

PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America
Pioneer Unit

November 2025

Volume 33, Number 3

November 2
Daylight Savings
Ends
(fall back one hour)



November 5
Frosty Full Moon



November 11
Veterans Day

November 27



MONTHLY UNIT MEETING

Date: November 13, 2025

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

Location: St. John's United Church of Christ
516 North Colorado Street, Burton

Directions: [from the east] Exit Highway 290 onto Texas Spur 125 north into Burton. At North Brazos Street, turn right and continue to East Texas Street. Turn right and go one block to North Colorado Street. The church will be on your left.

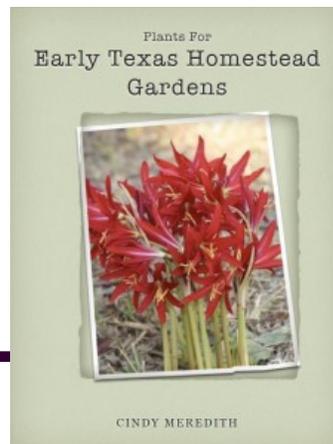
[from the west] Exit Highway 290 onto Texas 390 going northeast into Burton. At the intersection of 390 (Washington Street) and Main Street, continue straight into Burton on East Washington Street. At North Colorado Street, the church will be on your right.

Program: Herbs in Early Texas Homesteads

Speaker: Cindy Meredith
The Herb Cottage

Hosts: Caroll Edwards and Connie Gwynn, Leslie Conrads, Tess Hartman, Becky Nichols, and Leah Pearce

Lunch: Grateful Feast

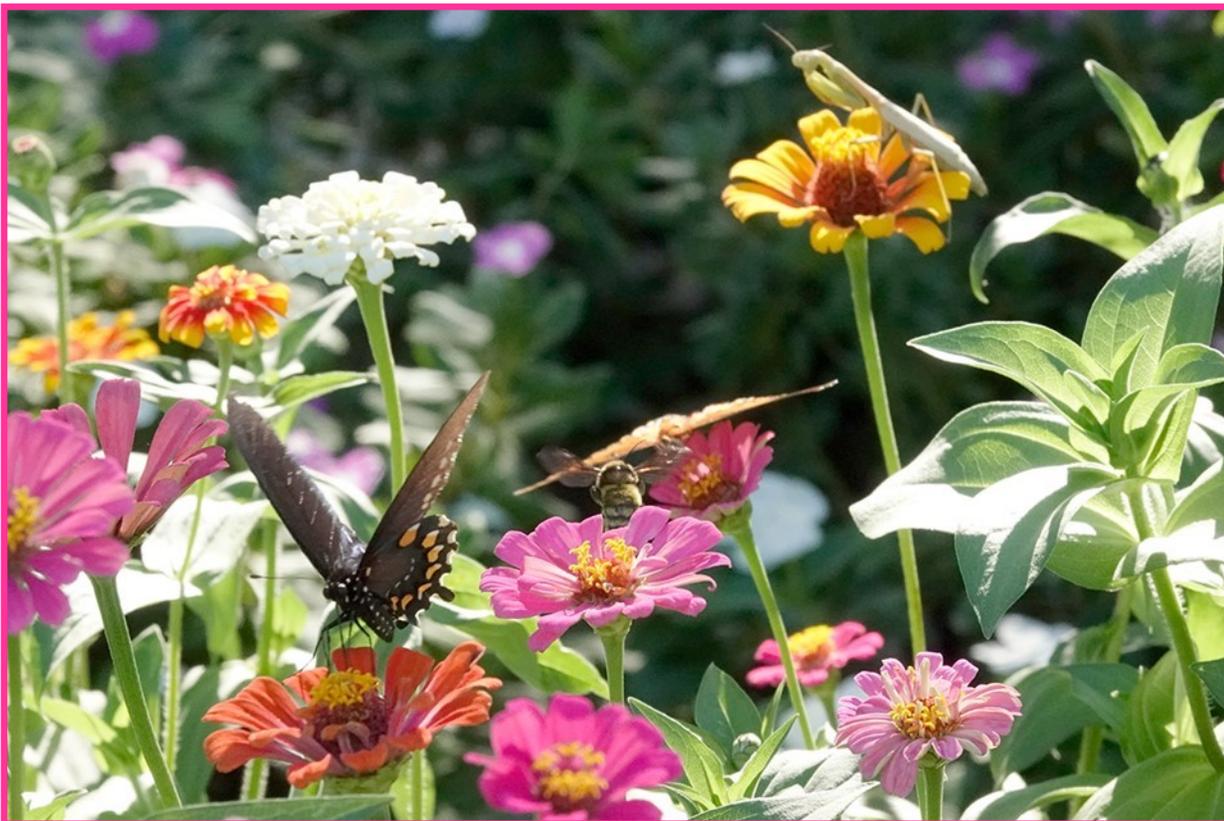


MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I woke up to 42° this morning, and I'm wearing a sweater as I write this article. This makes me happy and relieved that our part of the world has finally cooled off some. And we received rain last week. Yipee! What a wonderful experience!

My Garden News — Leaves are falling rapidly from the trees now. I will be leaving the leaves on the ground this year; no raking. I did this last year, and it worked out fine. I have learned that one of the reasons our insect population is declining is due to the raking up of our leaves each fall. Apparently, many insects overwinter in the leaves on the ground. I hope to plant several new trees next week. They say Fall is the best time.

From October 10th through the 26th, I participated in the Texas Pollinator BioBlitz. The first few days I was quite discouraged. I didn't see any Monarchs. Then, suddenly, here they came. I had more Monarchs in my garden than I have ever had. And other butterflies too. My sister and I went driving one afternoon, butterfly hunting in various gardens, and she captured a most amazing scene in one photograph – two butterflies, an American Bumblebee, and a Praying Mantis, who was eyeing the butterflies with hungry anticipation. See the photo below.



Pipevine Swallowtail

American Gulf Fritillary
Bumble Bee

Praying Mantis

Continued on next page

If you would like an easy way to earn some Volunteer Hours, write and submit an article to Pioneer Paths about what’s happening in your garden.

October Board Meeting — The Board met on October 8th. See Board meeting highlights from Joanna Hagler, our Unit Secretary, elsewhere in this newsletter.

December 11th Christmas Meeting and Luncheon — Caroll Edwards and Connie Gwyn have details in their newsletter article. If you want to attend, please be prepared to pay \$10 (cash or check) at the November meeting. Guests pay \$25. Connie has done an incredible job working with Chef Nicole at Festival Hill to keep the cost down to \$25 for our meal and provide a delicious and festive luncheon. Thank you, Connie!! I do apologize that we have to ask you to only pay with cash or check. I know credit cards can be easier, but the credit card companies are charging us too much when a member pays with a credit card. We appreciate your understanding. If you want to attend, but can’t make the November meeting, please contact either Connie, Caroll, or me to make payment arrangements. We have to receive any checks in the mail by Monday, November 24th, as we have to let Festival Hill know the count by Wednesday, November 26th.

EdCon 2026 Update — On Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, HSA will post Early Membership Registration. If you’re planning to attend, you’ll want to take advantage of discounted prices. Be sure you have your Membership number on hand when you register.

New Members — I’m looking forward to welcoming new members to our Unit over the next couple of meetings. Thanks to all the hard work that Cammie Beierle does to make sure the prospective members have the information they need. Also, thanks to Julie Johnson and Serena Speaker for helping them complete the required garden hours.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the November meeting.
Diana Sellers
Pioneer Unit Chair

WORKSHOPS

Be sure to check your emails for news of upcoming hypertufa workshops now that the weather is cooler. Jelly and craft workshops for TWSS will be following later.

Thanks,
Pat Cox

FROM THE PROGRAMS CHAIR

As the cool days of fall settle in, we turn our attention to the past — to the early Texas homesteads where herbs were not just a charming addition to the garden, but a vital part of daily life. This month, our program will explore "Herbs in Early Texas Homesteads" with Cindy Meredith, owner of The Herb Cottage. Cindy will take us back to a time when every plant had a purpose and every garden was a living apothecary.

Join us November 13, 2025, 10:00 a.m., at the United Church of Christ in Burton.

Warmly,

Tory Farley
Programs Chair



FROM THE HOSPITALITY TEAM

GRATEFUL FEAST

We are out of DOOR PRIZES. If anyone has donations they would like to share, please bring them to the meeting

We previously sent a list of lunch items that everyone has signed up for. Thank you!

Because we are having such a large luncheon, WE HAVE DECIDED TO ONLY SERVE COFFEE, TEA, AND WATER in the early morning. Breakfast items are not needed.

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

In order to keep our costs down for the SHARING CHRISTMAS luncheon at Festival Hill, they will be serving a nice selection of Harvest Salads and Soups, along with dessert. It has been requested that members planning to attend pay their \$10.00 on or by the day of our November meeting. Guests who wish to attend the luncheon will again owe \$25.00 this year. CASH OR CHECK ONLY PLEASE. No credit/debit or PayPal. Thank you.

PLEASE BRING canned goods or non-perishables for DONATION to the December meeting. (Please do not bring to the November meeting!)

Thank you,

Caroll Edwards and Connie Gwyn
Hospitality CoChairs

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Dear Herbies!

A very Happy Fall to you!! At this writing, the weather forecast says a chance for rain this weekend! Sure hope they are right!!

This was my first year to not plant a summer garden and put in a fall garden instead. *This year*, it worked! We have enough cucumbers to make pickles with many more little ones growing (I hope the 45 degrees in the forecast doesn't slow them down too much!); of course the broccoli is doing well. I need to find calendulas to plant!

The October meeting was great fun!! Thank you, Dawn Wilson, Julia Johnson, Sonia Miller, Swee Leng Rapatz, and Melissa Houck for all your help!! I learned so much in the process, much of which is actually sticking. **Also, if you are interested in buying some dried herbs to make your own herbal tea blends, I discovered that, as members of HSA, we have a 20% discount with Mountain Rose Herbs.** The code is in the members' area on the HSA website.

We had a wonderful group for last month's meeting. There were 35 members and six guests: Melissa Houck, my beautiful, long-time friend from Houston, manned a tea station for us; Kathy Carter - this was her second meeting, and she will be ready for membership soon; Barbara White, also her second meeting, and she will be ready for membership soon; Sharon Fothergill, her 3rd meeting, and she has almost completed her training for membership; of course Roman White, who we hope is interested in membership (GREAT talk on Falcons, Roman!); and Randy White (just a little more time with us and you will be a certified member!!).

November is such a special month to meet! Even in our darkest moments, we have so very much to be thankful for: learning to provide for ourselves and our families, making wonderful friendships, a solid roof over our heads, comfortable beds to sleep in, and a relatively safe place to live! I am absolutely thankful for all of you!!! You enrich my life more than you know!!

I'm looking forward to all that yummy pre-holiday holiday food!! See you soon!

Cammie Beierle
Membership Chair



HORTICULTURE STUDY GROUP

Musings on Lavender and Water

Everything we read and from every field trip, the advice was limit watering. Lavenders like it dry. Well, the real answer is maybe, sometimes, yes and no. Confused? The Horticulture Study Group has learned that Fernleaf Lavender likes regular water and suffers horribly if it dries. However, other varieties are more drought tolerant, but even they have their limits. After a month with no rain and hot temperatures, our lavenders had their tongues hanging out and were begging for water. So we watered them, and they smiled.

Then there is the issue of how to water. Can you use overhead sprays of water or do you need to keep the foliage as dry as possible? Again, it seems that it depends on how quickly the foliage dries after getting wet. If the lavender will get several hours of sun and wind after watering, then it will tolerate overhead watering. One thing does seem to be clear and that is that lavenders don't like humidity. But then, we don't either. Unfortunately, we can't control the humidity in our gardens.

More on the lavender study will be presented to the Unit in February.

Madeline Johnson



SENSORY GARDEN

I will be out of the country on the usual Sensory garden meeting day — November 20th — but any of our members may go on that day or any other day to help spruce up the Sensory Garden for all of us and the community to enjoy. Just perform things that you do in your own garden and that will be great. I was there recently with the color wheel planted by Henry Flowers with fall flowers, and they are beautiful.

The garden received good rain during the past week which makes everything look great. Help me with this garden by giving a little time to maintain it.

Blessings,
Serena Speaker
Sensory Garden Chair

Our next visit to the Sensory Garden with students is Friday, November 14th, starting at 8:15 and ending by 10:20 a.m. We will be talking about pumpkins and hopefully planting.

PLEASE bring a pumpkin to the NOVEMBER meeting. If you can help with the kids, please let me know.

Thanks,
Debi Meschwitz



CULINARY GROUP



The Culinary Group continues to meet the first Wednesday of the month at 10:00 a.m. in Menke House. All are welcome - just show up and enjoy food, fun talk about food, and good herbie conversation. Put it on your calendar and join us.

Belinda Weatherly

MINUTES OF UNIT MEETING
HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
PIONEER UNIT

October 9, 2025

The October meeting of the Pioneer Unit was held at Brenham Presbyterian Church, Brenham, Texas.

Diana Sellers, Unit Chair, introduced Cammie Beierle, recipient of a Pioneer Unit Herbal Scholars Scholarship. Cammie enlisted the help of Dawn Wilson and Julia Johnson. The presentation, entitled "Medicinal Herbs for Everyday," was hands-on as members moved through stations making teas, salves, and oils. The uses and benefits of specific herbs were discussed. Cammie recommended using the herbs from our gardens for the best results.

Tory Farley, Programs Chair, introduced Roman White, recipient of a Pioneer Unit Scholarship. Roman is a Texas state licensed falconer. He used the grant to attend a conference with the North American Falconers Association. His sport is hunting small game with falcons. Falconers are invited by municipalities who need to reduce their population of rabbits, rats, and other small game. Roman explained it's a consensual partnership between the falcon and falconer with some falcons returning to nature and some choosing to stay with their falconers. Roman led a fascinating question and answer session as members learned about falcons and other birds of prey.

Cammie Beierle, Membership Chair, welcomed six guests and 35 members.

Julia Johnson, Pharmacy Garden Chair, is talking with a contractor for the greenhouse. Members were encouraged to call Julia to help with the plans. Tables for the Plant Sale will be made on Wednesday, November 19th, from 8:00-11:00. Contact Julia to sign up to help. The Pharmacy Garden website is live. Many plants need to be researched. Let Julia know if you would like to research a particular plant. There are also regions of the garden which need to be adopted.

Serena Speaker, Sensory Garden Chair, thanked Susan Bame for helping in her absence. A workday will be held October 28th. Debi Meschwitz thanked everyone who helped prepare the garden for the scavenger hunt with the elementary children.

Leslie Conrads, TWSS Chair, asked for ideas and makers for items under \$20 for the shop. Members were encouraged to attend upcoming workshops to make products for TWSS.

Diana asked members to look for an upcoming email regarding registration for the Herb Society of America EdCon which will be held April 15-17, 2026, in San Antonio. She shared the theme for this year's Herbal Forum — sustainability. Members were encouraged to share any catchy slogans for our sale motto related to the theme.

Connie Gwyn and Caroll Edwards reminded us to sign up for the December meal.

Hostesses Becky Nichols, Patty Mills, Wendy Matthews, Madeline Johnson, and Noreen Barker were thanked for the delicious meal they provided.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Hagler, Secretary

PIONEER UNIT BOARD MEETING SUMMARY OCTOBER 2025

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

Minutes: The minutes of the July 2025 Board meeting were accepted with two corrections.

Programs Report - Tory Farley has all programs planned for the year and has begun scheduling for 2026. The culinary group will present in September 2026. Tory adjusted the 2025 program lineup as a speaker cancelled. Cindy Meredith will present in November 2025 and June 2026. Diana reminded the Board of the earlier date for the Plant Sale this year. Therefore, our Unit meeting preparing for the Plant Sale will be March 6th.

Membership Report - Cammie Beierle recorded 58 membership renewals and five new members. The September meeting had 44 members and 11 guests in attendance. Louise Rice is eligible for her 20-year pin.

Treasurer Report - Diana summarized quarterly spending and recurring annual expenses. The bank balance on September 30, 2025, was \$73,082.77 with two certificates of deposits in the amounts of \$24,692.50 and \$16,860.77. Ann Lugg added that the Online Images expenditure has been cancelled. Royceanna Kendall, Treasurer, noted nearly a \$10,000 increase in our bank balance compared to a year ago.

Standing Committee Reports

Archives/Rosemary - Susan Bame shared that Diana Reed and Leslie Conrads have worked with her to sort and organize archives. An organizational system has been created, and documents are ready to return to storage.

Education - Pat Cox is researching field trips and is welcoming suggestions. Pat is considering Zilker Botanical Gardens and Blissful Folly Farm. Blackwood Educational Institute was recommended and discussed. Hypertufa workshops are planned when the weather gets cooler. Cammie will be giving a jam and jelly workshop. Carroll Edwards is planning a crafting workshop to make windchimes. Pat will give her lotions workshop and have a member shadow her so they can give it in the future.

Hospitality - Members will be signing up for the Thanksgiving meal at the October monthly meeting. Connie Gwyn asked for door prizes for meetings. The December meal was discussed. In the past members paid \$10 for their meal and PU paid the remainder.

Motion: Upon a motion duly made by Connie Gwyn and seconded by Royceanna Kendall, the Board voted unanimously for the Pioneer Unit to pay a portion of members' meals in December. Members will pay \$10 for their meals.

Scholarship - Phoebe Lake shared the scholarship committee's plans for the distribution of discretionary funds. The elementary schools who received funds last year will receive them

again this year. Phoebe read responses she got from the schools when she asked how the funds helped them. Each school had a unique and inspiring response. The greenhouse project will receive \$1,500. A donation of \$1,500 will be made to the National Herb Garden in Washington, DC for their intern.

Gardens -

Pharmacy Garden: Julia Johnson is working with a contractor for the greenhouse restoration. The preliminary projection for labor is \$3,000. Julia currently has \$7,000 with donations from Pioneer Unit, South Texas Unit, Billie Parus, and a local donation. The contractor has worked with Creekside Nursery in the past so is familiar with greenhouse construction. They are working with Festival Hill to determine a layout that meets the needs of their maintenance crew, as well as the gardeners. Julia asked for ideas for layout from PU members. The Greater Fayette Community Foundation holds 5 volunteers' days at Festival Hill. They will continue to help with the greenhouse and projects throughout the gardens. The memorial bench was discussed. Diana researched Frazier's who did not have benches. Several Board members recommended a cedar mill in Industry. Last year, members of the PU volunteered for a total of 336 hours in the Pharmacy Garden. So far this year 40 hours have been volunteered. Julia asked for suggestions to get more volunteers. She showed ideas for t-shirts and discussed pins.

Sensory Garden: Serena Speaker thanked Susan Bame for coordinating the garden while she was out with surgery. An upcoming workday is scheduled on the same day as a school garden lesson. The Board discussed how the two events could happen concurrently. Henry Flowers will replant the color garden when the weather cools. He will spray for weeds but can't lay gravel this year. Serena asked for suggestions for a gravel company. The Board discussed purchasing a weed eater since the school lawn crew does not weed. Serena asked how to entice more volunteers. Several members expressed the need to discuss continuing the garden or releasing it to the school.

Communications - Publicity/Website: Ann Lugg has posted the yearbook. The recent Herbarist publication of HSA has a Pioneer Unit advertisement with a QR code linking to our website.

Plant Sale - Julia Johnson, Madeline Johnson, and Phoebe Lake have begun preparations for the Plant Sale by sending preliminary requests to growers. Diana praised the new tables designed by Rob Lake. A few more will be made at a November 19th table workday. It will be held from 8:00-11:00 a.m. behind the Menke building. Julia suggested the tables might be dual purpose and used in the greenhouse.

Thyme Well Spent Shoppe - Leslie Conrads and Pat Cox are updating a document referencing makers and the items they make.

Old Business - Diana summarized the need for a credit card for the Unit. Our website domain fee is paid every five years. A member, now an affiliate member, was paying from their personal credit card. Diana spoke with Round Top State Bank who suggested a credit card with two authorized users. The Board discussed the two users being the chair and treasurer.

Motion: Upon a motion duly made by Ann Lugg and seconded by Carroll Edwards, the Board voted unanimously for the Pioneer Unit to apply for a credit card through Round Top State Bank.

New Business

EdCon sign up begins the Friday after Thanksgiving. Diana suggested that funds budgeted for national meetings be used to subsidize some members' costs. Our Unit will be donating an item for the "swag bag" that participants receive. Cammie and Leona Marshall may have a table with items for sale at the convention. The Board discussed sponsoring a speaker at EdCon.

Motion: Upon a motion duly made by Diana Sellers and seconded by Tory Farley, the Board voted unanimously to donate \$1,000 to sponsor a speaker at the HSA convention in San Antonio.

Diana summarized the discussion from the Plant Sale/Forum meeting held in September. The hours for the sale will remain 9:00-4:00 both Friday and Saturday. The theme will be related to sustainability. Diana asked for help with drafting a slogan.

Feedback from last year's Forum asked for the return of classes on Friday. The Board discussed pluses and minuses. The suggestion was to start small with one or two classes. Suggestions for teachers include Andie Marsh, author of "Soil is Sexy" on Substack/Instagram/YouTube, and Andrea DeLong-Amaya, Director of Horticulture at Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanna Hagler
Secretary



FROM YOUR SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Each year, depending on the success of our Plant Sale, we designate funds to support both local and national recipients in the area of gardening. Earlier this year the Pioneer Unit Board decided on \$5,000 for this discretionary giving.

This year we are donating \$500 each to four local elementary schools - Brenham, Alton, Krause, and Round Top. Each of these schools has gardening activities for students. This is the second year we have given money to these schools and they are thrilled with our donations "to encourage a love of gardening in children." In a thank you note, one teacher wrote, "The gardens are a place at our school that everyone loves and brings smiles to many people."

In addition to these school donations, our Unit has given \$1,500 to the support of the National Herb Garden intern. The intern assists the director of the National Herb Garden (the largest designed herb garden in the country!). The National Herb Garden was a gift from the Herb Society of America to the American people in 1980 and is located in the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C.

We also plan on designating \$1,500 to the refurbishment of the Festival Hill greenhouse. This worthwhile project is still in the planning stage but will be a great asset to both our Unit and Festival Hill.

As an Herb Society of America Unit, we should be proud of our contributions!

Phoebe Lake
Scholarship Chair



PIONEER UNIT HERBAL SCHOLAR PROGRAM

Interested in learning more about a particular herb, gardening idea or culinary topic?

Apply to become an Herbal Scholar! Previously known as a Unit Scholarship, here's how it works. You fill out a simple application outlining the area of study that you're interested in pursuing.

You'll then receive a stipend of \$250 to use in researching your study-books, classes, etc. In return we ask that you present your findings to the unit in the form of a presentation, a display, an article for the newsletter or an idea of your own.

Previous applicants have studied lavender, salvias, homeopathy, the genus Rubus, flavors of Japan, Oaxacan cooking, witching herbs, and The Spice Trail.

As you can see, the possibilities are endless!

For more information contact Phoebe Lake, pvlake@gmail.com, 281 660 6071

✂

HERBAL SCHOLARS APPLICATION FORM

Name _____

Phone Number _____

Proposed Use of Funds _____

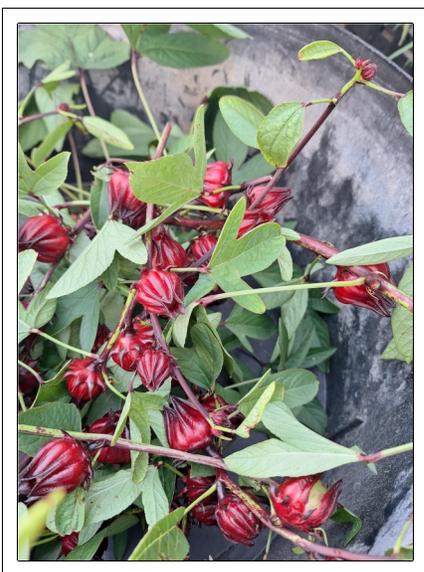
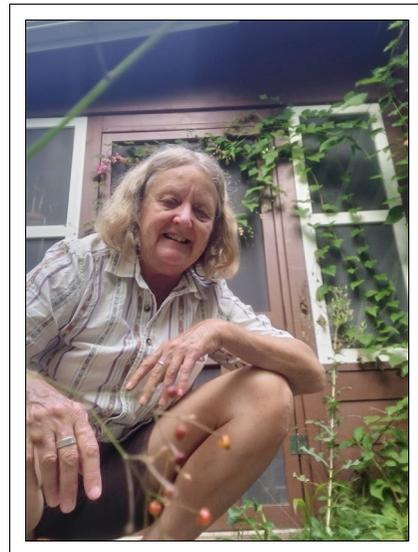
Note: Return completed form to Phoebe Lake.

November Birthdays

November 4	Wendy Matthews
November 7	Belinda Weatherly
November 13	Sherry Michie
November 14	Jana Rinehart
November 19	Lois Sutton
November 24	Bev Elam
November 26	Diana Reed
November 27	Stephen Brueggerhoff
November 30	Tory Farley



Wendy Matthews (November 4) sent the following message and the adjacent photograph: "Another year of friends, fun, and learning. And a screened porch!"



Bev Elam (November 24) sent the photo to the left and this message: Thank you for sharing the Roselle Hibiscus seeds from last year. I had a bumper crop this year. "

November 2025

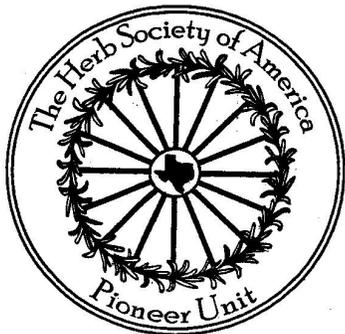


Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
CG = Culinary Group FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden	HSG = Horticulture Study Group					1
2	3	4	5 CG Menke House	6	7 FH Workday 9-11:00	8
9	10	11	12	13 Pioneer Unit Meeting	14 SG student event 8:15-10:20	15
16	17	18	19	20 SG Workday 9-11:00 HSG 10:00-noon	21	22
23	24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

December 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 Pioneer Unit Meeting	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 SG Workday 9-11:00	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 	26	27
28	29	30	31 		CG = Culinary Group FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden	HSG = Horticulture Study Group



PIONEER PATHS

Volume 33

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—Diana Sellers

Vice Chair Programs—Tory Farley

Vice Chair Membership—Cammie Beierle

Secretary—Joanna Hagler

Treasurer—Royceanna Kendall

SPICY CRANBERRY JAM

- 12 ounces fresh cranberries
- 1 1/4 cups sugar
- 1 orange zested plus 2 tablespoons of juice from the orange
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/8 teaspoon grated nutmeg
- 1 tablespoon grated crystalized ginger



Combine all of the ingredients in a large pot. On medium high heat, bring the ingredients to a boil, stirring occasionally. Lower the heat to a simmer and cook for 15 to 20 minutes until the mixture thickens and all the berries have popped. Use a potato masher to pulverize the berries. Stir. If you want your jam very smooth, use an immersion blender or food processor after it has thickened.

Spoon into clean, airtight containers. Store in the refrigerator.

[Editor's Note: Some of you might have received this recipe from HSA last year. I made several batches and thought that now was a good time to repeat the recipe. Last year I put "three bags of cranberries" on my grocery list, because the bags were generally 12 ounces. The bags at HEB last year were three pounds! I still have cranberries in the freezer.]