer and brochure to distribute at the February meeting. The herb of the year is cilantro/coriander. Henry asked for help with set-up the week of Forum and angels for the Friday workshops which will include demonstrations on jams and jellies, self-watering containers, bokashi composting, fermentation and floral design.

Susan Lake asked anyone who has saved seeds for her to get them to her as soon as possible. Cathy Comiskey is making herbal tea blends for Forum and asked if anyone had recipes she could use.

Sara Holland will be leading the next culinary group meeting on February 1, and the theme will be cilantro. She asked for participants to bring cilantro recipes.

Barbara Hemmer announced there would be a hypertufa workshop before Forum and the date would be on the website.

Karen reminded members that the Forum is the Unit's only fundraising event for the year and helping out in some capacity is a requirement of Pioneer Unit membership. A suggestion had been made to open the plant sale and TWSS at 8:00 a.m. Friday to match Saturday's opening time but it has been decided to keep Friday's opening time at 9:00 a.m. due to the difficulty of having everything ready by 8:00 a.m.

Pam Traylor thanked today's lunch hostesses – Susan Lake, Lucy Nehr Korn, Susan Bame, Linda Rowlett, and Candi Glancy. Door prizes were won by Catherine Gardiner, Joyce Caddell, Susan Yancey, Mary Reeves, and Cindy Nash. The meeting was then adjourned for lunch.

Respectfully submitted,
Pat Cox, Secretary

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

We enjoyed a tasty presentation in January by Molly Fowler the 'Dining Diva.' Many members were present and two guests were with us. A first-time visitor at our meeting was Sharon Bischofshausen, who has been to our Plant Sale for at least the last two or three years. It was good to see her again, and she will likely visit more, and we hope she will be able to join the Unit when time permits. Also Peggy Trochta was with us for her third or fourth visit. She was introduced to our Unit last summer by Betty Pior. Peggy plans to become an active member with us soon as well. Our loyal affiliate member Marijane Lipscomb was with us too. We're happy to see all of you and look forward to seeing you again.

We're getting in full gear mode working toward Forum in mid-March and lots of preparations therefor are underway. This is a prime opportunity for members to attain a lot of volunteer hours and learn and interact with each other toward new projects.

Hearty Herbs for all,
Georgia Sowers



NEW ACTIVE MEMBER!

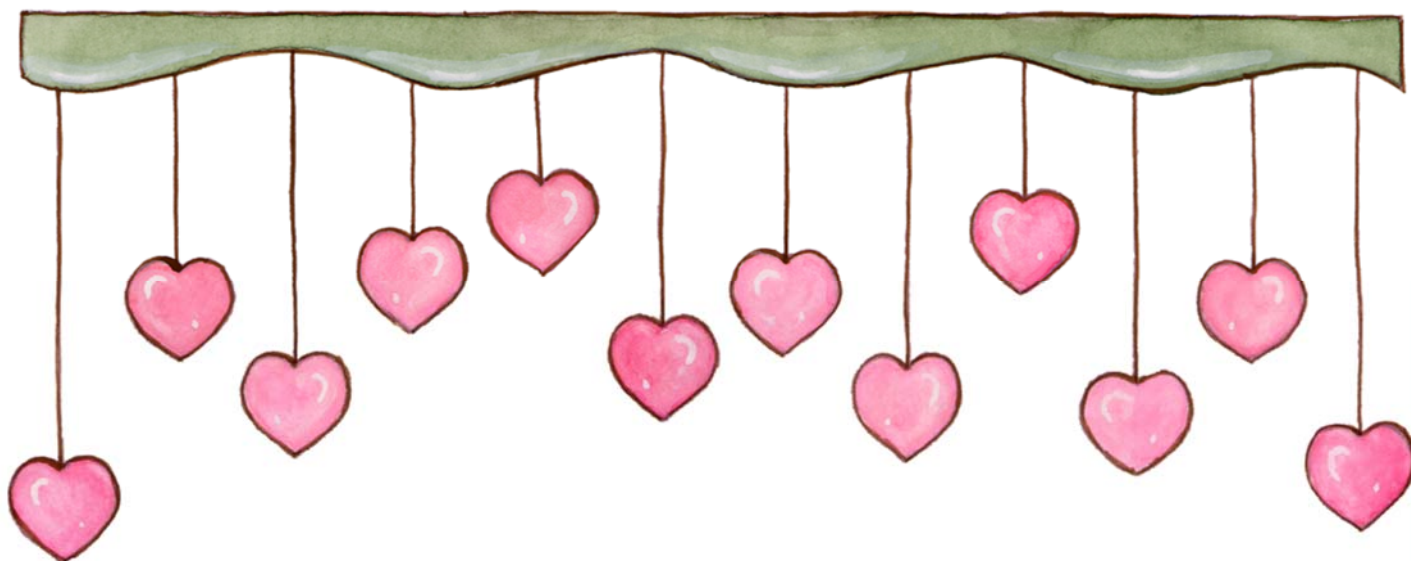
Kathe Forrest is our newest active member effective January 2017. Kathe was referred to our Unit by faithful recruiter, active member Susan Yancey. She has a fascinating background, a Texan who's lived in 12 states and visited all of the United States with the exception of only 3 or 4. Kathe's travels have taken her to Australia and England, Wales and Ireland, as well as hiking and camping in the Continental Divide until the snows came and she had to live in Idaho for a time. Her careers include modeling, owning a health food store, managing Whole Foods and Natural Grocers, a laboratory technician, astrologer, librarian and a veterinary assistant. Wow! Her long-time study of herbs has helped her in her career, as well as her certifications as a nutritionist and as a teacher of yoga. And atop all this, Kathe volunteers for Hospice. She has three children, in Austin, Denver, and Australia.

Kathe's address is 8383 Boehnemann Rd, Brenham Texas 77833-2012, home phone is [979-337-2501](tel:979-337-2501) and cell [512-934-1725](tel:512-934-1725). Her email address is katheforrest@gmail.com and her birthday is January 19th. Please update your current yearbooks, and her info will be in the next print of our yearbook come September. We are very happy that Kathe has joined us. She will be a great asset to our Unit. Let's get to know her and make her feel happily at home here. Welcome, Kathe!

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION CHANGES

Changes and corrections were reported on the listserv but for those who don't have access, these are listed here for you to update your current yearbooks. Active member Dr. Lois Sutton has a new address and new email: 638 Upper Grassy Branch Ext, Asheville North Carolina 28805-9292 and doctorlonc@gmail.com. Active member Henry Flowers has a new address: 709 Scott Drive, Brenham Texas 77833-4980. Active member Georgetta Welch has a new email address: grwelch67@gmail.com. Active member Lori Yeats has a new email address: lora4626@sbcglobal.net. Affiliate member Susan Abouhalkah has a new address: c/o Yusha Abouhalkah, 8211 Pheasant Glen, Spring Texas 77379-8736. Please keep me posted if you have any changes or corrections so that we may handle with National and the Unit membership. You may contact me at gzsowers@att.net or call [979-836-8228](tel:979-836-8228), and I'll look forward to helping you.

Georgia Sowers
Membership



February Birthdays

February 3 — Tony Scanapico

February 20 — Bonnie Lout

February 21 — Janie Cornelius and Mary Sockwell

February 22 — Sara Holland

February 23 — Karen Cornwell

February 25 — Susan Lake

FORUM NOTES

Herbal Forum volunteers are needed in the TWSS hospitality and tasting areas. If you can spend an hour tidying up and talking to customers, please let Pam Traylor know.

Remember to bring herb-related books and magazines for donation for the Scholarship Table.

Seeds Seeds Seeds

If you have tucked away seeds for the Pioneer Unit to sell at Forum, now's the time to let us know. Send me a note at gardener@susanlake.net so we can put your seeds on the list and make arrangements to get them. We will be packaging them in the next few weeks to have them ready by the March meeting.

If you haven't been saving seeds, think about it for next year. Even if you only harvest enough for a few packages, that's great.

Susan Lake

SILENT AUCTION

As many of you know, we have conducted a silent auction at each year's Forum, and for the past few years we have raised over \$800 for the National Intern. We hope to have an equally successful Silent Auction this year. The Silent Auction will be situated on a table or two in the main building at Festival Hill, where there is room for a few select items. These items need to be pretty special to realize as much funding as possible for the National Intern. If you have a special herbal item that you think would be of interest to others, please bring it to me at the February meeting, or contact me, and I will make arrangements to collect it from you.

And please note: Pioneer Unit members are invited to bid on the Silent Auction items! Don't miss out!

Linda Rowlett — lrowlett@coatsrose.com or 281-757-1988

February Herb of the Month - Black Cumin

I would bet that all of you, being wonderful and informed cooks, know of and have used the spice we know as cumin. It is the seed of a plant that is a relative to coriander, but it isn't easy to grow here. Like coriander it has become an essential part of certain cuisines, such as those of Mexico and India.

But this article isn't about cumin, it's about black cumin. How many of you know what that is? I would suspect that if you do, you are in the small minority. Thus I'm writing this to educate you and further educate myself as well.



Before I did any research I did know what black cumin is. It is actually the seed of an annual plant botanically known as *Nigella sativa*. In 2014 Pam Traylor wrote an informative report on this plant for the Unit's Botany Study Group that was included in one of that year's issues of Pioneer Paths. Thus I recall some of the basics, but not all the details, and am going back to that report as a basis for this article. Thus Pam really deserves most of the credit for this article. Thank you, Pam!

Family name: Ranunculaceae (Buttercup family)

Common names: black cumin, black caraway, fennel flower, nutmeg flower, and Roman coriander

Origin: Black cumin is native to Southern Europe, North Africa and western Asia. Seeds were found in Tutankhamen's tomb. It is still commonly used in Pakistan, India, Arabia and Egypt. The Old Testament refers to it as "fitches" from the Hebrew *ketzah*, "vetch." Mohammed mentioned it is a cure for all diseases except old age.

Cultivation: It is a short-lived annual plant with finely dissected leaves, growing to about one foot high and has small white flowers that can be tinged with blue. Thin pointed fruits with eight segments are formed holding seeds. Looks similar to love-in-a-mist, *N. damascena*, but has no uses in common. It requires full sun, moist but not wet soil of light garden loam, pH 5.6 to 8.2 and does not withstand frost well. It is best sown in situ in the garden.

In the Kitchen: It was used before pepper was introduced and has a complex flavor that is pungent, peppery, nutty and acrid with an aroma reminiscent of lemony carrots or nutmeg. It is used in spice mixtures including Indian *panch phoron* (Bengali five-spice) and curry blends, masalas, and dolmas. It is added to stews, casseroles, cheeses, lentils, and Naan bread baked in tandoor ovens of northern India. Egypt and the Middle East sprinkle seeds on cakes, pastries, and breads. When not used in a spice blend, the seeds are most often left whole.

Medicinally: Essential oil of the seeds is found to be antimicrobial and effective against intestinal worms and is used to treat stomach upsets and colic, asthma, and headaches; it is a diuretic and promotes lactation. Externally it is used for abscesses, hemorrhoids, skin diseases and arthritis.

In the pharmacy garden at Festival Hill I have grown this plant on occasion, but it does take some effort—mainly of the mental kind because in order to grow it one has to remember to sow it first. It is very easy to grow, just like its cousin *Nigella damascena*—love in a mist. Just sow it, water it and move on. It is best started in the winter because it prefers cool temperatures and will flower in the spring.

Being intrigued by its culinary uses and knowing that Melissa loves Indian food and likely has every spice needed for making most dishes of that cuisine, I went home and looked in my pantry and sure enough I found some. I tried a few seeds, and the flavor does fit that of the description above. It probably isn't too late to sow some seeds if you would like to grow it. Not many seed sources sell them so you might have to do a search. I order mine from The Thyme Garden Seed Co. (www.thymegarden.com). If you want to order some for cooking, I would try Mountain Rose Herbs (www.mountainroseherb.com), or again maybe do a search for other suppliers. I hope one day I'll be surprised and see black cumin seeds in a dish at one of our meetings!

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



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

Botanical Name/Etymology: *Cyamopsis tetragonoloba*

Family Name: Fabaceae

Common Name(s): **Guar**, Cluster Bean, Gavar, Guwar, Guvar Bean

Origin: The African species, *Cyamopsis senegalensis*, is thought to be the origin of *C. tetragonoloba*, but to date, no guar bean plants have been found in the wild.

Growth Habit: Upright, bushy annual legume with a taproot, growing to a maximum of 2-3 meters. It has a main stem with either fine branching along the stem or basal branching. The alternate, trifoliate hairy leaves are elongated ovals. White to bluish clusters of flowers grow in the plant axil. Flat, slim pointed pods develop, containing 5-12 small white to grayish oval seeds. The roots develop nodules with nitrogen-fixing soil bacteria, rhizobia, which improve soil quality.

Growth (Cultural) Requirements: Arid to semi-arid climate with regular precipitation is preferred but guar can grow in sub-humid climates. It prefers a well-draining sandy, fertile loam soil and full sun for best plant development. It grows best in alkaline soils, pH 7-8. It is drought resistant, salt tolerant, and sensitive to frost.

Propagation: Seed.

Folklore and History: It is thought that Arabian horse traders imported guar from Africa to India as horse fodder. Guar was domesticated in India and has been cultivated there and in Pakistan for many centuries. It is used not only for food (as a vegetable) and animal feed, but also for the production of guar gum for industrial and food uses. Guar was first introduced to the United States as a cover crop for grazing in 1903. Because locust gum was difficult to obtain during WWII, alternative sources were sought to replace it. Guar production took off, and by 1953 guar gum was the gum of choice, especially in the paper and textile industries. Guar is grown in the arid/semi-arid regions of Texas and Oklahoma but most of the guar gum comes from India.

Chemistry (if known – especially active essential oils): Ripe guar seeds contain a polysaccharide composed mainly of guaran, a galactomannin which is obtained from the endosperm. The seeds contain 80% gum (1/3 galactose and 2/3 mannose). It is a high viscosity gum. Nutritionally, the seeds are 30% protein, 45% carbohydrates, and 2% fat.

Plant Part(s) Used: Seed, young pods.

Time of Harvest: 60-90 days after sowing in mid May to early July, the seed pods turn dry and brown. Guar pods can be harvested with a grain harvester, making it the only source of gum suitable for mechanized agriculture.

Dosage Level: 12g/day for constipation; 15g/day for diabetes; 15g/day + pectin with 5g insoluble fiber for high cholesterol; 5g partially hydrolyzed for irritable bowel syndrome. See Warnings.

GRAS? (generally regarded as safe): Yes.

Culinary Uses: Young pods are eaten as a vegetable; ripe seeds used as a dry bean. Guar gum is used as a thickening agent, stabilizer and emulsifier in the food industry. It is sometimes used as a bulking agent in slimming products. Seed oil is used as a dietary supplement. Guar gum mixed into bread flour may reduce cholesterol and blood sugar levels.

Medicinal Uses: Guar gum is used as a prebiotic (non-digestible fiber for beneficial colon bacteria) in the treatment of digestive ailments, constipation, diabetes, high cholesterol, weight loss, and as a laxative. Take guar supplements with at least 8 ounces of water to reduce the chance of choking or intestinal blockage. See Warnings.

Other Uses: Cattle feed; waterproofing agent in explosives; fire-fighting (additive to water for water drops); in the paper industry, guar gum is added to paper pulp to improve quality, folding strength, and durability of paper and to hold recycled papers together for processing; in the textile industry for printing pastes; cosmetics, personal care products (lotions, shampoos); for control of dust on roadways (water additive); in pharmaceuticals as a binding agent; for oil drilling (fracking).

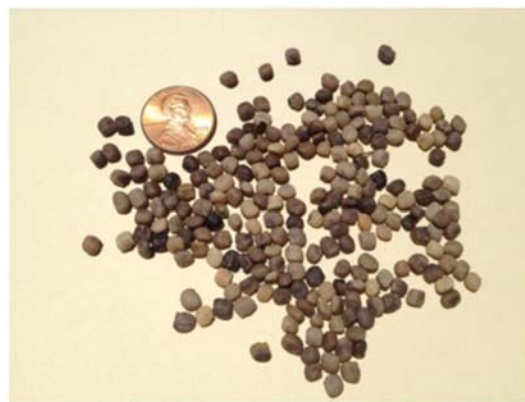
Sources for Seed or Plants: internet.

Miscellaneous Information: The process for extracting guar gum is the same for both food grade and industrial guar. The beans are first run through a mill which splits the bean in half. A screen collects the released cotyledon (future plant), which is known as guar meal. The "splits" with the attached hull are heated and then passed through another mill which grinds the hull off. The clean splits are then hydrated with a spray of hot water while they travel along a screw conveyor. This process relaxes the tightly wound galatomannin in the endosperm, making it usable. The splits are then flash dried and ground to powder or gum. The meal and hull are used in cattle feed.

Warnings: Supplements may interact with estrogens and medications for diabetes, and may interfere with the absorption of penicillin and metformin (glucophage, oral diabetes medication).

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Submitted by Candi Glancy, January 2017





Grapevine Wreath Making Workshop Thursday, February 16, at 1:00 pm

Thyme Well Spent Shop could use some wreaths for Forum. All members who are interested in making grapevine wreaths are invited to come to our vineyard on Thursday, February 16 at 1:00 p.m. Bring your clippers and gloves. Make a wreath for yourself and one for sale at the Herbal Forum.

This workshop has **no limitation** on participants, but please contact me to let me know you will attend.

Linda L. Rowlett
lrowlett@coatsrose.com
281-757-1988

2017 HSA Educational Conference: *Mark your calendars!*

*The Herb Society of America 2017 Annual Meeting of Members
and Educational Conference*

May 4 – 7, 2017, in Little Rock, Arkansas

- Preconference Tours Thursday, May 4
- Preconference Dinner Thursday, May 4
- Educational Conference Friday, May 5
- Educational Conference Saturday, May 6
- Post-Conference Tour Sunday, May 7

All Educational Conference events will be held at the Little Rock Marriott

Little Rock Marriott • 3 Statehouse Plaza • Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Registration is scheduled to open February 2, 2017.

February 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
BSG = Botany Study Group	FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden		1 Culinary Group 11 to 1:00	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 BSG Wreath Making	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				



March 2017

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26	27	28 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	29	30 FH Workday 8:30 to noon	31	





PIONEER PATHS

Volume 24

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—Karen Cornwall

Vice Chair Programs—Phoebe Lake
Secretary—Pat Cox

Vice Chair Membership—Georgia Sowers
Treasurer—Lucy Nehrkorn

Pioneer Unit
The Herb Society of America
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