

PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America
Pioneer Unit

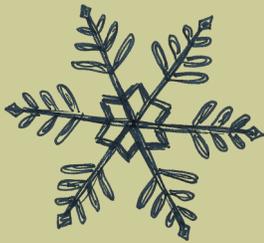
February 2026

Volume 33, Number 6

MONTHLY UNIT MEETING

- Date: February 12, 2026
- Time: 9:30 a.m. Meet and Greet
10:00 Presentation
- Location: Bethlehem Lutheran Church
412 South White Street
Round Top, Texas
- Directions: From US 290, take Texas 237 south for 7.6 miles. Turn right onto Bauer Rummel (Round Top Road) and then left onto South White Street. The church and Fellowship Hall are at the end of the street on the right.
- Program: Lavender
- Speaker: Pioneer Unit Horticulture Study Group
- Angel: Swee Leng Rapatz
- Lunch: Share a new recipe (with lavender perhaps?)
- Host Team: Shawn Helm, Leona Marshall, Sherry Michie, Sonia Miller, and Leah Pearce

February 1
Snow Full Moon



February 2
Ground Hog Day



February 14
Valentine's Day

February 16
Presidents' Day



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

BRRRRR!!!! I was completely caught off guard by this freeze. I usually watch the weather forecast everyday but had stopped watching because the weather people were predicting warm until February. I was in Austin the entire week leading up to the freeze and was not able to cover any plants. I guess I'll find out which plants are capable of withstanding just about anything – treacherous heat to treacherous freezes. I planted 10 new native trees in the Fall. We shall see what happens.

February Unit Meeting

As a member of the Horticulture Study Group, I am looking forward to us presenting what we learned about lavender this past year. Lavender can be a difficult plant to grow in our area, but it was fun to try. I think a number of people in the group were successful. The group has prepared a great presentation for the Unit.

Forum, Plant Sale, and Thyme Well Spent Shoppe

Lots of work is happening to prepare for the upcoming **Forum, Plant Sale, and Thyme Well Spent Shoppe**. The planning committee has met several times and developed some strategies to make the event go smoothly. Please read the article in this newsletter that outlines the plan for Pioneer Unit Members to shop early the Thursday afternoon prior to opening the doors to the public Friday morning. The purpose of the plan is to increase smooth operations for all.

Forum - The Forum speakers have been determined:

Andie Marsh, Soil Scientist – Soil Stewardship: Microbes & Soil Regeneration

Cynthia Meredith – Native Herbs in early Texas Homestead Gardens

Linda Franzo – Herb Serendipity: The Unexpected Pleasures of Herbs & Edible Flowers

Ramin Baranpourian – The Golden Wonder: Exploring the Origin, Horticulture & Medicinal Uses of Turmeric

Friday Workshops

We will once again offer workshops on the Friday before the Forum. We'll need volunteers to assist as Speaker Angels for the workshops. There will be two different workshops, each offered twice, 1:00 to 3:00 and 3:30 to 5:30:

Worm Bin Workshop – Andie Marsh

Chutney: The Fantastically Flavorful Condiment – Billi Parus

Volunteering - Sign-up sheets were posted at the January Unit meeting for everyone to volunteer at the March Event. Many members signed up but there are still many spaces available. We could use everyone's help. There are many areas that members can choose to volunteer – a few examples: setting up for the plant sale, cashiers (Plant Sale or TWSS), ticket writers (Plant Sale or TWSS), greeters and hostesses for the Forum, stuffing packets for the Forum attendees, working on needlework items, and many other areas. Many members have already stepped forward to say they are willing and ready to be active participants, and I know I can count on all of you. Thanks so much!

Prospective Members and Volunteering at the March Event

Please talk with Diana Sellers if you are working towards becoming a Pioneer Unit Member but have not completed all joining requirements (which includes meeting attendance, garden work, submitting a completed application, and paying joining dues).

Looking forward to seeing you all at the February meeting,
Diana Sellers
Chair, Pioneer Unit

**FROM THE PROGRAMS CHAIR**

Hello!

I hope this message finds you well. I'm looking forward to our upcoming program and wanted to share the details with you.

Our next meeting will be held on February 12, 2026, and will feature a presentation by our Horticulture Study Group, who will be reporting on Lavender. We can expect an informative and engaging program highlighting this versatile and much-loved herb.

Meeting Details:

Date: February 12, 2026, at 10am
Program: Horticulture Study Group – Lavender
Location: Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Round Top, Texas

We hope you will join us for this enjoyable and educational gathering. Thank you to the study group members for their time and preparation, and thank you all for your continued participation and support.

Warm regards,
Tory Farley
Programs Chair

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Hey Herbies!

Like you, I am looking forward to warmer weather! Ask me again about July!

The January meeting was really enjoyable!! Stephen is an interesting speaker: very relatable and easy to learn from. Thank you, Stephen! It was good to see you and hear your knowledge about native plants.

We had a total of 48 attendance: 40 members and eight guests: Jill Quimby (she needs one more meeting to complete her requirements for membership!), Brigitte Beseche (I apologize if the spelling is wrong), Karen Bookout, Debi and David Roberson, Robin Greer, Arlene Hamilton (came with Mary Doebbeling), and Sheila Ripple.

Please add these addresses to your directory for our newest members:

Barbara White, P.O. Box 2001, Brenham 77834
Sharon Fothergill, 1901 S. Austin, B, Brenham 77833
Kathy Carter, 12000 Gerke Road, Brenham 77833.

We are so glad to have you be a part of the Pioneer Unit! These new members are working hard to get to know this Unit. Please, take a few minutes to get to know them.

Dear guests and those new to the Pioneer Unit, please join us as we prepare for our biggest fund-raiser, the Forum and Plant Sale in March! The funds we earn from this event go to support so many people involved with our Unit and outside our Unit! Signup sheets will be on the welcome table as you enter the building. We look forward to getting to know you better!!

See you soon!

Cammie Beierle
Membership Chair



CULINARY GROUP

Culinary is diligently working on preparation for our September presentation. This is terrible work involving eating delicacies prepared by our membership. I tell people all the time that it's a party every month. We meet the first Wednesday of the month at 10:00 in Menke House. All are welcome to check us out.

Belinda Weatherly



HORTICULTURE STUDY GROUP

HSG Starts A New Year

Limoncello basil seed and cuttings from Lemon Verbena and Rober's Rose Lemon Pelargonium were the main attractions at the opening meeting of 2026. Everyone had the opportunity to start limoncello basil from seed and either a lemon verbena or a Rober's Rose Lemon Pelargonium from cuttings. Propagation is very important to our continued enjoyment of herbs. So we shared in this fun gardening experience.

The really cold weather held off long enough for us to welcome 25 members, including four new growers and one returning to the group after a short sabbatical. We provided an overview of the way the group works, with more details to be provided at the next HSG meeting. It is not too late to join.

Contact either Madeline Johnson (979-249-6211) or Phoebe Lake (281-660-6071) for more information .

Horticulture Study Group: Lemony-Herb Varieties in the Study
February 26, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to noon
Festival Hill, Schoolhouse #9

Submitted by Madeline Johnson



Pioneer Unit Board Meeting Summary January 6, 2026

Present: Diana Sellers, Cammie Beierle, Royceanna Kendall, Joanna Hagler, Susan Bame, Pat Cox, Connie Gwyn, Phoebe Lake, Julia Johnson, Ann Lugg, and Tess Hartman.

Minutes - The minutes of the October 7, 2025, meeting were accepted.

Programs Report - Diana Sellers confirmed with Stephen Brueggerhoff for the Forum. She reminded the Board of the March 13th and 14th dates for the Plant Sale/TWSS/Forum event.

Membership Report - Barbara White, Sharon Fothergill, and Kathy Carter were approved as new members. Cammie Beierle noted 46 members and six guests in attendance at the December PU meeting.

Treasurer Report - Royceanna Kendall reported the bank balance on December 31, 2025, was \$63,235.46 with two certificates of deposit in the amounts of \$25,359.90 and \$17,328.72. The bank balance is approximately \$5,000 higher than at this time last year.

Standing Committee Reports

Scholarship- Phoebe Lake detailed how the Herbal Scholarships could be used to attend HSA EdCon.

Pharmacy Garden: Julia Johnson continues to work closely with the contractor who will begin work on the greenhouse as soon as a heater is installed.

Communications Publicity/Website: Ann Lugg is preparing our Plant Sale advertisement for Texas Gardener Magazine.

Plant Sale: Julia Johnson reported that Madeline Johnson has begun ordering plants from main vendors. Ann Lugg's husband, Simon, repaired wagons. Ten new wagons are needed. Rebar was cut for a perimeter barrier for the plant area. Phoebe Lake ordered vests for ticket writers.

Thyme Well Spent Shoppe: The culinary group is making mustards to sell.

Old Business - Diana continues to work with the bank to get a credit card issued. The bank communicated with MasterCard to facilitate issuance, which is expected soon.

The cedar bench for the Mary Reeves memorial was cost prohibitive. Julia is working with Lamar at Festival Hill to find a reasonably priced bench in alignment with existing benches in the gardens.

New Business

Tess Hartman will chair the nominating committee for new Board members. Candidates are needed by the May newsletter.

A committee will be formed to review PU Bylaws, Rules, and Guidelines.

The March event (Plant Sale/Forum/TWSS) was discussed. Andie Marsh, Cindy Meredith, and Ramin Baranpourian will be Forum speakers.

The Festival Hill-Pioneer Unit Memorandum of Understanding will be reviewed to determine if updates are needed.

The meeting was adjourned.

Joanna Hagler



February Birthdays

- February 3 — Tony Scanapico
- February 13 — Barbara White
- February 17 — Barbara Solis
- February 20 — Bonnie Lout
- February 22 — Sara Holland

MINUTES OF UNIT MEETING HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA PIONEER UNIT January 8, 2026

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

Tory Farley, Programs Chair, introduced Stephen Brueggerhoff, Horticulture Extension Agent for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Brazos County. Stephen encouraged members to cultivate and embrace what we have here in Texas. Most PU members live in either the Post Oak Savannah or the Blackland Prairie and the USDA Hardiness Zone 9A. Many examples of beautiful and interesting native plants were presented. The benefits of growing native plants include increased biodiversity, soil support, reduced water and fertilization, and increased property values. Resources for additional information were given, including Homegrown National Park, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Native Plant Society of Texas, and Native Prairie Association of Texas. Stephen also hosts the radio program Garden Success, airing Thursdays from noon to 1:00 pm on KAMU-FM.

Diana Sellers, Unit Chair, opened the meeting.

Cammie Beierle, Membership Chair, welcomed 40 members and eight guests. New members Kathy Carter, Barbara White, and Sharon Fothergill were welcomed. Carolyn Thomas celebrates 20 years of membership. Our unit welcomed 10 new members in 2025.

Royceanna Kendall, Treasurer, reported our bank balance of \$63,235.46 as of December 31, 2025.

Pat Cox, Education Chair, thanked participants in the hypertufa workshops who made items for the Potting Shed at the Plant Sale. She asked members to check their emails for upcoming crafting and lotions workshops.

Julia Johnson, Pharmacy Garden Chair, encouraged members to sign up for volunteer spots for the Plant Sale. She shared that the greenhouse construction is gaining momentum and should begin upon arrival of the heater. In the Pharmacy Garden, First Friday volunteers will be digging up turmeric for gifting to Forum attendees.

Phoebe Lake, Scholarship Chair, is sending emails to high schools and colleges for scholarship applications. Members were asked to tell any students they know how to apply for the scholarship. The student's major needs to be related to horticulture. Phoebe referenced the recent newsletter in which PU's herbal scholarships could be used to attend HSA EdCon in San Antonio. She received two applicants.

Phoebe invited members to join the Horticulture Study Group as they study "lemony herbs." It's a fun, close-knit group of gardeners who learn how to grow and use the herbs they study. Contact Madeline Johnson or Phoebe Lake, if interested.

Continued on next page

Diana reminded members of the earlier date for the Plant Sale, TWSS, and Forum. Because the event will be one week earlier than most years, our March PU meeting will be March 5th at the Festival Hill schoolroom. We will prepare for the Plant Sale, TWSS, and Forum. The speakers for Forum will be soil scientist Andie Marsh, native herb enthusiast Cindy Meredith, and greenhouse manager at Temple of Compassion, Ramin Baranpourian. At the request of Forum attendees, a Friday class will be offered. Andie Marsh will teach a class on simple methods of making compost. Diana asked for volunteers to sign up to help with Forum either by making packets or by becoming a speaker angel.

HSA EdCon will be held April 14-17, 2026. Multiple classes and speakers are scheduled. Diana worked with the PU Board to combine unused funds in the budget into five (5) \$500 stipends to attend EdCon. An email from Diana was scheduled to go to members the Monday following the meeting. Recipients will pay for their registration and hotel and be reimbursed for \$500 of the cost.

Diana asked for volunteers to review the PU Bylaws, Rules, and Guidelines found in the Unit Directory. This hasn't been done for six years. This will be done quickly with Diana and two Board members.

Caroll Edwards, Hospitality Chair, expressed appreciation to the members for their generous food contributions at the December meeting. She delivered them to Burton Ministries where they will be distributed to needy families. Connie Gwyn, Hospitality Chair, thanked hostesses Cindy Nash, Cathy Nitsche, Caroll Edwards, Becky Nichols, and Deb Pruitt.

Noreen Barker is collecting seeds, books, and magazines for TWSS.

Tess Hartman, Past Chair, will lead the nominating committee to fill Board positions. The election will be in June. Please contact Tess if you would like to serve on the Board.

The meeting was adjourned and members enjoyed a delicious lunch.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Hagler, Secretary

SENSORY GARDEN

The Sensory Garden will meet on our usual day on February 19th from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. at 1000 East Blue Bell Road. Please bring gloves and snippers to help get the garden looking better after all this cold weather. It will also be time to trim our roses.

Please join me for a beautiful 2 hours in this garden.

Thank you.
Serena Speaker
Sensory Garden Chair

THYME WELL SPENT SHOPPE

I must start out with a big **THANK YOU** to everyone who has made, or is making, jams, jellies, mustards, handicrafts, cards, and other items for the shoppe. Also, I could not have stepped into this position without the help/guidance of Cathy Nitsch, Pat Cox, and Louise Rice. Thank you to Henry Flowers, who while no longer a member stepped up to make many of his products, and Patty Mills who agreed to blend the rest of them.

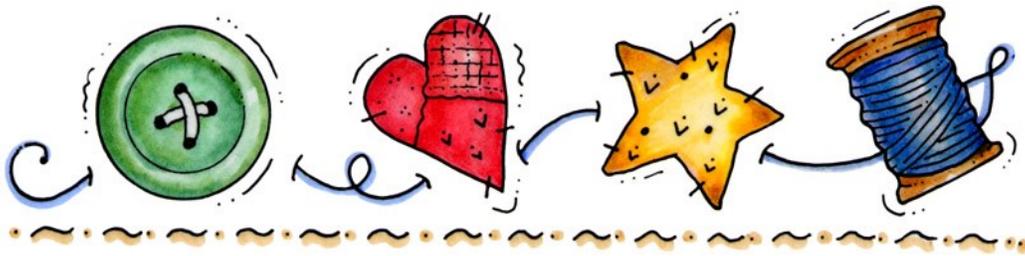
It looks like in addition to all our usual wonderful products, we will be adding a number of new things this year. With that said, there are still workshops planned throughout February, so please watch for upcoming emails on dates and times and join them. We will need all the products brought to the work meeting at **Festival Hill on March 5th** so we can begin the set up.

Lastly, volunteers for the shoppe are still need for Friday and Saturday assisting at checkout. If you have any time available, please contact me.

Leslie Conrads

832-331-4642 (cell- leave a message) or email: conradsfamily@gmail.com

Thyme Well Spent Committee Chair



Attention Jam and Jelly makers: if you have finished canning and would like to bring your products to the February meeting, that would be great. One less thing to do in March. Otherwise, bring them to the March workday. Please contact Cathy Nitsch at cathy.nitsch@gmail.com if you have questions.

Cathy Nitsch

979.421.9980 home

281.235.5078 cell

Pioneer Unit Member-Only Plant Pre-Sale Shopping Experience

To ensure that the Plant Sale is set up properly and that all members have the most positive experience possible, the process outlined below will be observed for the *Member-Only Plant Pre-Sale*. The **Pioneer Unit Member-Only Plant Pre-Sale Shopping Experience** is a special time set aside to recognize and reward members for all their dedication and hard work throughout the year to make our Unit so special. We thank you for everything you do!!

Placement of Plant Signs by Designated Plant Sale Coordinators

From 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. on the Thursday before the Plant Sale, only designated Plant Sale Coordinators will tackle the placement of plant signs. This is a crucial task that must be done correctly prior to beginning the sale.

Everyone else will wait outside of the Plant Sale area so that this task can be done as quickly as possible.

Shopping will not begin until all plant signs have been placed and the Plant Sale area is completely prepared for our Friday morning debut! We aim to have member-only shopping begin right at 4:00 p.m., but not before.

Once completed, an announcement will be made that the Member-Only Pre-Sale Plant Sale can begin.

Unit Member-Only Pre-Sale Shopping

Only Pioneer Unit Members are allowed to shop on Thursday afternoon. You must wear your Pioneer Unit Badge during this time (this is to help the community recognize that this is a member-only event).

Documentation and Payment for Purchases

Members must write down their purchases on the members-only card files, tallying up the amount of each size or type of plant. You may take your plants home Thursday afternoon, and you need to pay for your plants by the close of the sale on Saturday.

Thank you for being such an integral part of this wonderful group of avid herb enthusiasts!

Plant Sale Committee

FESTIVAL HILL AND PLANT SALE NEWS

I hope you all have stayed warm during these last couple of weeks!

For our January First Friday at Festival Hill we had a wonderful group join in on the fun of digging up the turmeric rhizomes from the Pharmacy Garden for our Forum attendees free plant as the herb of the year. Linda Rowlett told us that she and Ann Lugg had planted the turmeric about three years ago, and we were all amazed at how many we could unearth- there were tons! Thank you to Bev Elam for bringing a couple of friends to join in the foray! They told me they had thought, "are you kidding, you want us to all meet up and do manual labor?" Lol, but it's always so fun to have friends in the garden with you!!



Mark your calendars for our upcoming First Fridays on February 6 and March 6! We will be doing all we can to have everything looking wonderful before the Forum. I do plan on keeping our First Friday for March 6, even though we will all be here on Thursday, March 5th, the day before. Join us if you would like!

For Thursday, March 5th, we will be meeting up at Festival Hill for what would be our regular Unit meeting day (except that it is on the first Thursday of the month). If you are new to our group, here is the plan: we will be splitting up in groups and doing everything we can to get ready for our big Spring Event the next week (Our Forum, Plant Sale, & TWSS). Some people may be out with me tidying up the parking area where we have our Plant Sale, while others are working in the TWSS to make herbal blends or other things.

Also, if you haven't signed up to volunteer I will have the sign ups at our February meeting. We need everyone helping in any way that they can! It's amazing watching the whole event unfold.

Also, if you would like to help with the plant deliveries, there is a sign up sheet for that. Those will be delivered between Monday, March 9, and Thursday, March 12, and I will be reaching out to those volunteers and hostess team when we know our scheduled delivery dates.

Oh! And great news! Courtney Kieke will lead a group of local students from the RTC Solar Car Team to be our Tear Down Crew! Thank goodness for that!

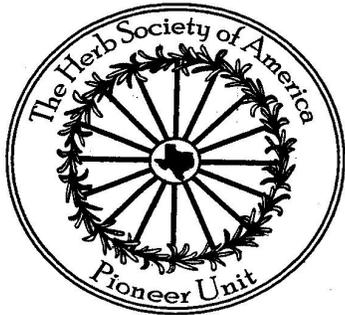
Julia Johnson

February 2026

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

March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 CG Menke House	5 Pioneer Unit Meeting	6 FH Workday 9-11:00	7
8	9	10	11	12	13 Herbal Forum	14 Herbal Forum
15	16	17	18	19 SG Workday 9-11:00	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 HSG 10:00-noon	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
Secretary—Joanna Hagler

Vice Chair Membership—Cammie Beierle
Treasurer—Royceanna Kendall

HSA EdCon 2026 It's Spicier in Texas! - April 15-17 San Antonio, Texas

The registration price increases on February 14, when registration opens to non-members! If you plan to attend, the time to register is now.

Follow this link to the registration forms:

<https://www.herbsociety.org/news-events/educational-conference-2026/>