



PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America
Pioneer Unit

February 2020

Volume 27, Number 6



February 9
Snow Full Moon

February 14
Valentine's Day



February 17
Presidents' Day

MONTHLY UNIT MEETING

- Date: February 13, 2020
- 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
- Directions: From Highway 290 head north on Business 36 North (Day Street). Turn left on College Street and go two blocks to Jackson Street. The church will be on your left.
- Program: Roses and Perennial Garden Color
- Speaker: Dr. William C. Welch
- Angel: Bev Elam
Hosts: Jane Press, Ronda Herzog, Joyce Lane, Ann Lugg, and Pam Traylor
- Lunch: Colors of the Rainbow



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As Past Unit Chair I am writing to inform you all that Karen Cornwell, our Unit Chair for the past 3½ years, has decided to step down from the position due to personal reasons. The Pioneer Unit Board was recently notified of this decision, and now I am passing along this notification to the Unit membership.

Per protocol, the 1st Vice Chair, Kathe Forrest, has assumed the position of Unit Chair to fill out the rest of the term through the June meeting.

Karen has volunteered to continue acting as Plant Sale Chair, so nothing has changed in that regard.

Please give Karen your thanks for serving as Unit Chair over these past years. Please also give Kathe your support for the rest of this term as she is now filling the positions of Unit Chair and Programs Chair, as well as helping with the Sensory Garden.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,
Henry Flowers
HSA Pioneer Unit Past Chair

CULINARY GROUP

- The February Culinary Group will begin the Group's exploration of American cuisine by bringing a dish from our childhood table.
- Meetings are the first Wednesday of the month at 11:00 a.m. in Classroom 2 at Festival Hill. We will not meet in March.
- Belinda Weatherly

FROM THE PROGRAM CHAIR

Ring around the roses, pocket full of posies, can Dr. Welch help those of us who may have a brown thumb when it comes to growing roses?

If anyone can, he's the man for the job – a TAMU horticulture professor and an expert and leader on Southern roses. He has written or collaborated on many books, including [Antique Roses for the South](#) and [The Rose Rustlers](#) (with Greg Grant). He will be bringing several books with him for you to purchase on Thursday, February 13, as we meet this month at the Brenham Presbyterian Church. His talk will include Perennial Garden Color as well as roses.

February 13 is the day before Valentine's Day, and Lori and I and others thought it would be a good idea to become acquainted with those unknown and perhaps new members by mixing up the seating arrangements. As you arrive, you will be given a heart sticker to place on your badge or shirt, and the different hearts will correspond with a table where you match your heart ...and then the fun and games begin. It's going to be a version of speed dating, which one board member suggested. We're going along with the idea and will try it out! I hope that you will find it enjoyable and educational and that you all meet and get to know someone perhaps different than yourself and make new friends.

See you there,
Kathe Forrest
Programs Chair



kalanchoe on my front porch

MINUTES OF UNIT MEETING HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA PIONEER UNIT January 9, 2020

Karen Cornwell, Chair, welcomed members to the January meeting. Kathe Forrest, Vice Chair Programs, was unavailable so speaker angel Belinda Weatherly introduced Alejandra Rodriguez Boughton of La Flaca Farm, who presented a program called "Urban Farming, Peppers, and Mexican Mint Marigold" and answered many questions from members after her talk. February's speaker is Bill Welch with a program on roses.

Georgia Sowers, Vice Chair Membership, welcomed visitors Sally Reynolds, Wendy Smith and her mother Donna Smith, Joanna Hagler, and Cammie Beierle's husband Jason.

Phoebe Lake announced that the first meeting of the new Horticultural Study Group she and Madeline Johnson are starting will be January 15 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at Menke House. Oregano will be studied in depth including best conditions for growing and propagation. All interested are encouraged to attend and then decide whether to join. Group members will take a plant home for observation.

Marcella Ausmus led a successful clean-up session at the Sensory Garden on January 8. Two more are planned for January 22 and January 25 starting at 9:00 a.m. Volunteers will earn Unit hours.

Beverly Elam will be holding workshops in February to make lotion bars and 'Fancy Pants' hypertufas for the Thyme Well Spent Shop. Sign-up sheets are available today. Pat Cox asked for volunteers to embroider cup towels for the shop.

Karen Cornwell reminded members that it is a requirement of membership to work some hours at the plant sale and/or TWSS. Sign-up sheets were available. If a member has limitations, every effort will be made to find a job suited to their needs. Trucks and trailers are needed, especially for tear-down on Saturday. The March meeting will be devoted to Forum preparation. Any members wanting more information on the plant sale can ask Karen and her helpers, Jana Rinehart and Susan Yancey.

Joyce Caddell reminded members that today is the deadline for applying for a Unit scholarship.

Lori Yeats, Hospitality, thanked lunch hostesses Linda Hartson, Marijane Lipscomb, Cammie Beierle, and JoAnn Reichle. Lori also asked for a moment of silence in support of Round Top Fellowship Church's minister's wife, Renee Diehl, who has received serious health news.

Henry Flowers asked members to read his emailed Forum brochure. It will be on the Unit website and Festival Hill website shortly. There will be Friday workshops at Forum this year, and Henry needs volunteer angels who can expect to be busy for most of the day on Friday. Henry asked for recipe suggestions using Mexican Mint Marigold. A Mexican Mint Marigold plant will be given to all attending Forum.

Karen announced a brief orientation to be held at noon after lunch.

A reminder was given that lunch hostess duties should be taken seriously. If anyone signed up for a team is unable to attend a meeting, it is their responsibility to find a substitute.

Respectfully submitted,
Pat Cox, Secretary

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Our January Unit Meeting enjoyed a great presentation on Mexican Mint Marigold and was well-attended with four prospective active members. Sally Reynolds was with us for her fourth visit as Georgia's guest; Wendy Smith was here for her second visit and her mother Donna Smith with her for her first visit, both guests of Cammie Beierle; and Joanna Hagler was with us for her first visit, also as my guest whom I will be mentoring. It was wonderful that all four of these ladies were able to join us for our annual Orientation, where a great deal of interaction occurred and information was disseminated. Also in attendance at Orientation were new 2019 members Patty Royal, Cammie Beierle, Barbara and Tom Solis, and Cathy Kietlinski. Officers and Chairs present were Karen, Henry, Georgia, Janie, and Marcella.

The Unit is hunkering down with plans, workshops, and workdays leading up to March and Forum 2020. Please note information as it comes out on groups.io as well as in the newsletter. Prospective active members, Membership will do its best to email information to you that comes from the listserv. Everyone's efforts are most appreciated. Many members and affiliate members volunteered 1,037 hours in varied capacities to date for our membership year. Our thanks to all of you. We will continue recording hours as reported by the members for workshops, Forum preparation, Forum 2020, and garden workdays up to and including June 30, 2020, when the books will close in preparation for the 2019-2020 Membership Annual Report to HSA.

Diana Sellers will be assisting Membership through the end of the term June 30, 2020, and we need at least one or maybe two more interested members who would be willing to assist and commit to learning the role of Membership Chair. Working knowledge of the software (Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, Adobe Acrobat .pdf, and email communications) is a necessity for this position. Also, being comfortable visiting with many individuals and answering questions, comments, and suggestions, in addition to making announcements to a large group will go a long way. I would love to visit with anyone who would like to become more active in this Board position. And help is always needed at the Registration Table when members sign in and check their attendance. You will earn volunteer hours here, so please let me know if you are interested before the meeting each month.

As always, if any other questions, comments, or ideas about Membership arise, please contact me at gzsowers@att.net or phone me at (979) 836-9229. For texting or messaging, my cell is (281) 486-6006. Thanks all, and I look forward to seeing everyone at our Unit meeting at 9:30 a.m. at Brenham Presbyterian Church. Enjoy a romantic St. Valentine's Day with your special honey(s)!

Herbal Valentines,
Georgia Sowers



Serving on the Pioneer Unit Board

The Board of the Pioneer Unit is the entity which directs the actions of the group. This Board is made up of the Executive Board – those officers elected by the body of the organization (Unit Chair, 1st Vice Chair- Programs, 2nd Vice Chair-Membership, Secretary, and Treasure). The Standing Committee Chairs, appointed by the Unit Chair and approved by the Executive Board, also serve as voting members of the overall Board. An added duty of the Unit Chair is to serve as Past Chair for a two-year term following the two years of serving as Unit Chair. One of the duties of the Past Chair is to serve as head of the nominating committee for new officers for the Executive Board.

In that I am currently the Past Chair, I am writing to you about the need for members to serve on the next Executive Board. According to the Unit Bylaws, one of the duties of active membership (and the first one listed, I might add) is to **"Be willing to hold office or serve on committees."** This is in addition to attending meetings, participating in our major Unit event (Herbal Forum), and performing volunteer hours. Those other aspects get a lot more attention, but if we don't have active members willing to serve on the Board then we can't have a properly functioning unit and the organization will cease to exist. I personally have served on the Board in multiple capacities for the past 16 years. There are a few others who have served as long or longer in their time of membership, and those are the members of the Unit whom I tend to admire the most due to their willingness to serve and help to direct.

I ask you to consider serving in some capacity on the Board. Right now, we especially need to find members who are willing to serve in the positions of Unit Chair and 1st Vice Chair – Programs. I know that there are many who can do a great job with either of these positions. Some of those whom the committee identified as good candidates have been asked to consider the positions and at present nobody has accepted.

One thing to keep in mind is that each member of the Board, even those on the Executive Committee, can bring in support in the way of committee members, so performing all the aspects of a position can be spread about on multiple shoulders instead of one. The Programs Chair could bring in helpers to find and secure program presenters, to help run the programs (introduce speakers in the case of a needed absence, help to set up equipment, help to organize volunteers in the case of a more involved program, and so on) or to help in putting the yearbook together. Thus, if you are asked or are considering volunteering to take on a position, know that the weight of the job need not all be on your shoulders.

Another way to really help the unit is to assist our elected officers or committee chairs – to serve on a committee. This is a great way to be involved and to learn more about the group. I'll admit that one position that I've never filled, and which I have the utmost admiration for, is the Programs Chair. I've always served in other capacities but have done my best to provide support for the Programs Chair where I could – either through advice or physical help at meetings. Yes, it would be nice to just show up at meetings, chat, listen to a nice program, eat and then leave, but multiple someones have to secure the presenter, tend to the presenter, set up necessary equipment, arrange tables and chairs, set out food and beverages, clean up and rearrange, and much more in order for our programs and unit to function.

I obviously have served as Unit Chair, which is also an important position needing to be filled in the next term. If one has an active and positive Board, Chair is a great position and it has many benefits. One of those is to have financial support to travel and represent the group at meetings, nationally and within our district. In my time as Unit Chair I enjoyed working with great Board members and think we were able to get much achieved. This is a great position and not nearly as demanding as one may think, so if you have any questions about it, please ask me or one of our other past chairs.

Please consider serving our unit by serving on the Board or, at least, support those who are doing so in order to learn and possibly serve in the future.

Henry Flowers
Past Unit Chair



February Birthdays

February 3 — Tony Scanapico

February 17 — Barbara Solis

February 20 — Bonnie Lout

February 21 — Janie Cornelius and Mary Sockwell

February 22 — Sara Holland

February 23 — Karen Cornwell

FORUM NOTES

PLANT SALE

Please remember to start saving cardboard flats for the Plant Sale. Our customers seem to prefer them to the plastic flats. Be sure to bring whatever you have in a plastic bag to either our March meeting or to Festival Hill the week of the sale.

We will have a short add-on to the February meeting, a very brief tutorial on all things Plant Sale. It will be an excellent opportunity to find out how it all works. Even if you have already participated in pre-Forum activities, think about where you might like to help in March. Please be sure pick up one of our handouts from one of my Plant Sale planners, Susan Yancey or Jana Rinehart. I hope the handout will answer many of your questions. We will also be confirming names of members planning to assist before or during the sale.

Forum is not only our primary fundraiser, it is also the best opportunity to work together at a wonderful and fun event. We always appreciate your efforts whether you plan to work outside, inside the TWSS shop, or a little of both.

Karen Cornwell
Plant Sale Chair

Garden/Plant/Cooking related books and magazines are needed for the scholarship table in the Thyme Well Spent Shop during the Herbal Forum. These can be handed in at the February or March meeting. We need them by the March meeting at the latest because they will need to be sorted and priced before the event. And remember to check out the materials on offer during Forum — you might just find something to purchase yourself!

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 or March 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!

Ann Lugg
alugg@rice.edu or 713-593-9981 (cell)

History and Mystery of Herbs – Holy Basil (Tulsi)

The plethora of basil varieties can be very daunting and downright confusing. There are literally hundreds of varieties that one can choose from to use or grow. Holy basil is an interesting group within this big, extended family. I will try my best, in brief, to describe them and their uses.

Basils are all members of the genus *Ocimum* in the family Lamiaceae. For the most part they are herbaceous annuals that are heat-loving and thrive in full sun with regular watering. As usual, there are a few exceptions which can behave as perennials in our area (mostly dying down to the ground and regrowing from their roots in spring). Basils are subtropical and are believed to have their origin in India. From there they spread east into Southeast Asia and west into the Middle East, Africa, and the Mediterranean.



Holy basil, commonly known as Tulsi or Tulasi, as a group are mostly from India, where they are revered by Hindus. In the ancient Vedic *Bhagavata Purana* text, Tulsi is called "Queen of the Herbs." It is seen as the embodiment of Lakshmi, wife of Vishnu and the goddess of wealth and generosity and is viewed as a living gateway between earth and heaven, as well as a manifestation of the divine in the plant kingdom. Most Hindu families revere this plant and grow it in their home gardens. In the mild climate of southern India, it can become quite large and woody and if the plant were to die a natural death its woody trunk and branches are commonly carved into beads used in prayers (rosaries).

Medicinally holy basil has been used in the Ayurvedic tradition for thousands of years to treat colds, coughs, flu and other such issues. It is viewed as an adaptogen which helps to boost the body's resistance to stress caused by biological, chemical or physical issues. It is also said to aid the digestive system by alleviating bloating and digestive gases. The various holy basil varieties provide a rich array of essential oils such as nerol, eugenol (clove oil), and camphor, as well as a variety of flavonoids and terpenes. Many other benefits of the use of holy basil in the diet are touted.

If one is familiar with the Ayurvedic doshas of kapha, vata, and pitta, holy basil is said to be kapha-reducing and can pacify vata and pitta, but can alternatively have a mildly pitta-aggravating effect in those who are overheated.

The most confusing thing about holy basil is that there are many types, not just one. Most varieties belong to the species *Ocimum tenuiflorum* (formerly *Ocimum sanctum*) which is the common holy basil of India. *Ocimum tenuiflorum* is very tropical and heat-loving in nature and will not withstand cool temperatures. Within this species are multiple cultivars.

- '**Krishna**' is a variety with rich purple flowers (the god Krishna has blue skin – thus the color connection). It is sometimes known as 'Shyama' tulsi. This variety is a bit open in growth habit and will reach about 2 to 3 feet in height. Its taste is described as crisp and peppery. Many ayurvedic practitioners consider this to be the most potent medicinal form of tulsi.

-**'Rama'** (also called 'Ram') has green leaves, a slightly shorter and more dense growth habit than its cousin 'Krishna' and its flowers are a soft purple to white. Its taste is described as mellow and cooling.

-**'Amrita'** (meaning immortality) has green leaves and purple highlights and is believed to be an "intermediate" form between 'Krishna' and 'Rama'. It is quite likely that there are a multitude of intermediate forms as basil is insect pollinated and within the same species are quite promiscuous in habit, leading to a wide variety of crosses. Seed producers must keep these different cultivars separate in order to maintain purity of seed. 'Amrita' is named after the town of Amritapuri in southern India, where it is a prized form of holy basil because of its vigor. It has more purple highlights than 'Rama', but is not nearly as purple as 'Krishna'.

- **"Thai Holy Basil"** (*Kra Pao*) In Thailand there is a type of holy basil known as *kra pao* (*krpow, kapow, grapao*) (I believe this name simply translates as "basil"), which is a key ingredient in *pad kra pao*. It is said to be somewhat similar to 'Rama' and has purple tinting. Many restaurants commonly substitute Thai basil (known for its rich licorice flavor) because it is more commonly available, but true aficionados of the dish say that it is not the same because of the different flavor. One such aficionado has a YouTube video in which he talks about the different holy basil, and he indicates that the best cultivar readily available as a substitute in the United States would be 'Rama'.

Other forms of holy basil are also encountered.

-**'Vana'** is a separate species – *Ocimum gratissimum*. *Vana* translates from Sanskrit as "forest" or "grove," and this basil is sometimes known as "tree basil" because it gets relatively tall – about 3 to 5 feet. It has lightly fuzzy leaves and due to its high eugenol content it has a clove-like aroma, leading to another common name – clove basil. This variety is one that is commonly root-hardy in our growing zone, so for us it behaves as an herbaceous perennial. If allowed to set seed, the seeds may germinate and produce seedlings; thankfully it seems to do this in a mild manner, unlike lemon basil, which is a prolific self-seeder. I love to use this one in beverages, especially juices. Take a small handful of rinsed leaves, crush them and add them to a pitcher of juice (orange, pineapple or a combo of both is great) and let it steep in the fridge overnight. Strain the next day and you have a wonderful taste. Combine with mint, pineapple sage, rose geranium, lemon verbena or other "sweet herbs" for additional tastes.

-**'Kapoor'** may be the most commonly grown form of holy basil in this country and if you encounter a plant simply labeled "holy basil" at a nursery, it is likely that it is this one. This plant is easily grown from seed and is not quite as cold sensitive as *O. tenuiflorum*. It gets about 1 to 2 feet in height and has a fairly bushy growth habit. Its leaves are very lightly fuzzy, and the flowers have a soft purple hue (see picture at top of this article). The aroma of the leaves is unique and has been described as "tutti-frutti." I'm not sure I would agree with that description, but I do say that it is a unique aroma and is very aromatic when brushed. It flowers readily and is a great attractant for bees. If allowed (and it is hard to deny it), this plant will go to seed and easily reseeds itself. It has been grown in the pharmacy garden at Festival Hill for many years and only needed initial seeding when the garden was first installed. The botanical name of this one is tricky. I have seen it listed as *Ocimum sanctum*, *Ocimum americanum* var. *pilosum* and *Ocimum X africanum*. According to Richo Cech of Strictly Medicinal Seeds (which is a great seed source for these plants), its proper botanical name is *Ocimum x africanum*. That name has also been erroneously applied to lemon basil, which are properly *Ocimum x citriodorum*.

Richo also mentions that it is his favorite of the varieties for making tulsi tea. He calls this plant "Temperate Tulsi" and says that the name 'Kapoor' is a misnomer.

The most common use of holy basil is to make tulsi tea. The leaves are usually dried and steeped to make a very pleasant and invigorating herbal tea. If you don't want to grow and dry your own, you can find tulsi tea available at many grocery stores. I recommend the brand Organic India. They have plain and flavored tulsi. I like their lemon-ginger and rose flavors and see that they now also have chai and hibiscus (roselle), which I plan to try soon.

I have ordered 'Amrita', 'Rama', 'Vana' and 'Kapoor' from one of our suppliers for the plant sale and hope we will receive them. Give one, a couple, or all a try. They are also available from Strictly Medicinal Seeds online if you are not afraid of giving seeds a try. 'Vana' and 'Kapoor' are fairly easy from seed. The others are a bit trickier – mainly in that they need lots of warmth to germinate and grow. All basil seeds also need a bit of light to germinate, so only lightly cover their seeds when sowing or, instead, cover them with one layer of newspaper that you can keep damp until they germinate (light passes through the paper and the paper keeps in enough moisture).

Warning: It is said that holy basil consumption can have adverse effects on pregnancy, so it is recommended that women who are, or who may become, pregnant should not use this herb.

(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.)

Try some tulsi and have a great February!

Henry Flowers
HSA Pioneer Unit Past Chair



O. tenuiflorum 'Krishna'

HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA NOTES

February Webinar:

Chocolate and Other Surprising Herbs for the Heart

Cal Orey, author of the Healing Powers books

Thursday, February 20, 2020

Join HSA at the upcoming webinar where guest presenter Cal Orey will explore heart-healthy chocolate along with herbs and spices that pair surprisingly well with chocolate. Cal will take a look at quality chocolate -- from truffles and bars to baked chocolate — along with some of the delicious herbs and spices paired with this decadent treat, including anise, cayenne, lavender, mint, nutmeg, and rosemary. As a special bonus, herbal tea and chocolate will be highlighted, including a luxury dark chocolate and a tea combination that hooked Cal on this unexpected combination. Chocolate, herbs, spices, and tea for American Heart Health Month? Yes! It's the perfect sweet and savory combination for good health and well-being.

Cal Orey, M.A. Is an author and journalist. Her books include the Healing Powers Series (Vinegar, Olive Oil, Chocolate, Honey, Coffee, Tea, Superfoods, and Essential Oils) published by Kensington. (The collection has been featured by the Good Cook Book Club.) Her website is <http://www.calorey.com> <https://www.kensingtonbooks.com/author.aspx/24200>

Remember: Signing up to hear webinars live can be done at herbsociety.org, and there is no cost to members. In addition, HSA maintains a library of past webinars that you can access.

2020 Annual Meeting of Members:

Thursday, April 16 – April 17, 2020
Charleston, South Carolina

Save the date for Charleston! The 2020 Annual Meeting of Members will be in gorgeous Charleston, South Carolina. History buffs, foodies, and garden lovers alike will want to use the annual meeting as an excuse to visit historic Charleston. Remember that this will be a one day event. The event will kick off on Thursday, April 16th, with a preconference reception giving you an opportunity to socialize with members from across the country.


On Friday the HSA Annual Meeting of Members leads off with business activities where you will hear updates from the Board of Directors and have opportunities to take advantage of committee meetings to further learn about the activities of the Society. Of course, the day wouldn't be complete without fascinating speakers who will share with you the deep culture of Charleston and the low country.

Note that the deadline for reduced cost registration for the Annual Meeting is February 18th.

February 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
CG = Culinary Group FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden	HG = Horticultural Study Group					1
2	3	4	5 CG Festival Hill 11:00	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13 Pioneer Unit Meeting	14 	15
16	17	18 Deadline for Early Bird Discount for HSA Annual Meeting	19 HG Festival Hill 9:30-11:30	20 HSA Webinar	21	22
23 Newsletter Deadline lrowlett@gmail.com	24	25	26	27	28	29

March 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12 Pioneer Unit Meeting	13	14
15	16	17 	18 HG Festival Hill 9:30-11:30	19	20 HERBAL FORUM	21 HERBAL FORUM
22 Newsletter Deadline lrowlett@gmail.com	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31			CG = Culinary Group FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden	HG = Horticultural Study Group



PIONEER PATHS

Volume 27

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—Kathe Forrest

Vice Chair Programs—Kathe Forrest
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