

PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America Pioneer Unit

August 2025

Volume 32, Number 12

August 9

Green Corn Full Moon



Perseid Meteor Shower
August 12-13
(peak)



One of Diana's Black Swallowtail caterpillars

Message From the Chair

It's August 4th and it's raining at my house – all morning. Dark clouds rolled in around 9:00, and the wind started blowing hard. My weather app said there was no chance of rain, but nature had other ideas. Such a strange summer, but I love it. I'll take rain any day, even when it forces me to stop packing for a trip. My rain gauge says ½ inch. Yipee!! I am thrilled to announce that I have new babies – caterpillars, that is. I have been waiting and waiting for them to arrive, and finally I have six Black Swallowtail caterpillars munching away on my fennel plants. They triple in size every day.

July Outing to Martha's Bloomers - Irene Spurrier, along with assistant Susan Bame, has done it once again. They arranged for us to have a very enjoyable luncheon at Martha's Bloomers in Navasota. We did a little shopping before and after and had a delicious lunch. It was really relaxing to sit and visit with everyone. Irene continues to be 'Irene the Extraordinaire'. And Susan is Extraordinaire 2.

July Board Meeting – The Board held its first meeting of the new fiscal year on July 8th. Joanna will provide the details in her newsletter article. We're off to a great start. Tory Farley has worked hard to arrange an interesting slate of programs for the upcoming year. I'm looking forward to hearing what the presenters have to tell us. Carol Edwards and Connie Gwyn could use a few more volunteers for hostesses and speaker angels. The Board reviewed the budget from the last fiscal year and proposed a budget for this coming year.

Membership Renewal – Congratulations to Cammie Beierle for her diligence in completing our membership renewal process. She submitted our renewal report to HSA and will be distributing new membership cards in September.

Membership Directories – The new directories will also be distributed at the September meeting.

Have a great summer. See you in September.

Diana Sellers
Unit Chair, Pioneer Unit

UPCOMING EVENTS

PROGRAMS

Tory Farley, Programs Chair, has provided a list of interesting programs for our coming program year. We will have programs by members of our own Pioneer Unit, including:

- Victorian Language of Flowers by Cathy Nitsch and Phoebe Lake
- Medical QR Codes by Cammie Beierle
- Report from the Lavender Study Group

We will have three programs from the 2025 Herbal Forum:

- The Healing Chemicals of Herbs by Gayle Engels
- Growing Central Texas Herbs by Cristen Andrews
- Restoring Biodiversity to Your Soil with Native Plants by Stephen Brueggerhoff, also a member of the Pioneer Unit

For a list of all programs, check out your Program Yearbook in September.

FIELD TRIPS AND WORKSHOPS

The Field Trip Committee is holding meetings to look at several suggestions for a fall field trip. The Zilker Botanical Gardens in Austin is one of our options. We welcome comments and suggestions!

We're planning a September workshop with Caroll Edwards to make wind chimes for the Thyme Well Spent Shop with her beautiful beads. We'll also be planning hypertufa workshops when the weather is cooler, jelly/jam workshops, and more for the Shop.

Pat Cox
Education Chair

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

August 11 — Leona Marshall and Serena Speaker

August 14 — Susan Yancey

August 17 — Vicki Wiste



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Happy Summering to you!!

It's going quickly and, as much as I miss seeing you, I have enjoyed my calendar being a little less busy.

It's been fun chatting with some of our recent guests. I'm looking forward to a busy fall getting to know new members and exploring new possibilities!

I have managed to harvest almost enough elderberries to make a gallon of wine. Hopefully there will be a little wine tasting this fall!! The Roselle Hibiscus should start to bloom and grow calyxes toward the end of August/first of September, to be harvested November/December time frame. We got 6 gallons last year and are hoping for as many and more this fall!! I dried some for tea (tisane) and made many jars of jam for the Thyme Well Spent Shoppe. It was my first time to make and water-bath anything. I've pickled cucumbers and squash this year, too — more firsts!

We'll need to be starting seeds for a fall garden soon. What do you plan to grow?

Julia Johnson, Dawn Wilson, and I are working diligently on the October presentation. You will be making something natural to Treat What Ails You from many of the plants you grow.

I can't wait to see you in September and hear your gardening stories. I would love to see your pictures!! Stay safe in this heat and garden on!

Cammie Beierle
Membership Chair



Some of Cammie's Elderberries

PIONEER UNIT BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

July 8, 2025

Present: Diana Sellers, Tory Farley, Cammie Beierle, Royceanna Kendall, Joanna Hagler, Susan Bame, Pat Cox, Carroll Edwards, Phoebe Lake, Julia Johnson, Serena Speaker, Ann Lugg, Linda Rowlett, and Tess Hartman.

Minutes: The minutes of the April 2025 Board meeting were accepted.

Programs Report - Tory Farley gave an overview of upcoming programming including Mark Merriwether from Foraging Texas, Cammie Beierle sharing what she learned from her scholarship study, Cindy Meredith from The Herb Cottage, and Steven Chamblee of Chandor Gardens and a regular contributor to Neil Sperry Gardens. In addition, Tory is working to get a speaker on the topic of mycology.

Membership Report - Cammie Bierle recorded 48 members and 31 guests at the May meeting. All active members have renewed their membership. The Board approved new members Serena Speaker, Stephen Brueggerhoff, Vickie Wiste, Sherry Michie, Earl Mills, Sonia Miller, and Swee Rapatz.

Treasurer Report - Royceanna Kendall reported a bank balance of \$79,331.89 as of June 30, 2025. Diana reviewed the budget spreadsheet, as well as a spreadsheet with revenues from TWSS provided by Leslie Conrads. After discussion of the budget spreadsheet, Board members determined any line items that needed to be revised for the 2025-26 fiscal year. The Board will discuss spending for the upcoming HSA conference at the next Board meeting.

Standing Committee Reports

Archives/Rosemary - Susan Bame shared that Diana Reed and Leslie Conrads have worked with her to sort through archives. They are now ready to make determinations and organize documents.

Education - Pat Cox is researching field trips and is welcoming suggestions. One such suggestion is a canning workshop so our beloved Pioneer Unit recipes get passed along to more members and canners. A kitchen space large enough for a group to learn and share is needed.

Scholarships - Phoebe Lake led the discussion about PU member scholarship presentations. The Board approved for speaker fees to be paid to PU members who present on the topic of their scholarship.

Gardens - Pharmacy Garden - Julia Johnson led a discussion about how to get additional help in the gardens. The Friday volunteers are very appreciated and accomplish much, but more help is needed.

Sensory Garden - Serena Speaker will not be in the garden for 8 weeks. She is making a list so helpers can pick a job that needs to be done. Plans for three school programs are set. Serena suggested at least five volunteers for each program. A memorial tree is being planted for Devah Woods, the Brenham Elementary School student who passed away last May.

Communications Publicity/Website - Ann Lugg detailed her finding that the PU domain name will expire in May. The company issuing the name requires an automated payment. Diana

discussed credit card options with our bank, including an amount limit and prior approval of charges. The Board approved issuance of a credit card for PU.

New Business

The Plant Sale and Forum will be March 13th and 14th next year. This is a week ahead of Antique Week; therefore, our speakers will get complimentary housing at Menke House. Forum evaluations asked that classes be offered as they were in the past. Two people have offered to teach classes. Suggestions are welcomed. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanna Hagler, Secretary



FROM YOUR SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Each year we have a designated amount in our Pioneer Unit budget for Discretionary Giving.

Due to the success of our spring plant sale, the Discretionary Giving budget for this year is \$5,000!

Note: This is separate from the Herbal Scholars (scholarships for members) and Academic Scholarships (for High School Seniors and College Students).

We are now soliciting suggestions for this year's Discretionary Giving.

Last year the Pioneer Unit gave funds to Habitat to Humanity and local Elementary School garden projects. We can donate to them again or new organizations.

All ideas are welcome!

Please send your suggestion to PVLake@gmail.com or 281 660 6071.

Phoebe Lake
Scholarships Chair

HORTICULTURE STUDY GROUP

Lavender Buds and Cooking

The first thing that you need to know about cooking with lavender is to use the dried buds. The second thing that you need to know is to use *Lavendula angustifolia* varieties because they have a sweeter taste. Some examples of *lavendula angustifolia* include Provence, Sweet, and French. We had a beautiful tea party at the July meeting of the Horticulture Study Group. Diana Sellers, Leslie Conrads, Jana Rinehart, and Deb Pruitt served us all kinds of lavender-infused concoctions, including lavender chicken salad sandwiches, lavender scones, lavender-honey goat cheese, and lavender fudge. If your mouth isn't watering, then check out the photo of the food table and it will be! It was absolutely delicious as well as educational. Who knew that Courtney Kieke had heels and Phoebe Lake had gloves? Our tummies were very grateful to our terrific culinary team for illustrating what we can cook with lavender buds.



Our lavender varieties continue to do well (with some casualties). We have learned that the Fernleaf Lavender tends to dry out quicker than the others (apparently, it is a thirsty variety). The Fernleaf and the French lavenders, which we are growing in pots, appear to be growing very well. Although life in the garden is never perfect, we are happy to report that as of July, the lavender varieties in the study are growing.

Madeline Johnson



JULY GATHERING

Was it a field trip, a luncheon, or a shopping excursion? It was all three. With no membership meeting being held for both July and August, but members wanting to get together, we did just that and enjoyed a lovely morning of conversation and camaraderie. On Thursday, July 10th, 26 members gathered at Martha's Bloomers in Navasota. If you've never been there, or haven't been there lately, you might want to give it a try. It's a nursery, gift shop and luncheon spot all rolled into one.

Irene Spurrier

[Note: Photos below by Cammie Beierle]



Plant Stories: *Silphium laciniatum*

If you can't make it on time to plant sales, it's always a good idea to still go. You may just find an unexpected treasure others have overlooked.

Such was my thinking many years ago when I showed up at the end of the Tomball Garden Club annual plant sale. Even so, I nearly walked by two large, tired-looking leaves in a one-gallon pot. A helper told me it would quickly grow into a 6-foot tall plant with bright yellow flowers. So I made my purchase and planted it in a sunny front bed.

Four months later, *Silphium laciniatum* grew into a 6-foot plant covered with sunny yellow blooms. It was one of the many well-loved plants that made the move to Brenham years later.

Silphium laciniatum is a wildflower also known as Compass plant because the leaves tend to align themselves north and south. Grows best in full sun or part shade. It attracts bees -- a good thing, but has a taproot that can go down 6 feet -- maybe not such a good thing.

One of the traditional uses was to burn the root during thunderstorms to avoid being hit by lightning. Not sure I'll try that!

Phoebe Lake

P.S. I wrote that article many years ago and only recently learned that what I have is, in fact, Cup Plant, or *Silphium perfoliatum*. It's called Cup Plant because water collects near the stem where the coarsely serrated leaves meet to form a cup. Aren't plants fascinating?

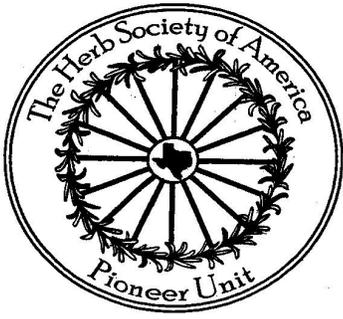


August 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
CG = Culinary Group FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden	HSG = Horticulture Study Group HB = Herbal Blends				1 FH Workday 9-11:00	2
3	4	5	6	7 SG Workday 9-11:-00	8	9
10	11	12	13	14 No Meeting	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28 HSG 10:00-noon	29	30
31						

September 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 CG Menke House	4	5 FH Workday 9-11:00	6
7	8	9	10	11 PU Meeting	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 SG Workday 9-11:-00	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 HSG 10:00-noon	26	27
28	29	30			CG = Culinary Group FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden	HSG = Horticulture Study Group HB = Herbal Blends



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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—Diana Sellers

Vice Chair Programs—Tory Farley
Secretary—Joanna Hagler

Vice Chair Membership—Cammie Beierle
Treasurer—Royceanna Kendall



Horticulture Study Group
Tea Party