

POTPOURRI



Herbal Greetings!!

Find Inspiration in Gardens

Summer is a wonderful time to enjoy our gardens and homes. It's a slower pace due to the Texas heat and the length of our days. It's also time for traveling to a variety of destinations. While you're out and about, please find time to locate and enjoy various gardens along the way. You'll see delightful garden designs, perhaps new varieties of plants and be inspired to re-create those gardens at home. Be sure to notice how height, contours, textures and color play into the overall beauty and design of gardens. While touring Monet's garden in Giverny, France recently, I was amazed at the height obtained by simply mounding up earth and planting tall plants on top of the mounds to get the needed vertical element in the garden. The gardens are basically flat rows that are slightly tilted downhill toward the stream. Each row was planted at the base, on the sides, then directly on top and the effect was spectacular. Closer to home you can visit gardens in many towns and cities all over Texas. There is a new book that may assist you in this endeavor entitled 'Touring Texas Gardens' by Jessie Gunn Stephens. In this book, you'll find descriptions, directions, phone numbers and even the birds you can expect to find in the area. And in local gardens, you might be able to find examples of a hardy rose called 'Caldwell Pink' that is disease free and flowers from May to November. Or you might get a chance to see a native Texas passion flower called 'Incense' which is not only beautiful but cold hardy too. Both of these are herbs. So, get out there and tour gardens at Zilker and Mayfield to see what our wonderful members have created just for us. Herbally yours, Michelle Chaput

DATES TO REMEMBER

Tuesday, July 1

General Meeting, 9:30a.m. Zilker Botanical Garden. This meeting is "International Flavors" with herbs. Learn how to combine your herbs to cook with the flavors from around the world. **A reminder: There is no General Meeting in August.**

Thursday, July 10

Study Group, 7p.m. at Zilker Botanical Garden The speaker will be Eloise Doherty on "Herb for Wildscapes." Eloise is co-chairperson of the Study Group and also has a landscaping design studio. (There will be a meeting on August 14th for the Study Group).

Tuesday, July 15

Executive Committee Meeting at 9:30a.m.

Executive Meetings are held each 3rd Tuesday of each month. All Board Members on the Executive Board should attend each month. All Chairpersons should submit reports when necessary and are encouraged to attend these meetings. For information contact Michelle Chaput at president@austinherbsociety.org or 343-7677.

Mayfield Park Gardening Day is the 4th Tuesday of each month starting at 9:30a.m. Bring your trowel and gloves and come enjoy this wonderful home and garden. Contact Kara Kroger at 567-5206.

Zilker Park Herb Gardening Day is *now* the 2nd Tuesday of the month starting at 9:30a.m.

The next workday will be July 8. Please change your calendars! Please contact Sandra Holland at 258-4643 and/or Betty Stahly at 472-7539, leaders of the gardening group.



Tuesday, September 2

Annual AHS member luncheon featuring guest speakers Gwen Barclay and Madalene Hill, authors of *Southern Herb Growing*. More details soon....

Refreshments are a delightful way to enjoy our meetings! Our members are encouraged to bring a favorite dish to share each month. So, if you didn't sign up at the last meeting, please contact Pam Bell at 894-0767 or majicbell@aol.com.

Sponsors:

Be sure to visit our sponsors for your gardening supplies and other gifts as well. Be sure to tell them you're a member of the Austin Herb Society. Sponsors are a vital part of our organization and to our community, so please let them know how much they are appreciated by identifying yourself as an Austin Herb Society member each time you visit them. If you know of anyone or a business that would like to become a sponsor of the Austin Herb Society, please send the suggestions ASAP to president@austinherbsociety.org. During the summer we renew/recruit our Sponsors!

Turn in Your Volunteer Hours!

If you've worked at either or both Zilker Herb Garden or Mayfield Park, Zilker Garden Fest, Yule Fest and Education Outreach this year, please turn in your volunteer hours for each event ***immediately***. If you don't have an exact figure, please send me an approximate figure. We need your hours turned in so that the Austin Herb Society gets credit through AAGC so that we may continue to use the facilities for our meetings and programs! The only way they know how much AHS participates is through our hours so this is **VERY** important. Thanks so much, Michelle Chaput at president@austinherbsociety.org.

Volunteers needed at Zilker Botanical Gardens

ZBG needs volunteers for the gardens, gift shop and other areas. Volunteers provide knowledgeable people to the public in the form of docents, helpful people in the gift shop and people to watch out for the gardens themselves. As you know, the gardens have experienced degradations over the past years from people uprooting plants, writing on things and helping themselves to valuable plant specimens. Zilker needs your hands, hearts and alert minds! *Please volunteer*

by contacting Tomye Zittner aagc@texas.net at Zilker Botanical Gardens.

An Herb to Consider

We are constantly looking for a versatile herb for our gardens and something a little showy so please consider the Periwinkle, *Vinca* major and minor. Yes, the common Periwinkle that graces many yards and gardens in Central Texas is an herb. *Vinca* major has had many uses when using the leaves as a tonic and astringent, such as to reduce internal bleeding, menstrual bleeding, ulcers, sore throats and many other maladies. *Vinca* minor has been found to contain 'vincamine,' which



benefits cerebral blood flow. It's also used to produce a medicinal wine and a homeopathic tincture. The Periwinkle may be used in the shade, sun, and in containers of all sorts. Besides, the deer hate it! You can get more information on this herb and many others from the "Eyewitness Handbook of Herbs" by Lesley Bremness. I suggest that you obtain this book for your own collection of reference books. While reading through it, you'll be surprised what constitutes as an herb. It is very easy to use and will help you identify plants. *Please never use an herb on your own. Seek the help and knowledge of a professional herbalist or health professional.

AHS Member needs our get well wishes

Swan Perkins recently was in a car accident. She is currently at home recovering from surgery and we are sure she would appreciate get-well cards and letters. AHS sent Swan flowers and card to cheer her up. Address: 8200 Bear Creek Drive, Austin 78737

Additions for the Potpourri

Everyone is encouraged to submit a short article, poem or recipe for the Potpourri. We would enjoy having more membership/sponsor participation in YOUR newsletter. Please submit them to president@austinherbsociety.org. And if you would like to help edit our newsletter, please contact Brenda Davis at bmd2@oag.state.tx.us to let her know you'd like to help.

Book Review by Ann Marie Wilson

The Origins of Fruit and Vegetables
Jonathan Roberts
Universe Publishing, New York. 2001
ISBN: 0-7893-0656-5 (228 pages)

Sitting down and reading this book is like taking a stroll around the world. Author Jonathan Roberts is a farmer and writer living in Southwest England. He has researched the fascinating tales of the fruits and vegetables we take for granted and in the meantime also has written a history of society.

The book consists of 35 chapters, each dedicated to an individual or group of fruits or vegetables. Our modern avocado, *Persea americana*, is considered a New World plant but its ancestor grew in what we now know as Africa. By the time European explorers began sailing around the world the ancient African *Persea* was extinct, but its descendents had been spread through out the world as the ancient continents of Laurasia and Gondwana broke up and drifted to become what we recognize as continents today.

Research into the origins of fruits and vegetables involves much mystery solving. For example, corn is exclusively American and was not known in the Old World until after Columbus sailed the ocean blue. Or was it? A chapel in Scotland, completed between 1446 and 1484, has carvings of what appear to some to be comcobs. Is it possible that there was transport of corn between the Old World and New World prior to 1492? Roberts, while admitting that we will never know for certain, suggests there may have been and submits an ancient tale and Massachusetts rock sculpture as evidence.

The spread of Islam was responsible for the spread of many useful plants. Vineyards were removed and replaced with fruits and vegetables believed to be more in line with the teachings of the prophet Muhammad. Among these were domesticated citrus and white mulberries from China, carrots from Afghanistan and eggplants from India.

The wonderful artwork depicted throughout the book is as much a treat as the information author Roberts presents. In fact, works by artists from all eras are used as evidence of when and where our modern fruits and vegetables originated. We all know that Texas A&M recently developed a maroon carrot, but exciting colors in carrots are not new. *Allegory of Summer* by Flemish painter Lucas Van Valckenborch (1535-1597) depicts yellow and purple carrots as well as orange.

This book does not have all the answers, the chapters are short and the origins of many of the garden treats we relish simply are not known. The author presents evidence for those that are and makes it clear when the explanations are speculative. He also includes a reference list that will aid the passionate reader in more detailed research. One challenge to American readers will be the British names and expressions used in the book, at times it is unclear if a term is in modern usage or describes an ancient plant form not currently under cultivation. The reader may find a dictionary useful at times. A world map is a second reference that may be useful as a visual aid to the paths our fruits and vegetables have taken around the world. Reading this book will give you a new perspective and appreciation for that glass of juice you pour each morning.

A little something to cool you off:

Jicama Pico De Gallo from 'Austin Herb Society Cooks' pg. 11

2 c peeled, diced jicama
1 green bell pepper, seeded and slivered
½ med. onion, sliced thinly
1 c diced cucumber
¼ c oil
1 tbsp white or red wine vinegar
½ tsp crumbled oregano
salt & pepper to taste.

Combine vegetables. Pour oil, vinegar, oregano, over mixture and stir, then salt & pepper to taste. Let sit at least 2 hrs in refrigerator before serving. Enjoy!

White Mulberry
(*Morus alba*)



Long White Squash
(*Cucurbita sp.*)

The Austin Herb Society, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the purpose of providing education regarding the benefits of cultivating and using herbs to promote better health and well-being, encouraging the growth and use of herbs for many beneficial community gardens, libraries and/or other community projects.

Disclaimer: The information in this newsletter is for educational purposes only. It is not meant to diagnose, treat, or replace the advice of a health professional.

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