

PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America
Pioneer Unit

June 2020

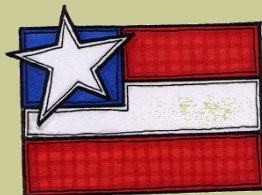
Volume 27, Number 10

June 5

Rose Full Moon

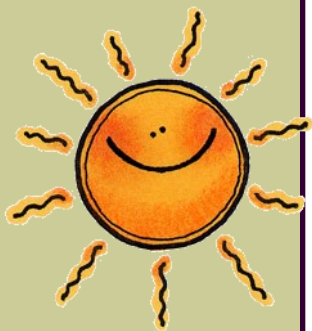
June 14

Flag Day



June 20

Summer Solstice



June 21

Fathers' Day

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The June meeting of the Pioneer Unit was to be our annual business meeting. However, the church cannot hold meetings at this time, so we will find an outside venue to meet for the sole purpose of voting on the new slate of officers. As per our by-laws on page 26 of the Yearbook: "The Officers shall be elected by a majority vote of Active members present at the Unit Annual Meeting in June." Therefore, next Thursday, June 11 at 10:00 a.m., we will meet at a place soon to be determined to vote for the Officers. Stay alert to your Listserv email of where and how the voting will be done.

Final reports are due at the end of each fiscal year from all of our committee chairs. Board members (Officers and Working Chairs) work enthusiastically to create wonderful learning and sharing environments for our members. This is our opportunity to look back over the year and remember past accomplishments. A few copies of the 2019/2020 Final Reports will be made available at the meeting, but digital versions will also be available on our website herbsocietypioneer.org under the membership tab. These reports and the Yearbooks contain confidential information and are password protected. I can send passwords out to all who need them.

If you would like paper copies and do not have internet access, I'd be glad to make them available; just let me know.

I was so looking forward to our presenter this time on edible flowers and hope we can reschedule these people that we have missed.

I do encourage you all to use the Listserv (email server) and continue conversations about your herbs and gardens. I keep waiting for a virtual garden party or tours. Post pictures as the season progresses – who will have the best and most delicious tomatoes? Post the kinds you are growing and keep connecting even if just once a month as we would if meeting in person.

Keep love in your heart for all of us.

Best,
Kathe Forrest

The picture is of my bean patch...I threw some beans out my backdoor and voila – they grew!!

Kathe Forrest



The heart is like a garden:
It can grow
Compassion or Fear
Resentment or Love
What seeds will you plant there?

Jack Kornfield

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

June 1 — Henry Flowers

June 5 — Lucy Nehrkorn

June 12 — Myra Simmons

June 13 — Leah Pearce

June 14 — Ronda Herzog

June 19 — Peggy Richardson
Diana Sellers

June 24 — Marijane Lipscomb



MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

I hope all of you enjoyed a Happy Mothers Day and a nice Memorial Day in May, also with some nice weather! The CV-19 pandemic is causing so many closures of events, organizations meeting, families getting together and others. Our Pioneer Unit missed another month of meeting together and less chances of members gaining volunteer hours. However, there was a post on the Discussion Forum about creative methods to earn volunteer hours that can be reported to Membership. Membership is still recording many of these hours and preparing for the Annual Report, which will be partially finished in time for the meeting date of June 11th, with the final ready to be published mid to late July. Thank you to all members for your volunteer efforts and diligent reporting; the entire Unit is grateful!

Renewal forms are coming in, and I'm very happy that you are mailing them to me at 607 Ross St, Brenham Texas 77833-2764 instead of the PO Box in Round Top. They will reach the Treasurer much quicker this way, and I'm actually meeting Treasurer Janie Plummer this Friday, June 5, to give her the dues checks already received. As renewals go, I'm really happy to report that Mary Ann Hillegeist and Oscar Hillegeist have renewed their active joint memberships. Mary Ann told me over the phone and at meetings that she did not like being an affiliate, and I echoed her sentiment that I didn't like them being affiliate members. It will be good to have them back in the active fold like old times!

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about Membership please contact me at gzsowers@att.net or call (281) 486-6006 if I can help you,

Herbally Summer,
Georgia Sowers
Membership Chair



Slate of Potential Officers for the Next Pioneer Unit Term July 2020 through June 2022

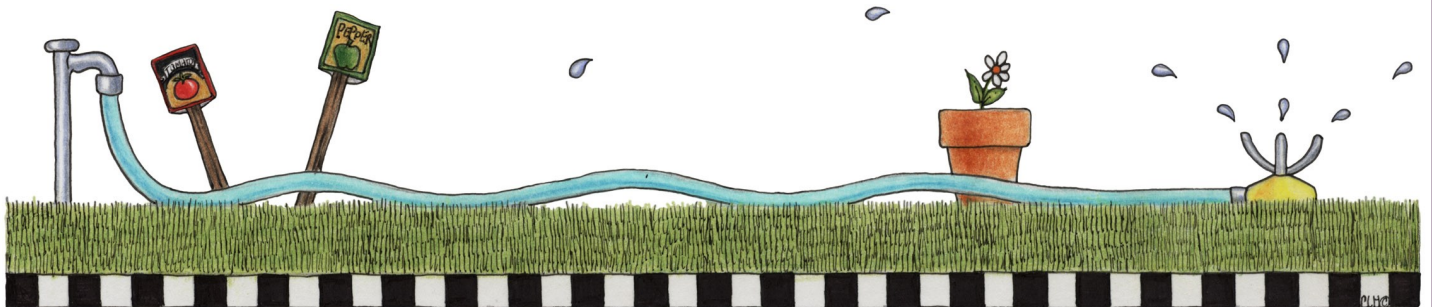
The June meeting is traditionally our annual business meeting, and every other year we elect new officers to the executive board of the unit. That will be the case at the upcoming meeting this June – assuming that we are able to have the meeting. Just before writing this I was informed that we won't be able to use the planned facility for this meeting and thus alternative plans are being considered. You will be informed as soon as those plans are in place – possibly even before you read this in the newsletter.

However the meeting is held, we need to vote for new officers because the current term expires at the end of June. The slate of potential officers as approved by the nominating committee is:

Unit Chair	Kathe Forrest
1st Vice Chair – Programs	Phoebe Lake
2nd Vice Chair – Membership	Diana Sellers
Secretary	Lori Yates
Treasurer	Debi Thomas

I and the nominating committee believe that these members will make a good executive board.

Many thanks and have a wonderful and safe June!
Henry Flowers
Past Unit Chair and Nominating Committee Chair



Favorite Gardening Things (Tools) – Dutch Perennial Planter

In continuing my discussion of favorite gardening tools, I'll move on to my second favorite tool – the Dutch Perennial Planter. Instead of a common trowel, I have been using this tool for almost 30 years now. It is actually a miniature spade with a sharp, almost heart shaped blade and a sturdy wooden handle. It is about 21 inches long and 4 inches wide. The main manufacturer of this tool is a Dutch company called DeWit, so you may likely see it also called a DeWit Perennial Planter.



Why do I like this tool? I find that when using it to plant, especially smaller 4-inch plants, I use my shoulder and whole arm to dig and don't put the pressure on my wrist as I tend to do with a common trowel. When planting hundreds of plants in one day, this keeps my wrists from aching. The sharp blade works well in both heavy and looser soils, but as with all digging tools sticky clay is still a challenge. I do find it easier to get that gook off the blade than I do with a curved trowel blade. This tool is also great for digging and dividing a perennial – dig it up, chop up the roots with the blade and replant. With plants such as daylilies, phlox, daisies and the like, this is easily done. The blade is also handy for chopping up smaller tree and shrub roots when planting, and I have also occasionally used it to kill a snake – not something I would likely attempt with a short trowel!

In addition to planting, the perennial planter can also be used for weeding. You can dig up deeper-rooted weeds, but can also turn it on an angle and use it to easily get under the roots of shallow-rooted weeds. With a fairly long handle, it is also handy for weeding without having to get down on the ground. I have another tool which I prefer for doing a lot of weeding, but this one comes in handy when planting and needing to do a bit of weeding at the same time.

I have had some of the DeWit-made planters last well over ten years. It is a good idea to occasionally oil the wood. Cleaning the blade, sharpening it when needed, and giving it a good oiling are also recommended. I have two of these in my work truck and use them almost daily. I've let coworkers use them on occasion (while I keep a watchful eye to make sure the tool doesn't develop legs), and most love it too – but they'll have to buy their own if they want one. In a landscape business tools seem to like to disappear, and I'm not about to let that happen to either of my two cherished perennial planters. Oh – and I also have three of them at home as well!

Sources: Amazon lists it currently for \$43.72 with free shipping. Burpee lists it for \$38.95, but shipping is not included – that will be \$10.95 more. You may also find it at other locations. I really recommend that you get the one made by DeWit. I once bought a cheaper, knockoff version and I proverbially got what I paid for. Unfortunately you aren't likely to find this tool at most hardware stores or nurseries. Some nurseries occasionally offer them for sale, but you are probably better off doing your shopping online for this tool. Just recently I got a catalog from Kinsman Company (www.kinsmangarden.com), and although they don't offer this tool, they offer a similar version called a perennial spade. This tool is 29 inches long and is a bit wider than the perennial planter and is listed at \$21.95 plus shipping and handling. I'm taking a chance and ordered one to see if it may be useful. I'll give a report in a few months.

Remember – I want to hear about your favorite tools too (I have that pair of Felco2 pruners waiting).

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

IT'S A MYSTERY...My Favorite Tool

In the May Pioneer Unit newsletter, Henry Flowers told us about his favorite Felco pruner and encouraged us to write about our favorite garden tool. I happened to have my favorite beside me on the porch as I read his request, so I was inspired to tell about mine.

I bought my favorite tool in a gift shop at the Royal Botanical Gardens of Melbourne in 1993. It was an unusual gadget, just a small souvenir, one that would fit in my purse to carry on the flight back to the USA. After September 1, 2001, this tool would have been a lethal weapon and not allowed within the cabin of the plane, but in 1993 it was just a single piece of "wire," twisted and coiled for use as a weeding tool, the handle coated with a plastic-type material. When I returned from my trip, the tool was put aside and forgotten for many years. It was rediscovered only this year during Covid-19 isolation. With the beautiful spring and renewed interest in my gardens, I put it to constant use and found the tool's real value. One might say it is for small weeding jobs, but my weeding projects so far this spring have not been so small. My husband Bob would have preferred to help me with a shovel, but I wanted to pick out the tiny, ornery weeds and roots that formed a ground cover in the daylilies. I know the weeds will be back, but by being "picky" I want to believe that they will not return so quickly or voraciously.

Why do I like this tool, other than where and when it was bought...the souvenir of an exotic trip? There are many reasons. It's a simple tool, inexpensive, no maintenance; it is lightweight and flat (it fits in an 8-inch business envelope). The single "wire" is very strong; the shape of the tool fits the hand nicely; it is easy to grip. The thin, blunt tip (1/8-inch diameter) penetrates most soils easily, getting under and into nasty nests of roots. The tool doesn't rust; it cleans easily. The red-coated handle is easy to spot.

I use it on smaller weeds and grasses. Today I cleaned a compact, gravelly bed where I once had planted lavender, having added rocks and a stone border to make the bed more Mediterranean for the lavender. The tool easily slid between the rocks. I dug it through soil and gravel, back and forth, in a criss-cross, tic-tac-toe pattern. Long roots and root clumps, of even the toughest of grasses, either "floated" to the surface or were easily pulled out. I used the curved end to lift buried stones from the border and to pull grasses growing out from under some stones. I can imagine that this tool was invented for the cracks in city sidewalks.

I'm calling it my Little Mystery Tool. I've never seen one here in the US...not to say they do not exist somewhere. It's such a simple concept, and I have wondered if one couldn't easily be duplicated. I'm not sure of the "wire" material...it doesn't bend; it doesn't dull. Maybe one of you has ideas for making one, or you've even seen them for sale.

Bob, who has watched enough FORGED IN STEEL episodes on the History Channel, says it is not as easy to replicate as I think. It's not just a wire. First, the metal has to be determined; second, what is the shaping process (by heat, a machine with pressure), and third, what is the handle coating and how is it adhered. Remember, the tool does not bend under strong tugging and it doesn't rust. So, I think Bob is right...it will not be easy to replicate. I think it best that I continue to use, to enjoy, and to not lose my Little Mystery Tool.

If I may make quick mention of a second favorite garden item of this season, it is the purchase of a TomCare combination garden bench/kneeling pad. I bought it from Amazon for \$44 on March 19, 2020. The sturdy bench/pad has pockets that are easily removed, and it switches easily from bench to pad usage. These durable pockets hold small tools including my trusty, rusty (don't tell Henry) Felco #6 pruners and a bottle of water. Most importantly, though, the pockets hold my iPhone and mini-Jawbone speaker with Bluetooth connection.

On these lovely spring days, listening to audible books and Spotify music has made the tedious work of weeding more a joy and less a drudge; time flies and the cares of the day are forgotten.

Ginger Heath



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:

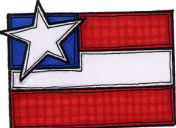

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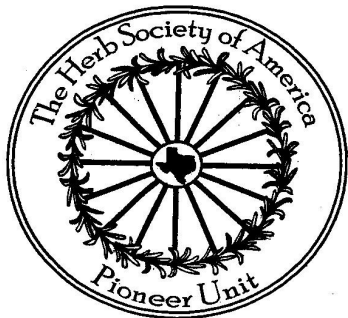
June 2020



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

July 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	6	7	8	9 Pioneer Unit Meeting (Keep hoping!)	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 Newsletter Deadline lrowlett@gmail.com	27 	28	29	30	31	



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Editor: Linda L. Rowlett, Ph.D.

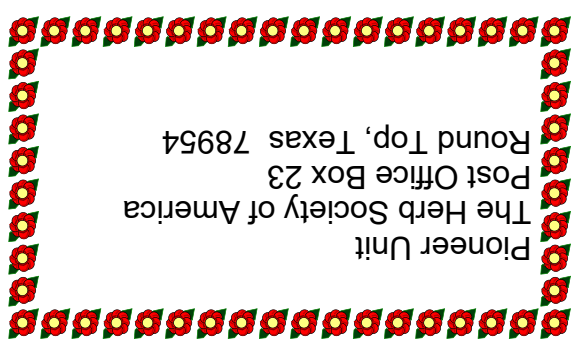
Pioneer Paths is a publication of The Herb Society of America, Pioneer Unit. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$10.00 per year.

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
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