PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America
Pioneer Unit

November 2026 Volume 34, Number 3

November 1
Daylight Savings Ends
(Fall back one hour)



November 11
Veterans Day

November 24
Frosty Full Moon
(Super Moon)

November 26
Thanksgiving



MONTHLY UNIT MEETING

Date: November 12, 2026

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

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

Directions: Exit Highway 290 to 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.

Program: Growing Native: One Gardener's Story

Speaker: Molly Glentzer, author

Hosts: Becky Nichols, Leslie Conrads, Madeline Johnson, Ann Lugg, Leah Pearce, Jana Rinehart, and Irene Spurrier

Lunch: Grateful Feast

You should have signed up to prepare a dish for the Thanksgiving meal. If you have not, contact Connie Gwyn or Cathy Nitsch, the Hospitality Chairs.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The Culinary Group held a truly wonderful Tea Party for our October meeting – elegant, lovely, delightful, and DELICIOUS. So many yummy goodies to taste. It was the best Tea Party I have ever attended – informative and delicious. The tributes to Belinda Weatherly were especially touching and insightful. Belinda was truly a special person. Belinda's husband Jim and her daughter Jessica attended, which made the event extra special. And what fun it was to see everyone all dressed up in their tea party attire! Thank you, Culinary Group, for hosting such an enjoyable event.

The temperatures have been so pleasant the past week. It has been a joy to go outside in the mornings and evenings and relish in the coolness. With overcast skies and heavy fog for the past several days and the leaves continuously falling from the trees, I do believe that we have rounded the corner from the oppressive heat of summer. While it rained at my house from time to time, it was the light, drizzly kind. I think I received 2/10ths of an inch. This morning the sun is brilliantly shining, but I hear that a nice cold front (and maybe some real rain) is on the way.

October Board Meeting: The Board met on October 6th. See Board meeting highlights from Joanna Hagler, our Unit Secretary, in this newsletter.

December 10th Christmas Meeting and Luncheon: If you want to attend, please be prepared to pay the $10 member cost (cash or check) at the November meeting. Connie Gwyn 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!! If you want to attend, but can't make the November meeting, please contact either Connie, Cathy Nitsch, or me to make payment arrangements. We have to receive any checks by Monday, November 30th, as we have to let Festival Hill know the count by Wednesday, December 2nd. We are not sure yet if guests will be able to attend the Christmas luncheon. The issue is space in the Menke House. The cost for guests will be $25 if we are able to have guests. We will keep you informed.

March Event Planning - Forum, Plant Sale, and Thyme Well Spent Shoppe: Last month we talked a little about our upcoming March event. There are many things still to do, but much work has already begun. The Planning Committee started meeting in July. We've had great discussions and made a few decisions. Now, the preparations begin in earnest. This event is truly important for the life of our Unit. We only receive a small amount of money from dues each year, so the income we earn from the March Event is the primary resource that provides the money needed to have our amazing programs and to operate the Unit.

Volunteering: Please bring your calendars to the November Unit meeting. Sign-up sheets will be posted for everyone to start signing up to volunteer at the March Event. 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!

I look forward to seeing everyone at the November meeting and enjoying our annual Thanksgiving meal.

Diana Sellers
Pioneer Unit Chair



FROM YOUR PROGRAMS CO-CHAIRS

We are very fortunate to have Molly Glentzer as our November speaker! She has been a gardener for many years but is best known as a senior writer and arts critic for the Houston Chronicle.

Have you thought about converting some (or maybe all) of your yard into a native habitat to support pollinators and other wildlife? Molly will share her experience of transforming her Brenham yard into a native plant paradise. Along with sharing her experience, she'll explain why growing native species is both important and practical, offer suggestions for the best ones to incorporate into your own garden, and point you toward resources.

Our meeting is November 12 at 10:00 a.m. at St John's Church of Christ in Burton.
Welcome Molly!

Phoebe Lake and Tory Farley

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Dear Pioneer Unit!

What a delightful meeting we had in October! Everyone worked together so well to present and enjoy the English Afternoon Tea Party! The tea delights were unforgettable, and the time spent together was even more so!!

At the best accounting (I know there were people there who did not sign in…), we had a total of 59 in attendance: 51 members and 7 guests, plus our dear Henry Flowers. Guests were Lorinda Draper, our District Representative; Theresa Posau; Jessica Weatherly Glazner; Jim Weatherly; Mike Yancy; Amy Swierkowski; Marie Merryman; and Henry. This was Lorinda's second meeting.

I'm looking forward to enjoying cooler weather and spending time with you in November!

Cammie Beierle
Membership Chair

DECEMBER MEETING

If you are planning to join your fellow "Herbies" for lunch on December 10th, we must have your reservation and $10 by November 30th. Guests are $25. If you haven't already done so, bring your money to the November meeting. Questions? Call Cathy at 281-235-5078. Thanks.

Cathy Nitsch and Connie Gwyn, Hospitality Chairs

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

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

Diana Sellers, Chair, opened the meeting, welcoming special visitors: Belinda Weatherly's husband Jim and daughter Jessica, as well as Belinda's best friends Susan and Mike Yancey. The program was presented by the Culinary Group which Belinda led for years.

Cammie Beierle, Membership Chair, noted 59 in attendance with 51 members and 8 guests. New members Cindy Yeilding and Pamela Austin were welcomed to the Pioneer Unit.

Diana provided the Treasurer's Report. As of September 30, 2026, the PU has a bank balance of $69,320.84 and two CD's, one with a balance of $26,209 and the other with a balance of $17,795. A handout of the PU yearly budget was provided to members. A motion was made by Debi Meschwitz and seconded by Jana Rinehart to approve the budget for the 2026-27 fiscal year. The motion passed. Members were encouraged to send Diana an email with any questions they may have.

Irene Spurrier, Field Trips Chair, gave an overview of a planned field trip to the Brookwood Community where attendees will have lunch, shop, and possibly tour the facility.

Julia Johnson, Pharmacy Garden Chair, encouraged volunteers to help plant salvias provided by Phoebe Lake for the Pharmacy Garden. The greenhouse project is making progress with electricity and propane installation nearing completion. Table benches may be built. Additional tabletops will be constructed in November. These are dual use for the greenhouse and plant sale.

Diana explained how the March Event will be different this year. It will be the second week of March. The Plant Sale/Thyme Well Spent Shoppe (TWSS) will be March 12th and 13th. Workshops will be held on March 12th and Forum on March 13th. On March 8th we will have our PU meeting when members will help prepare for TWSS and unload plants. Details will be forthcoming via email and the newsletter, as well as at the February PU meeting. On Thursday the members' only sale will be from 4:00-5:00. This is for members, not for friends or family. Please wear your badge.

Shawn Helm, TWSS Chair, invited members to attend upcoming workshops where participants make items for TWSS. This year the Potting Shed will be incorporated into the TWSS.

Diana reminded members to donate books and magazines to Noreen Barker for TWSS.

Cathy Nitsch has jars for those making jams and jellies for TWSS. Cathy also has recipes.

Diana asked members to use the PU tax exempt form when buying supplies for the March Event. Contact Shawn Helm if you need a form for purchasing TWSS supplies. The last page of the Membership Directory has a Request for Reimbursement form which should be submitted to Royceanna Kendall, Debi Thomas, or Diana Sellers.

Connie Gwyn thanked hostesses Leah Pearce, Ann Allen, Bev Elam, Sharon Fothergill, and Julia Johnson. Connie reminded everyone to sign up for the December meal. Members pay $10 while the PU pays $15. Sign-up for preparing a dish for the November meal was also encouraged.

The program "An Afternoon Tea with Friends" was presented by Cathy Nitsch, Cammie Beierle, Barbara White, and Julia Johnson. It began with a tribute to Belinda Weatherly. As each presenter shared her portion of the presentation, they spoke about what they learned from Belinda. Her curiosity and friendship made the Culinary Group a fun place to learn and deepen relationships.

After learning about tea, PU members were treated to the most delicious buffet. The tables were decorated with beautiful dishes. Tea was served from lovely teapots. Belinda's Dream roses were the centerpieces in honor of Belinda Weatherly.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Hagler, Secretary

Pioneer Unit Board Meeting Summary
October 6, 2026

Present: Diana Sellers, Cammie Beierle, Joanna Hagler, Susan Bame, Pat Cox, Connie Gwyn, Irene Spurrier, Barbara White, Linda Rowlett, Martha Neva, Phoebe Lake, Julia Johnson, Madeline Johnson, and Tess Hartman.

Minutes: The minutes of July 7, 2026, meeting were approved

Programs Report: Phoebe Lake has revised the speaker line up. The presenter scheduled for May had to cancel, and Henry Flowers will be our program at the May meeting.

Membership Report: Barbara White will work with Cammie to write procedural protocols for the membership chair position, as well as help with many tasks. The Board approved Debbie Cox as an affiliate member. Betty Pior was reinstated as an active member.

Treasurer Report: Scholarship checks have been cashed by recipients. The Board approved the budget for the 2026-27 fiscal year. It will be presented to the PU membership for approval.

Standing Committee Reports

Education - Pat Cox gave an overview of planned workshops including candle making, hypertufa, beeswax wraps, and mosaics. Irene Spurrier is planning field trips. A trip to Brookwood Community is planned for December 3rd. A trip to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildlife Center is also a possibility.

Scholarship - Martha Neva will display thank you cards from the scholarship recipients at the next PU meeting.

Pharmacy Garden - Julia Johnson updated progress on the greenhouse. Electrical and basic irrigation, including a sink, are nearing completion.

Communications Publicity/Website - Linda Rowlett reported for Ann Lugg. A web page containing recipes for Tea with Friends has been created on the Pioneer Unit website. Go to main menu, then Reports, and then Culinary Group. Plant Sale information has been submitted to Texas Highways magazine and Texas Co-Op Power Magazine. Ads are being designed for Texas Gardener. The PU newsletter is posted on our webpage and on our Facebook page.

Hospitality - The meal signup for the November meeting continues. Connie Gwyn will begin collecting money for the December meal.

Unfinished Business
An Ad Hoc Committee will meet to complete the review of the Pioneer Unit Bylaws.

New Business
The Plant Sale Committee met. Julia will begin signups for volunteers in November. Madeline Johnson will coordinate the unloading of plants which begins March 8th. Festival Hill staff will also help with unloading. Diana stressed we will adhere to members only shopping during the members only sale on Thursday. Friends and family may not shop with members. TWSS volunteers will begin setting up the shop after the PU meeting on March 8th.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Hagler, Secretary

HORTICULTURE STUDY GROUP

Presentation Planning Meeting

Planning…That is what we did at the October meeting of the Horticulture Study Group. We will present information about the eight lemony herbs that were the subject of our 2026 study to the Pioneer Unit. We studied lemon verbena, lemongrass, lemon mist thyme, Mrs. Burn's Lemon Basil, Rober's Lemon Rose pelargonium, lemon balm, lemon catnip, and lemon savory. Photos from our HSG members are included with this article. We will provide lots of details on cultivation and uses of each of these herbs. You will take home samples that illustrate the beneficial uses of this set of herbs.

When is this fascinating presentation? Mark your calendars. We will present at the February 11, 2027, meeting of the Pioneer Unit.

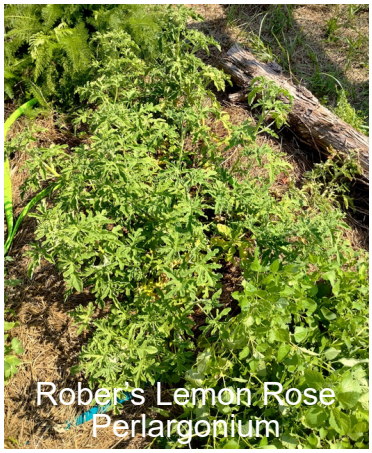
Madeline Johnson


Lemon Verbena


Lemongrass

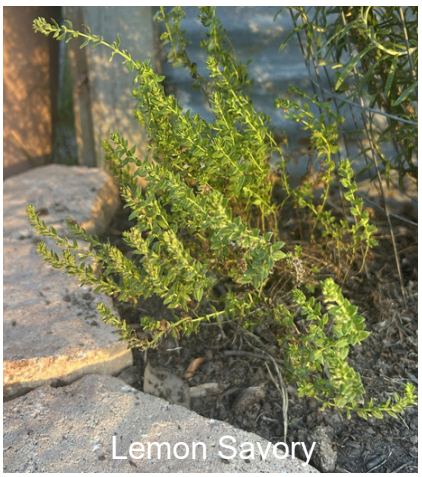

Lemon Mist Thyme


Mrs. Burn's Lemon Basil


Rober's Lemon Rose Perlargonium


Lemon Balm


Lemon Catnip


Lemon Savory



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

November 4	Wendy Matthews
November 14	Jana Rinehart
November 19	Lois Sutton
November 23	Stephen Brueggerhoff
November 24	Bev Elam and Barbara Hemmer
November 26	Diana Reed
November 30	Tory Farley

FIELD TRIP

The Brookwood Community, Brookshire
Thursday, December 3rd
Tour at 9:15, Lunch at 11:30

“Brookwood is a God-centered non-profit residential and vocational community for adults with disabilities located on 485 acres in Brookshire.”

“Do you want to experience Brookwood in action and learn about our Citizens’ innovative educational and enterprise programs?”
[quotes from Brookwood’s website]

If yes, we will be given a guided, walking tour (minimum of 10 people) at 9:15 a.m. The tour begins at the Worship Center on the Main Campus. The tour will end at the Gift and Garden Center where The Cafe at Brookwood is located. There is no cost for the tour.

Our lunch reservation is for 11:30. We will order off their menu and pay individually. A copy of the menu is available on their website [brookwoodcommunity.org].
Entrees are approximately $15 - $26.

There will be time both before and after lunch to browse and shop in Brookwood’s beautiful gift shop and greenhouse filled with Christmas treasures.

Please let me know:

1. Do you plan to attend the tour?
2. Do you plan to attend the lunch?
3. Do you plan to attend both tour and lunch?

I need your answers by Friday, November 20th.
Text 979 732-4407 or email farmgirl1716@gmail.com

The tour is only available if we have 10 or more members sign up. The lunch number is flexible.

Irene Spurrier
Field Trips Chair

WORKSHOPS

On October 29, Barbara White and her friend and new member Cindy Yeilding led a candle-making workshop where we made scented flat candles which don't burn but are hung up in closets and other small spaces to perfume the air. It was a lot of fun learning to make these new items for TWSS and creating our own designs (see the picture). A workshop to make more conventional candles is planned for later.

Keep checking your emails for future workshops for hypertufa, mosaics, and possibly beeswax wraps.

Pat Cox
Educatioin/Workshops Chair



THYME WELL SPENT SHOP

Workshops have started, and I am looking forward to many more! Please consider joining in the fun.

Also, please be sure to sign up for work at the Shop when the time comes!

Shawn Helm
Thyme Well Spent Chair

PHARMACY GARDEN

First Fridays are fun with friends at Festival Hill's Pharmacy Garden! Come join us this Friday, November 6th, or next month December 4th, from 9:00-11:00 a.m. We'd love to share stories with you as we keep up with the gardens at Festival Hill in Round Top.
(The Antique Show is over, and the roads are back to normal!)

Julia Johnson, Pharmacy Garden Chair









PIONEER PATHS
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Pioneer Paths is a publication of
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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 and Phoebe Lake
Vice Chair Membership – Cammie Beierle
Secretary – Joanna Hagler Treasurer – Royceanna Kendall and Debi Thomas

BOOK REVIEW

A Bold Return to Giving A Damn: One Farm, Six Generations, and the Future of Food

In A Bold Return to Giving A Damn, Will Harris relates the story of his family's farm as it transitioned first from a traditional family farm to participation in what Harris labels "Big Food and Big Ag" and then his efforts to develop a system of regenerative agriculture that he calls "radically traditional farming." Harris explains that he experienced an epiphany when he observed the changes in the land and animals under the system of participation in collectives where animals (primarily cattle) are purchased and taken off to large holding areas where the animals are subjected to inhumane conditions before being slaughtered and prepared for markets. Harris determined that he could best change that system by "owning every step of the supply chain from field to fork." In the book, he outlines the changes that he made in handling his animals. He stresses that he follows what he believes are more humane conditions. For example, he leaves the young calves with their mothers for months longer than the collectives allowed. He determined that he had to handle the slaughtering of the animals as well in order to provide better conditions.

In addition to improving the conditions for the animals, White Oak Pastures, the Harris family farm, has diversified the farming, adding hogs and sheep and other animals; growing more varied crops; keeping bees to make honey. Harris acknowledges the need to monetize all of the changes; meat is sold directly from the farm to the customer as much as possible. The honey is sold. Farm tours and meals are offered. Animal byproducts from the slaughter houses are used on the land or sold.

Harris takes pains to compare the cost of doing business under Big Food and Big Ag to the cost of regenerative farming as he does it. He contends that his production methods actually sequester carbon rather than adding to the carbon in the atmosphere as Big Food methods do; in addition, he makes a case that what he calls "fake meat" also contributes more to climate degradation than his farming methods. Harris stresses that consumers need to know their farmers and to be willing to pay more for ethically grown meat and vegetables.

If you should decide to read this book you should be prepared for more salty language than you usually find in nonfiction of this type. He uses cuss words and colloquial expressions (such as "grandpappy") – and then you will find a word like plethora on the next page!

Linda L. Rowlett, Ph.D.