

PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America
Pioneer Unit

September 2025

Volume 33, Number 1

September 1

Labor Day

—

September 6

Falling Leaves Full
Moon



September 22

Autumnal Equinox

MONTHLY UNIT MEETING

Date: September 11, 2025

Time: 9:30 a.m. Meet and Greet
10:00 a.m. Presentation and Meeting

Location: Brenham Presbyterian Church
900 South Jackson Street

Directions: Exit Highway 290 to Business 36 North (Day Street) into Brenham. Continue north to College Street. Turn left to Jackson Street, and the church will be on your left.

Program: Victorian Language of Flowers

Speakers: Cathy Nitsch and Phoebe Lake

Lunch: Back to School Favorites

Host Team: Patty Mills, Pat Cox, Carla Lessard, and Leona Marshall

SPECIAL REQUEST: Cathy and Phoebe ask that you bring clippers to the meeting. You will be making tussie mussies as part of the meeting, and this process will be facilitated if everyone has clippers or scissors for cutting flowers.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

According to radar, I see that it is raining today in Round Top, as I write this. Actually, it appears to be raining across Central Texas. I hope each of you receives lots of rain. I am also seeing temperatures in the 70s and 80s. That's even better news. I hope it's true! It has been rainy and cool where I am, with temperatures in the 50s and 60s.



Fog often rolls up into the canyon in the afternoons. This is a photo of Menkhaven in the Conejos Canyon, Colorado, where we stay every year. It's up in the mountains at about 8,600 feet. Makes breathing a little difficult.

I'm still vacationing but will be home in time for the September Unit Meeting. I look forward to seeing everyone. Cathy Nitsch and Phoebe Lake will be starting off our new Program Year with a presentation about the meaning of flowers and teaching us how to make tussie-mussies. They need you to bring clippers if you can. I will be bringing the new Directory and Program Yearbook to the September meeting. And, amazingly, it will be time to start planning our March events.

I look forward to seeing you in September and am hoping Fall will be in Texas soon.

Diana Sellers
Pioneer Unit Chair

FROM THE PROGRAMS CHAIR

Hello herbies!

Our September presentation on The Language of Flowers will be given by our very own members, Phoebe Lake and Cathy Nitsch. Please bring your garden clippers to help with trimming the "Tussie Mussie" bouquets.

We will be meeting at Brenham Presbyterian Church, located at 900 S. Jackson Street. Program begins at 10:00 a.m., followed by lunch.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone, as we kick off our 2025-2026 Pioneer Unit Season!

Tory Farley
Programs Chair



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Hello, Dear Herbal Friends!!

It's been a full two months since we've been together. I certainly hope you've had a good, healthy summer!! I'm ready to be back together again!

My Roselle Hibiscus is putting on tiny calyxes right now. With all the rain, the bushes are quite sizeable. I am hoping for a good harvest: my flowers have been assaulted by snails and with all the rain, we've fought fungus on lots of the plants. I really enjoyed not having to water!!

If anyone would like to practice/learn jam making, let me know and we'll make a joint effort for the Thyme Well Spent Shop!! Also, I have one more bunch of elderberries on the bush that I'm waiting on to make some Elderberry wine. If you're interested in experiencing that with me (it will be my first time making it!), I'd love to have you.

You will pick up your new membership cards at the meeting next Thursday, so be on the lookout for a table with your new card on it!

Excited to see you!!

Cammie Beierle
Membership Chair

HORTICULTURE STUDY GROUP

Keeping Bugs Away and More with Lavender

Lavender is often used in making sprays and sachets to discourage unwanted bugs. Jules Johnson and Shawn Helm presented the HSG members with a 'Bug Off' spray for use outdoors to repel biting insects. They had made the spray by infusing Witch Hazel with lavender, lemon eucalyptus, rosemary, lemongrass and catnip (harvested from the Pharmacy Garden). A teaspoon of citronella essential oil and 2 tablespoons of apple cider vinegar completed the recipe. Sachets of lavender are often used to repel moths, scorpions, and other insects.

Royceanna Kendall demonstrated how to make a paste for applying to the rash caused by poison ivy. It's her son's favorite salve for reducing itching and healing fast. It contained ingredients that we were unfamiliar with (Bentonite clay and Colloidal Silver) as well as a good dose of lavender and peppermint essential oils.

The last presenter, Ginger Heath, gave us a lesson on making essential oils for skin care. Lavender is often used in skin care products, but seldom alone. Lavender provides the most notable effect both in what you smell first and in grounding you. Lavender essential oil is a top note in skin care and can be used with any type of carrier oil, such as sunflower oil (Ginger's favorite). The product can be made more interesting by adding a base note, such as a vetiver.

As always, we learned a lot and walked out with samples to try at home.
Submitted by Madeline Johnson



CULINARY GROUP

The Culinary Group stayed out of the kitchen for the summer. By the time you receive this newsletter, the group will have had its September meeting, a tea party. Cathy Nitsch and Cammie Beierle provided the herbal beverages, and the remainder of the group provided herbal tea party foods. All are welcome to attend the Culinary Group's "party" every month!

Belinda Weatherly



SENSORY GARDEN

Calling all gardeners to help with the Sensory Garden at Brenham Elementary on Thursday, September 18th. Serena Speaker will not be there because she is having knee surgery and needs your help with weeding from 9:00 till 11:00 a.m. I will be watering the Sensory Garden while Serena is unavailable because of her knee.

Susan Bame



ARCHIVE COMMITTEE

The Archive Committee is almost done with our organizing. If anyone has anything you think we might need to retain in the Pioneer Unit archives, such as pictures, minutes of meetings, etc., please bring the materials to the September meeting, and Leslie Conrads, Diana Reed, or I will collect them. If you have questions about whether something should be archived, direct that to any of us.

Thank you.
Susan Bame

FESTIVAL HILL GARDENS

Hello friends, here's a little update from Festival Hill:

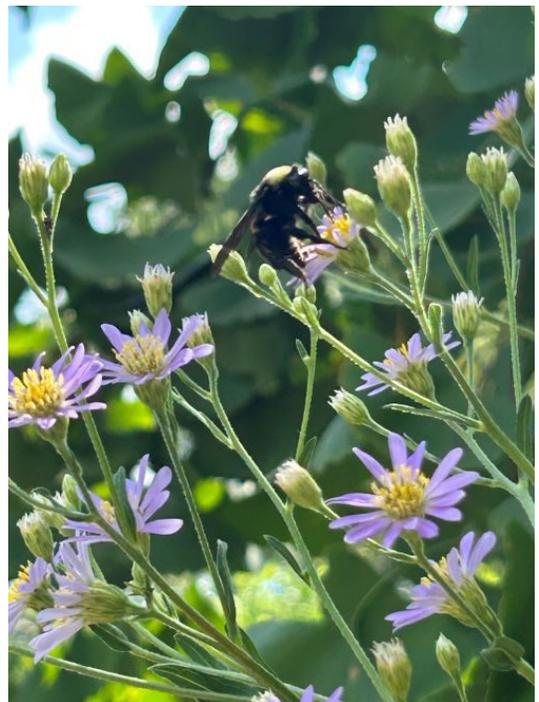
The celosia is really starting to take off in the Mediterranean bed and is such a nice contrast with the herbs showcased there. I'm waiting to see the roselle and mahogany hibiscus burst into bloom. And the swan plant, a gift from Henry Flowers, has been very beautiful and interesting with its ball-shaped seed pods: it's a milkweed and even attracted some monarchs to lay their eggs on it! Look for the swan plant in the Africa bed and at Ann's Arbor towards the lake.

The Step Garden near the parking area behind the Menke house is really shaping up nicely and will have its new pathway finished Saturday, September 6th, during our community Gardens & Grounds volunteer day. Also, we'll be installing our first bird sign on the walking trails that day! Please consider joining us for our First Fridays at Festival Hill: we meet up from about 9-11:00 a.m., on the first Friday of the month. Park behind the historic Menke house, and you'll find us working back in those herb gardens.

The Pharmacy Garden website is coming along nicely. If you've signed up to research a plant and are having trouble inputting your information into the form, just email me at aggieized@gmail.com. Ann Lugg and I are working to get the website LIVE on our unit's website very soon, as well as finding appropriate signage for the garden so that our visitors can learn more about the plants they are seeing as they enjoy the Pharmacy Garden. For a sneak peak, visit <https://www.herbsocietypioneer.org/pharmacy-garden/> .

I caught a glimpse of this fuzzy fellow to the right a week ago, visiting our blooming Tartarian Asters in the China bed of the Pharmacy Garden. I enjoy seeing the bees buzz about wherever I am, but yikes! Their sting is rather annoying as I found out on the Friday before Labor Day. I was placing some pea gravel out in the Mediterranean bed; it had already gotten quite hot and the bees were whirling everywhere. I quickly stepped between two large basils, when wham! I got stung right on my calf. Sure: it hurt a moment, but the random flare-ups of crazy intense itching are about to drive me nuts! Oh well, I do still love the bees!

Julia Johnson
Pharmacy Garden Chair



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 to new organizations.

All ideas are welcome!

Please send your suggestion to PVLake@gmail.com or 281 660 6071.
Phoebe Lake
Scholarships Chair



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- September 3 — Kay Scanapico
- September 5 — Noreen Barker
- September 7 — Irene Spurrier
- September 8 — Caroll Edwards and Deb Pruitt
- September 12 — Debi Thomas
- September 13 — Janie Plummer
- September 14 — Joanna Hagler
- September 15 — Pat Cox and Sue Edmundson
- September 22 — Linda Hartson and Michael Perkins
- September 27 — Connie Gwyn
- September 30 — Georgetta Welch



Noreen Barker (September 5) sent the following meaningful quotation from Mother Teresa of Calcutta as her birthday message to the Unit: "Whenever you share love with others, you'll notice the peace that comes to you and to them."

Deb Pruitt (September 8) sent the following: "I am so excited to be learning from so many talented herbalists! I continually share information; this Sunday I am discussing "Herbs in the Bible" with my women's group.

"I have my three kids growing and cooking more with fresh herbs. The two in south Austin hang out at The Great Outdoors herbs section just for fun! My son complains about keeping his herbs alive on his third floor apartment patio. But his basil looks better than mine!"

Pat Cox (September 15) had this to say about her birthday: "After the trauma of the BIG birthday last year, this birthday I am just grateful for more time to enjoy family and friends, to visit my sister in the UK, to read more books, and of course to have more adventures with the Pioneer Unit."



September 2025

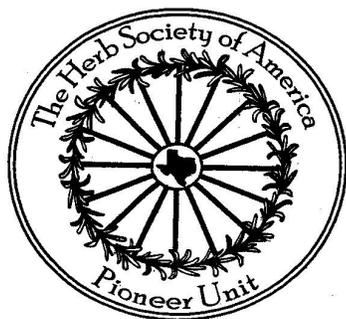


Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 CG Menke House	4	5 FH Workday 9-11:00	6
7	8	9	10	11 PU Meeting	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 SG Workday 9-11:-00	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 HSG 10:00-noon	26	27
28	29	30			CG = Culinary Group FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden	HSG = Horticulture Study Group

October 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
CG = Culinary Group FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden	HSG = Horticulture Study Group		1 CG Menke House	2	3 FH Workday 9-11:00	4
5	6	7	8	9 Pioneer Iunit Meeting	10	11
12	13	14	15	16 SG Workday 9-11:00	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 HSG 10:00-noon	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



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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."

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Vice Chair Membership—Cammie Beierle

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HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Did you know the Herb Society of America has a library?

The Herb Society of America Library Collection includes more than 3,500 volumes covering a wide range of topics related to herbs and gardening. Materials include books, periodicals, multimedia, art, rare books, and historical archives.

You can find links for the library by going to the Herb Society website, accessing the menu, and scrolling down to HSA Library.

HSA LENDING POLICY: HSA members may borrow items for a period of thirty days. Items are shipped by USPS media mail unless expedited shipping is needed. The borrower pays return postage. Materials may be requested via phone (440-256-0514), letter, or in person.

You can also become a Friend of the Library by making a donation to Friends of the Library. Suggested levels of membership include:

\$35.00 Mint

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