

# PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America  
Pioneer Unit

May 2020

Volume 27, Number 9

May 1

May Day

—

May 5

Cinco de Mayo

—

May 7

Corn Planting

Full Moon



—

May 10

Mothers' Day

—

May 25

Memorial Day

## MONTHLY UNIT MEETING: CANCELLED

### MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

This quote is from a letter from Amy Schiavone (Vice President of the Herb Society of America). It expresses my sentiments exactly.

When all of this is done, we probably won't smell like dirt, and we probably won't smell like roses either. I do believe that we will be stronger and that we will have a much deeper appreciation for our family, our friends, and our communities. My wish to you all is that you dig into happiness, plant inspiration, and sow hope.

The enjoyment I have in my life in this moment is centered around my garden, and I think how lovely to be able to be outside so much, weeding or planting or just admiring the beauty that life awards us in the Spring.

Just think if this virus pandemic had happened in the summer; wouldn't we all be stark raving mad? In the summer, my days outside are much shorter due to the heat.

In the following days, on our email server I will post many ideas for volunteer hours that you can do right at your computer or spending time outside making notes and taking stock of the many plants you love. There will also be ways to interact with your fellow "Herbies," and I hope that many of you will participate so that we can stay connected until we meet in person again.

So I close mimicking Amy: do dig into joy and stay safely away, tucked into your garden hideaway, finding solace and sending out care and love for this planet and all who share it with us.

Peace,  
Kathe Forrest  
Unit Chair

## PIONEER UNIT BOARD MEETING April 15, 2020 Virtual Meeting on Zoom

Present: Kathe Forrest, Henry Flowers, Lori Yeats, Lynn Ehler, Cathy Nitsch, Ann Lugg, Jane Press, and Pat Cox. Also present by proxy were Marcella Ausmus, Janie Plummer, Barbara Hemmer, and Pat Garrett.

Programs: Kathe Forrest, Vice Chair Programs, noted there was no Unit meeting in April and it is currently uncertain whether there will be a May meeting.

Membership: Georgia Sowers, Vice Chair Membership, had emailed a Motion out of Committee to ratify new members Sally Reynolds and Sandra Dudley.

**Motion:** A motion was made and approved out of committee to ratify new members Sally Reynolds and Sandra Dudley.

Treasurer: Janie Plummer, Treasurer, emailed the Quarterly Income Statement/Budget Summary Report for Three Months Ending March 31, 2020, and Forum Comparative Income and Expense for March 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Past Chair: Henry discussed potential new Board members for the next two-year term and the need to find someone for any position still unfilled.

### Standing Committee Reports:

Rosemary: Lynn Ehler has been sending out birthday cards.

Gardens: Kathe Forrest, Linda Rowlett, Cathy Kietlinski and Joanna Hagler have been working in the Sensory Garden, pulling weeds and planting herbs from Forum 2020. The grass has been mowed, and the garden is improved but still needs work. There are loquats, parsley, and peas to be picked. Tomatoes are growing.

Communications: Cathy Nitsch asked whether to place a half-page or full-page ad in The Herbarist for Forum 2021.

**Motion:** Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted unanimously to place a full-page ad in The Herbarist for Forum 2021.

Henry has volunteered to create and design the ad for The Herbarist.

Plant Sale/Gazebo: Karen Cornwell, plant sale chair, thanked Susan Yancey and Jana Rinehart for their hard work at the members-only plant sale. Plant sale expense was \$9,617.42 and income was \$5,454.55.

Thyme Well Spent Shop: Shop expense was \$1,616.88 and income was \$1,958.45, resulting in a profit of \$341.57 from the members' sale. Food items and lotions will be available for sale at the next in-person meeting.

Several motions which had been voted on by the Board via email were ratified at the meeting:

**Motion:** Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted unanimously to buy gravel to be placed in the Pharmacy Garden at Festival Hill.

**Motion:** Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted unanimously to buy magnifying glasses to be sent to HSA.

**Motion:** Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted unanimously to reimburse Forum speaker Susan Belsinger for the air fare she expended traveling to Forum.

**Motion:** Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted unanimously to give \$300.00 to the Zion Youth Group who were engaged to take down the plant sale at the end of Forum 2020.

There was discussion about how to proceed if the Unit cannot get together in person for several more months. The Board felt strongly that members should be encouraged to stay in contact by emailing pictures or short videos of their gardens and sharing herbal ideas and information.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pat Cox  
Secretary

### MAY BIRTHDAYS

May 5 — Esther Hartman

May 7 — Pam Traylor

May 9 — Louise Rice

May 12 — Jean Zavoda

May 17 — Helen Foster

May 22 — Joyce Lane

May 26 — Karen Springer



## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

I hope everyone has been as safe and sound as possible during the isolation and confinement in the COVID-19 pandemic. Members are reporting hours sporadically, and Membership is thankful for this. Please remember that annual dues are payable now, and thank you to those who have mailed in their applications and dues checks payable to HSA Pioneer Unit. Individuals pay \$67 (HSA \$55 and local Pioneer Unit \$12), and Joint members pay \$98 (HSA \$80 and local Pioneer Unit \$18). The Renewal Form is included in this newsletter, and for expediency, you may send your renewals to Georgia Sowers, Membership Chair, at 607 Ross St, Brenham Texas 77833-2764. Checks will either be given to Treasurer Janie Plummer at our meeting this month in Round Top (if indeed we are able to meet in person) or will be mailed to her before the end of the month.

As always, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns about Membership, please email me at [gzsowers@att.net](mailto:gzsowers@att.net) or phone (281) 486-6006 or you may email Membership Assistant Diana Sellers at [sellers2000@yahoo.com](mailto:sellers2000@yahoo.com) or phone (512) 461-7175.

Wishing a Happy Mothers Day to all the moms, stepmoms, and grandmothers!

Thank you again and enjoy the rest of Spring 2020.

Herbally,  
Georgia Sowers  
Membership Chair

### THYME WELL SPENT SHOP

We still have lots of items made for the Forum 2020 shop for sale. Food items include jams and jellies, mustards, vinegars, and seasonings. Lotions include body and nail butters, scrubs, spritzers, lip balms, facial toner and lotion bars. The plan is to bring them to our next in-person meeting. All items will be sold at a discount. A reminder will be sent out as soon as we can schedule that meeting.

Thanks,  
Pat Cox and Jane Press

### SENSORY GARDEN BRENHAM ISD

Marcella Ausmus, Sensory Garden Chair, has prepared a list of volunteers to water at the Sensory Garden through September. If you did not get on her list, let her know if you are available to help in other ways or to fill in if someone has a conflict.

## CULINARY GROUP

The Culinary Group explores cuisines in addition to individual herbs and spices. Pat Garrett suggested we share some of what we've learned with the Unit while we are socially distancing. So here is a recipe and some information about a cuisine we studied last year.

Moroccan Cuisine. This cuisine is the beneficiary of multiple groups moving in and through their country over many years. Geographically it borders both the Atlantic and the Mediterranean with influences from Europe as well as the native Berbers, Spanish, Arabic, Algerian, and Portuguese. The combination of cultural tastes, native foods, herbs, and spices created a complex cuisine marked by the combination of savory, hot, sweet, tart, and spicy. The addition of fruit to savory dishes is a hallmark of this delightful cuisine.

Herbs used are bay, garlic, cilantro, marjoram, thyme, parsley and spearmint. Spices frequently used are saffron, chilis, coriander, cumin, cardamom, cloves, allspice, turmeric, ginger, paprika, and black pepper. (This information is from Sara Holland).

The following recipe includes ingredients you probably have in your house or that will be easy to get, as well as illustrating the use of fruit with savory in a combination that may be novel for you. Try it!

### Moroccan Orange and Black Olive Salad (from Debi Thomas)

2 large oranges, peeled and diced  
10-12 black olives, halved  
2-3 cloves garlic, chopped  
1 Tbs chopped fresh Italian parsley  
1 Tbsp olive oil  
1 tsp chili powder  
1 tsp paprika  
2 pinches crushed red pepper flakes (optional)  
Salt and pepper to taste

Mix all ingredients and serve chilled. Enjoy!

Belinda Weatherly



## Favorite Gardening Things (Tools) – Hand Pruning Shears

You know that I often write about plants and their many wonderful attributes, and I could certainly do so again, but I wanted to write about something else and perhaps inspire some of you to do so as well. Thus I'm going to write about favorite tools that I use in gardening. Tools are invaluable and we all know that in order to get the job done well and efficiently the right tools are required. Can one ever have too many tools? The answer to that question is, simply, yes. I'll admit that I do. I have some tools that I've purchased and only used once or twice, likely because another tool will suffice and may be easier to use. Don't tell me that you don't have kitchen gadgets or appliances that are in the same boat! ;-)

Perhaps a better question regarding tools, in general, is whether expensive ones are better than cheap ones. Quite frankly I can think of no definitive answer to that conundrum other than "it depends." There are lots of variables. Generally a tool that is more expensive is, I find, more expensive because it is made of higher quality materials, is more durable, and may be better designed. Whether it may behoove you to buy the more expensive tool may depend on you. Are you likely to take care of the tool, maintaining as necessary and storing it away securely in a good place and where you can easily find it? Or are you the type that is likely to toss it into a drawer or in the corner of a storage room (or (gasp!) leave it to fend for itself outside in the elements), never cleaning it or oiling it if needed? If you are the latter you might want to just stick with the cheap tool that will simply get you by and, if you lose it or it rusts to uselessness, you can simply and cheaply replace it. If you are of the former bent, then perhaps you should spend the money and go for quality and longevity.

While writing these "vague" descriptions in regards to tools I have in mind one of the most useful of gardening tools – the hand pruning shears (or secateurs if you want to be hoity toity about it). Over my many years of gardening I have used many different hand pruners (which I'll refer to simply as pruners from now on), and I can say that they are not all the same. I've used cheap ones, expensive ones, well-made ones, poorly made ones and ones that, in retrospect, make me cringe. Of all of them I come back to pruners made by Felco, a Swiss company whose pruners have set the standard for excellence for many a decade and which have been flat out copied by many others, but yet not so well, as the goal seems to have been to make a copy to sell cheaper. In this instance I would say that you truly get what you pay for!

My favorite pair of pruners is, and has long been, the Felco #2. This is the pruner that has set the standard for excellence since it was introduced in 1948. I can find no information on Felco #1, but assume that if there ever was one it faded into the distance as #2 was that much better. This is a durable pair of pruners. One of the things I love most about them is that many of the parts are replaceable. Occasionally I replace the blade if it is worn beyond a simple sharpening or the spring if it has lost its spring. That, I find, is so much more satisfactory than throwing it away and getting a new pair and is, in the long run, cheaper.

This pruner is what is commonly known as a "bypass" pruner, meaning that the curved, sharp blade passes a counter blade which is thicker, flatter and not sharp. It will make a clean cut. Unlike a pair of scissors, which has two sharp blades moving in opposition and thus cuts from both sides, a bypass pruner simply cuts from one side with its one sharp blade. Other types of pruners are "anvil" and "ratchet." Anvil pruners have a sharp blade that is beveled on both sides

and cuts through the intended material until it stops against a flat edge or "anvil." This type of pruner is generally considered fine for removing dead plant material, but is not great for use on live material as it tends to crush part of part of the tissue on the anvil side. A ratchet pruner is simply an anvil type that has a mechanism that partially locks the blade down as it passes through the intended material in increments. I personally have never used a pair of ratchet pruners for trimming plants, but use one all the time to cut pvc pipe.

For those who may have smaller hands, you may perhaps want a smaller pair of pruners. A good option is the Felco #6. I've used a pair before, and they are great, but not quite as hefty for cutting larger materials. If you are left-handed, they make pruners for you too – perhaps the Felco #9 is what you need. There are also many specialty pruners such as ones with rotating lower handles to avoid fatigue or blistering when pruning for prolonged periods – such as when pruning miles of grapes in a vineyard.

Generally Felco pruners are about \$60 a pair. I find that well worth it. If you are prone to losing tools I recommend you stick with a cheap \$15-\$20 pair from the hardware store. Felco pruners do have red handles, which is a great aid in finding them if you lay them down in leaves or mulch and forget where you put them. Avoid buying green or black pruners – believe me, you will likely lose them (I certainly have!).

You can also buy a leather holster to keep your pruners handily attached to a pocket or belt. I wear mine daily while at work and am the only employee who does. This, quite frankly, baffles me. I use my pruners all the time and need to keep them at hand. Having to go get them from my truck when needed or simply sticking them in a pocket (where they will eventually wear a hole or poke you in the leg) are both crazy. If you have a hefty garden apron, then that is a great place for them as well. Keep them on hand and safe!

If you take care of such pruners they can last indefinitely. I have a couple of pairs that are at least 10-15 years old. You should clean them regularly to remove sap and other buildup (and to sterilize as well), sharpen the blade occasionally with a sharpening stone or other recommended tool, and oil them to keep them well-lubricated and free from rust. I use WD-40 on mine – it was created to keep missiles from rusting, so why not my pruners too?

I would be lost without my pair of Felco #2 pruners. Do you have a favorite gardening tool you couldn't do without? I have others and will write about them in the future, but I'd love for others in our group to pitch in and tell us about their favorite tools as well. As an incentive, I am going to purchase a brand new pair of Felco #2 pruners and at the end of this year I will award it to the member or our unit who, in my judgment, writes the best article about their favorite gardening tool for the Unit newsletter. The article should be at least a page long. You should describe your tool (added pictures are great) and tell us why it is so valuable to you and how you use it. Remember that you also get credit for writing articles for the newsletter, so if you need some extra hours that is another good incentive to write. Send your completed articles to our newsletter editor, Linda Rowlett, and not to me. I'm looking forward to some good articles so if you aren't outside gardening, get to typing.

Happy gardening.  
Stay safe and healthy!  
Henry Flowers, Past Unit Chair



# HSA PIONEER UNIT MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL APPLICATION

*Due May 1*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday (Month/Day): \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Category

- Active - single \$67/ joint \$98     Life – single \$12/ joint \$18
- Affiliate (Unit or Member-at-Large) - single \$12/ joint \$18

(Make check payable to HSA-Pioneer Unit and give to Membership Chair at meeting or Mail to HSA-Pioneer Unit, ATTN: Membership, P O Box 23, Round Top TX 78954)

Program Recommendations:

Field Trip Recommendations:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please check accordingly: I  HAVE or  HAVE NOT COMPLETED THE REQUIRED 20 VOLUNTEER HOURS  
Active Members: HOW DO YOU PREFER TO FULFILL YOUR REQUIRED 20 VOLUNTEER HOURS?

- Working in any Unit-sponsored garden, such as Festival Hill or Brenham ISD, and any other Unit-approved garden, or seed cleaning
- Herbal Forum at Round Top and Forum preparation throughout year supporting efforts pertaining to preparation of items, such as Thyme Well Spent Shoppe, as well as mail outs, packets, and plant sale preps
- Hosting at a meeting, including a.m. refreshments, setup/cleanup, decorating, serving lunch, including Angel duties
- Educational activities for promoting the knowledge, use, and delight of herbs, such as presentations (including a/v), research articles for newsletter (up to 4 hours prep), participation in education events
- Unit administration, such as hours spent performing duties as Officer or Unit Board of Directors member, maintaining or updating Unit scrapbook, sending greeting cards to Unit members
- Other approved activities as the Board of Directors may approve after review. We can work with you to find volunteer opportunities.

WE WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS:

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(Please utilize another sheet if necessary)



# May 2020

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

# June 2020

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

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Chair—Kathe Forrest

Vice Chair Programs—Kathe Forrest  
Secretary—Pat Cox

Vice Chair Membership—Georgia Sowers  
Treasurer—Janie Plummer

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