

PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America
Pioneer Unit

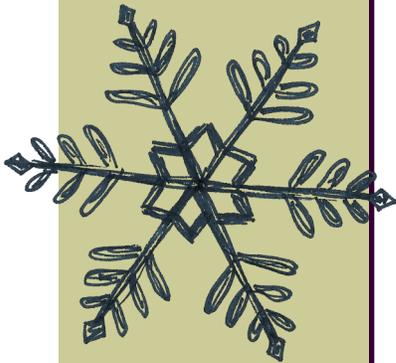
December 2025

Volume 33, Number 4

MONTHLY UNIT MEETING

- Date:** December 11, 2025
- Time:** 9:30 a.m. Meet and Greet: Service Building Classroom
10:00 a.m. Presentation and Meeting: Edythe Bates Chapel
11:45 a.m. Lunch at Menke House
- Location:** Festival Hill
Round Top, Texas
- Directions:** From Highway 290, take Texas 237 south 6.6 miles to Jaster Road. Turn right on Jaster Road. Turn left into the parking lot.
- Program:** Native Bees
- Speaker:** Tom Shaughnessy
Master Naturalist Gideon Lincecum Chapter
- Angel:** Julia Johnson
- Host Team:** Linda Rowlett, Ann Lugg, Debi Thomas, and Belinda Weatherly
- Lunch:** Christmas Lunch at Festival Hill

December 4
Long Nights Full
Moon



December 21
Winter Solstice



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Wasn't Thanksgiving Day a perfectly beautiful day. Such a nice day to spend with friends and family. We spent a lot of time playing outside with grandchildren. I thought about all the things I am thankful for – family, friends, and all of you. The Pioneer Unit has wonderful members – thoughtful, hardworking and soooooo creative. The things you do is what makes our Unit an excellent program. Here's what we achieved in 2025:

2025

An end to another busy and productive year has arrived. So many great accomplishments this year:

- Tory succeeded in bringing us another set of superb programs. Thank you very much, Tory! One of our program highlights was having Monika Maeckle speak to us. It was very rewarding to extend an open invitation to the community to come hear her and purchase her books. I think everyone also really enjoyed hearing Roman White bring his red-tailed hawk to a meeting and talk about falconry; then the icing on the cake were the presentations in September and October by Unit members Cathy Nitsch, Phoebe Lake, and Cammie Beierle. Very creative and informative programs. They were the recipients of our Unit Scholarships.
- Phoebe and her Scholarship Committee (Cindy Nash and Diana Reed) are off to a great start once again. In the Spring they awarded eight \$1,000 scholarships to students for college tuition. In addition, they recently gave \$500 each to four local elementary schools for gardens, \$1,500 to fund an HSA Intern for the National Herb Garden, and \$1,500 to renovate the Festival Hill Greenhouse. Wonderful work by the Scholarship Committee.
- We had a successful Herbal Forum, Plant Sale, and Time Well Spent Shoppe sale in March.
- The Pioneer Unit held multiple programs for the Brenham Elementary School 2nd graders. Those kids love to come to the garden and participate in the activities that Debi Meschwitz has planned for them. A huge thanks to all the Pioneer Unit volunteers who help with those activities and who help work in the garden. Serena Speaker continues to lovingly oversee the garden.
- How about the Festival Hill Garden!! It's looking beautiful, and we owe it to Julia Johnson who's always thinking about what we can do to make it shine and encouraging members to volunteer to beautify it. You're wonderful, Julia!!
- I'm also sending a special shout-out to all the Pioneer Unit Board members. They are in the 2nd year of their term and have done an amazing, fantastic job of providing leadership. One always steps out of their comfort zone some when agreeing to serve in a Board position, and they have all stepped up to the task.

2026

The approach of the new year brings a flurry of activity as we start preparing for our annual March event. There is much to be done – plants to order; jellies, mustards, lotions, and handmade items to be made; and speakers to be lined up. We need everyone to be involved as much as possible. As we have discussed, the events in March are our primary fund-raising events. The money we make is what allows us to have our wonderful programs and give generously to those needing resources as they learn about gardening.

March Forum, Plant Sale, and Time Well Spent Shoppe

Sign-up sheets will soon go up so you can see the different areas that need your help. Please sign-up for whatever you can. We need everyone’s help. Your time will be much appreciated. Leslie Conrads is the new Thyme Well Spent Shoppe chair. Please let her know if you are planning to make something to sell at the TWSS.

I look forward to seeing you at the Pioneer Unit Christmas Celebration. Have a blessed Holiday and Happy New Year.

Diana Sellers
Pioneer Unit Chair

FROM OUR PROGRAMS CHAIR

As we turn the calendar toward the close of the year, I’m delighted to invite all Pioneer Unit members to our December meeting at Festival Hill — one of the most cherished gatherings of our season. This meeting offers us a chance to pause amid the holiday bustle, enjoy one another’s company, and celebrate the spirit of fellowship that defines our Unit.

The "Native Bee" program by Tom Shaughnessy, a member of the Texas Master Naturalist Gideon Lincecum Chapter, will be in the Edythe Bates Chapel, 10:00 a.m., December 11, 2025. The program will be followed by a festive holiday luncheon in the warm and welcoming surroundings of Festival Hill. This meal has become a beloved tradition, and I hope everyone has signed up for the luncheon to savor both the food and the camaraderie.

Please join us as we gather to celebrate the close of another productive year together. Your presence enriches our community, and I hope to see many of you at Festival Hill.

Warm Regards,
Tory Farley
Programs Chair



FROM THE HOSPITALITY CHAIRS

BRING CANNED GOODS or Non-PERISHABLES for Donation in Round Top. The most requested items are protein, such as chicken, tuna and Spam.

Caroll Edwards and Connie Gwynn

MINUTES OF UNIT MEETING
HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
PIONEER UNIT
November 13, 2025

The November meeting of the Pioneer Unit was held at St. John's United Church of Christ, Burton, Texas.

Tory Farley, Programs Chair, introduced Cyndi Meredith, owner of The Herb Cottage in Hallettsville. Cyndi's presentation, "Herbs in Texas Homestead Gardens," provided ideas and inspiration for our gardens. Cyndi is a wonderful resource and can be found at www.theherbcottage.com. She is also on Instagram, @herbiecott, and on Facebook, @theherbcottage.

Diana Sellers, Unit Chair, opened the meeting. Cammie Beierle, Membership Chair, introduced three new members: Barbara White, Kathy Carter, and Sharon Fothergill. Cammie welcomed five guests: Amy Gardner, Lorentina Fielding, Lisa Nicklow, Joy Kamani, and Sheila Ripple. There were 48 members present. Susan Yancey is eligible for her 15-year pin.

Royceanna Kendall, Treasurer, discussed our bank balance of \$71,668. She filed the IRS 990 on behalf of the Pioneer Unit.

Phoebe Lake, Scholarship Chair, summarized PU generosity through scholarships, including two PU herbal scholarships. Eight \$1,000 scholarships were awarded to students. Four elementary schools received \$500 each for their garden programs. The National Herb Garden intern received \$1,500. Monies will also be used to support the Festival Hill greenhouse.

Julia Johnson, Pharmacy Garden Chair, shared that the restoration of the Festival Hill greenhouse will soon begin. New tables for the Plant Sale are being built by PU volunteers.

Leslie Conrads, TWSS Chair, asked members to email her what they are making for TWSS.

Debi Meschwitz asked volunteers to bring pumpkins to the November Sensory Garden lesson with Brenham Elementary School children. Members are asked to thank Plants N Things Nursery for their contributions to the school program.

Diana reminded members of the luncheon next month.

Connie Gwyn and Caroll Edwards thanked hostesses Becky Nichols, Leslie Conrads, Leah Pearce, and Tess Hartman for the delicious meal they provided.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Hagler, Secretary

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Oh, WOW, I already want summer back! Love the rain, but this cold is not for me or my little tomatoes on the bushes. The last threatened near freeze, I picked all my green tomatoes and made a green tomato pie using green apple pie recipe. The spices were tasty, but the tomatoes were too hard and needed to be blanched or roasted before baking into a pie. My family liked it, but next time (next meeting?) will be better!!

I am enjoying the novelty of the black turmeric!! It has a strong flavor and is so pretty!! The health benefits are greater with this variety. I am intrigued by the colors of the varieties of turmeric!! (See photo below.)

Our last meeting (feels like 3 months ago) was fun. We had 47 members and six guests: Amy Gardner (her 3rd meeting), who brought Lorentina Fielding; Lisa Nicklow came with Debi Meschwitz; Joy Kamani (her 2nd meeting); Sheila Ripple (her 2nd meeting); and we were delighted to see former member and Chair Karen Cornwall!!!

There are a few guests who are close to membership. Y'all, watch for the new members and guests and make them feel at home and welcome by introducing yourselves!

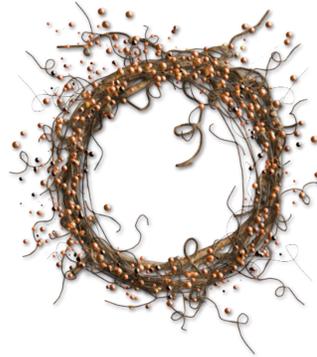
I look forward to the December meeting, then January when we get serious about the annual Plant Sale and Thyme Well Spent Shoppe! New members and guests: This event is a great way to get some extra volunteer hours outside of the gardens. Sign up sheets will be out soon, and workshops are where the magic happens!!

See you soon!!
Cammie Beierle
Membership Chair
281-844-4852



December Birthdays

December 9 — Beverly Green
December 19 — Linda Rowlett
December 25 — Becky Nichols
December 31 — Phoebe Lake



[Editor's Note: I have yet to find a foolproof way to get everything into the newsletter without missing something sent to me, and last month I missed an email from one of our November birthday members. So here it is!]

Diana Reed (November 26) wrote: "I enjoy reading, gardening and manipulating needle, thread, and colorful fabric. I believe if we keep our enthusiasm and curiosity for all we encounter on this planet (and beyond), we will never get bored! So blessed to have such a supportive and loving husband who has put up with my shenanigans for 52 years. Cheers to another trip



Beverly Green (December 9) sent the lovely photo to the left and identified it as the latest photo of herself with Amelia, her first great grandbaby.

Linda Rowlett (December 19): "Last night I had the pleasure of going into downtown Houston to listen to the Houston City College (HCC) Choral Ensembles Concert. Not much will get me into downtown Houston, but my grandchild A.J. Giles is a high schooler taking classes fulltime in the Media, Visual & Performing Arts Center of Excellence at HCC. The program helped move me toward getting some holiday spirit.

"I am happy to be starting another year with family and friends, including lots of herbie friends!"

December 2025

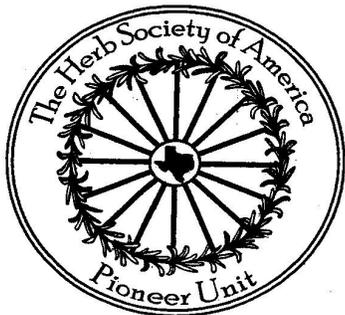


Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 CG Menke House	4	5 FH Workday 9-11:00	6
7	8	9	10	11 Pioneer Unit Meeting	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 SG Workday 9-11:00	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 	26	27
28	29	30	31		CG = Culinary Group FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden	HSG = Horticulture Study Group

January 2026



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

Vice Chair Programs—Tory Farley

Vice Chair Membership—Cammie Beierle

Secretary—Joanna Hagler

Treasurer—Royceanna Kendall

"Winter Trees" William Carlos Williams

All the complicated details
of the attiring and
the disattiring are completed!
A liquid moon
moves gently among
the long branches.
Thus having prepared their buds
against a sure winter
the wise trees
stand sleeping in the cold.

Stock Photo: the Long Nights
Full Moon in the branches of
winter trees

