



Herbal Greetings!!

Happy New Year!

Thank you to everyone who has been spending time working in the Vee Fowler Native Texas Herb Garden. We know your time in December was very precious with all of the other holiday activities that were occurring. Watch for future workdays coming up.

The AHS Holiday Bazaar was a delight to attend with great gifts for purchase from our members, holiday goodies, and a special presentation from Kim Lehman. Thanks to all who made this annual event a special one!

Speaking of annual events, mark your calendars to attend our AHS annual event on Saturday, February 12. The topic *Health from the Rainforest* with Leslie Taylor, ND, will be a great treat for all. Leslie spoke a year ago at our study group and those of us who saw her can attest that she is a walking encyclopedia of rainforest botany. Her life history is fascinating and she will share her many ventures and valuable knowledge with us for an entertaining and enlightening morning.

The cost of the event is \$20 for members, \$30 for non-members, and will include breakfast treats and tastings from the rainforest along with table displays of rainforest plants, raw materials and handcrafts, books, products, and exotic and tasty treats. One special herb from the rainforest is chocolate! Being that this is the weekend prior to Valentine's Day, we will offer a chocolate display with special chocolate treats.

The annual event is our fundraiser and proceeds will be applied toward our herb garden at Zilker Botanical Gardens. See Page 4 for complete information and registration on this not to be missed event!

Herbally yours,

Jan Bland and Cindy Boyle, AHS co-presidents



Fall Dandelion

Leontodon autumnalis

The whole plant is edible--flowers used to make wine, leaves boiled like spinach or add fresh to salads, roots used as vegetable and as coffee substitute.

Tuesday, January 4

Austin Herb Society, General Meeting, 9:30am to Noon at Zilker Botanical Gardens

Susan Cashin, "South Africa, People, Places and Plants." In 2000, Susan and her husband fell in love with S. Africa and bought an olive farm in the wine country. They plan to spend their "re-enjoyment" (not retirement) in S. Africa as permanent residents. There is a \$3 donation for non-members.

Tuesday, January 11

Zilker Park Herb Gardening Day is the 2nd Tuesday of the month starting at 9:30am. Talia Bright is leading the gardening group. If you have volunteered to help with the garden, please come. For info, please contact Talia at 423-1852.

Tuesday, January 13

Austin Herb Society, Study Group, 7pm-9pm at Zilker Botanical Gardens. AHS members Vee Fowler and Eloise Doherty will discuss "Oregano, Herb of the Year for 2005." This is a wonderful herb with many culinary and medicinal uses that also loves our Central Texas weather. For more info, contact Vee Fowler at 345-0719 or Eloise Doherty at 927-8478. There is a \$3 donation for non-members.

January Field Trip

The January field trip, 'Cooking with the Herb Society,' has been postponed until further notice. Cindy Phillips will announce a replacement field trip at the January general meeting.

Tuesday, January 25

Mayfield Park Gardening Day is the 4th Tuesday of each month starting at 9:30am. Bring your trowel and gloves and come enjoy this wonderful home and garden located off MOPAC & 35th St. Please contact Julie Crouch at 339-0193. Everyone is welcome!

Membership Information

Updated Info:

Rosalyn Huffman: new address--P.O. Box 824, Boulder Creek, CA 95006, ph: 831-818-6973

New Sponsor

The Herb Garland, 858 Central Avenue, Elgin, Texas 78621, contact: Pat Garland ph: 512-281-4170, email: <mailto:pjgarland@evl.net>, herbs, vegetables, flowers, crafts, and food products

New Member

Thu-Thuy Trinh, email: <mailto:thuy-trinh99@yahoo.com>

NOW ON SALE! Please pick up your tickets for **Zilker Garden Festival** Your AAGC Rep. Margie Malone has tickets for sale. AAGC is asking that each member of every club purchase at least two tickets. You may pick up the tickets at the meetings for \$3.00 each or contact Margie at 444-2014 or <mailto:margiemalone@sbcglobal.net>. This event directly supports Zilker Botanical Gardens. Tickets will be \$5.00 at the gate.

Upcoming events around Austin

Ronda's Montessori Garden,

1st Monday of every month, 10am to Noon

We host public meetings for children between the ages of 2 to 5 and home schooled children to come and learn about organic gardening. The first meeting in October each child took home a cup of red wiggler worms and a handout on how to set up a kitchen compost system. November they studied the Native Americans and the strawberry plant with each child taking home a strawberry plant. December the children focused on birds, their benefits and made pinecone birdfeeders. January they will be growing a plant from the refrigerator. The fee is \$3-per child to attend these wonderful meetings. Volunteers are welcome with help in the Children's House and gardens, because extra eyes are always needed. If you have questions or would like to learn more about our wonderful garden, please contact me at 707-8635 *From:* Ronda and children who love herbs at Ronda's Montessori Garden 4300 Mt. Vernon Dr.

Austin Area Garden Council Meeting

January 11, 2005 at Zilker Botanical Gardens

Austin Herb Society is hosting the January 11, 2005 Austin Area Garden Council meeting. We will be sharing the responsibility with Crafty Gardeners Club. Our responsibility will be for the food, drinks, paper products, centerpiece, etc. Since these two clubs are famous for their culinary skills, it should be a wonderful buffet. Not only do

we need people to donate food, but we need a couple of volunteers to help set it up. Contact Pam Bell at 894-0767.

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, month of January, 2005

Enjoy free admission to the Center throughout the month of January, 2005. For more info see

<http://www.wildflower.org/> .

Southwest Lavender Conference in Austin

February 4, 2005, 6pm to 9pm and February 5, 2005, 8am to 5pm Learn from experts about growing, harvesting, distilling, cooking, and marketing lavender. Sponsored by

Gabriel Valley Farms and the Texas Herb Growers & Marketers Association. For info or to register: contact Gabriel Valley Farms at (512) 930-0923;

<http://www.gabrielvalleyfarms.com> or <mailto:gvfarms@att.net>.

Spring Herb Gardening Seminar

February 26, 2005, Round Top, Texas

Festival Hill garden will teach guests how to begin their spring gardens. You will learn the best herbs to plant including basil, the "queen of Texas herb gardening."

Contact: McAshen Herb Gardens, PO BO 89, Round Top 78954 or visit <http://www.festivalhill.org/>

El Interior: Seven Medicines Talk by Susun Weed

March 17, 2005 at 7:00pm

You will be on the edge of your seat, as Susun Weed takes you right to the essence of healing. Her humor and experiential exercises will clarify your healing options, from homeopathy to acupuncture, from reiki to rolfing, from surgery to salves, from nettles to belladonna. Find out how to heal with the least risk and the lowest cost. Susun will help you understand your choices and empower you to live from the heart. Cost is \$20.00. For more info, contact El Interior at 474-8680 or visit El Interior, 1009 West Lynn Street.

Zilker Garden Festival

April 2 - 3, 2005, 10:00am to 5:00pm

This annual festival heralds the start of the gardening season for many Austin-area gardeners and has something for every member of the family. There are clinics for gardeners, an activity area for children, music and food. All proceeds from the Zilker Garden Festival benefit the activities of the Austin Area Garden Council and Zilker Botanical Garden. Go to <http://www.zilker.org/> or call 477-8672 for more info.

Vee Fowler Native Texas Herbs Gardening Notes:

December 11th was a wonderfully sunny and warm Saturday and many of our members showed up to help dig trenches and clear weeds for the new water lines. Cindy Boyle, Brenda Davis and her daughter, Marlene Carrole, Jan Bland, Barbara Broering and Michele Lofstrom all pitched in. Eloise Dougherty was able to inspect the work on Sunday afternoon. She had the flu but felt that she needed to see everything we had done on the previous morning. Mel Henson also showed up and approved of all our hard work. All in all I must say that it was one of the most satisfying birthdays I've ever had. Thanks to everyone who showed up and lent their hand (and back)! You are wonderful - my gardening angels. In the up coming weeks we are going to hire some help to do a limited amount work so we can start to build the walls. We need bagged soil, granite gravel, limestone rocks and bricks. Anyone who wants to donate please contact me at 343-7677 or michellechaput@yahoo.com .
Happy Gardening,
Michelle Chaput

Chocolate Ginger Cake – “Vee’s Birthday Cake”

4 oz butter, softened
4 eggs lightly beaten
2 tbsp lite karo syrup
2 cups self-rising flour
1 tsp baking soda
4 tsp ground ginger
½ cup cocoa, sifted
1 ½ cups milk

Preheat oven to 350 deg., brush cake pans with butter & flour. Beat butter & sugar together until light & creamy. Add eggs gradually. Add syrup. Fold soda, cocoa, and ginger into flour and gradually add to mixture alternating with milk. Mix until just incorporated. Spoon into pans or bundt pan and bake about 35 minutes or until a knife comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack. Refrigerate over night if desired. Cake must be cool before adding frosting. You can even freeze at this point.

Frosting:

4 oz butter, softened
1 cup confectioners' sugar
2 tbsp cocoa (or more if a darker chocolate is desired)
2 tbsp finely chopped candied ginger
1- 2 tbsp milk, vary the amount of milk to get the consistency you desire
Beat butter & sugar until light and creamy (an elec. Mixer works well). Add cocoa and beat well. Decorate with ginger.
(If you want you can add ground ginger to the frosting about ½ tsp.) This recipe is from the Best Ever Chocolate Cakes & Slices. It has been doubled in size and hints added!
Michelle Chaput

News from Ronda's Montessori Garden

Our nine basil gardens have finally passed away. But thankfully, the children picked most of it prior to this so there was much fun playing with baskets of basil and great joy giving handfuls of it to their parents. The basil made everyone smile while holding and breathing a handful of this wonderful herb. The children also pulled out the woody stems to make basil stem fragrant picture frames to give as Christmas gifts. Next, the children will plant cilantro, dill, and parsley by seed, but if only it would stop raining long enough to stop washing their seeds away! If you have questions or would like to learn more about our wonderful garden, please contact me at 707-8635

From: Ronda and children who love herbs at
Ronda's Montessori Garden
4300 Mt. Vernon Dr

Oregano, Herb of the Year for 2005

Oregano (*Origanum vulgare*), also called Wild Marjoram, belongs to the Lamiaceae family, which is the same as marjoram, thyme, mint, basil, and sage. Oregano is a perennial plant that is widely distributed throughout Europe, Asia, and the Americas. It has woody stems, in an upright nature, reaching a size of about 2-1/2 feet tall. Oregano tends to get leggier and more sprawling if left unclipped. The flower buds at the end of the stems are covered with modified leaves called bracts which gives them the appearance, until they blossom, of tiny green pine cones. Flowers appear in summer and will last well into the fall. Oregano usually has pinkish-purple flowers and is considered a perennial herb. Oregano enjoys well-drained, slightly alkaline soil and full sun. Start this herb either from seed in spring, from cuttings in the summer, or root divisions in the fall. Growing oregano in pots works well, if given plenty of light. Given the proper conditions, you should be able to harvest leaves until the first frost (if outdoors) or all year long (if grown inside). You can start using the leaves, a few sprigs at a time, once the leaf stems reach 4" tall.

Oregano's pungent, spicy flavor makes it great for tomato based sauces/pastas, eggplant, seafood, pizzas, soups, and grilled meats. Because it retains its flavor well, oregano can be used either fresh or dried. If you are using the fresh herb, use twice the amount of it as you would the dried called for in your recipe.

Ancient Greeks used to let their cattle graze on fields of oregano, in the belief that it produced tastier meat. Oregano is used to promote perspiration as a treatment for colds, flu, and fevers. A tea of oregano is often used to bring on menses and relieve associated menstrual discomfort. It is also used in baths, as steam inhalations to clear sinuses and relieve laryngitis, and as drinking an infusion to clear lungs and bronchial passages. Internally and externally it can help alleviate dry itching skin. The essential oil is used to treat viral infections, respiratory ailments, and muscle aches. Pregnant women should not ingest large amounts of oregano.

Oregano is also used to help forget and let go of a former loved one, such as a former spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend, etc. Burn in incenses or drink the infusion to aid in letting go.
submitted by Brenda Davis



Leslie is the founder and owner of Raintree Nutrition, a company with a strong commitment to rainforest conservation and preservation. She is a Board Certified Naturopath and works with shamans and South American health practitioners to discover and make available to consumers new medicinal plants. For more information about Leslie and her company, visit www.rain-tree.com.

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For more information, including registration form and directions to Zilker Botanical Gardens, visit the ABC website at www.herbalgram.org or the AHS website at www.austinherbsociety.org.

The Austin Herb Society invites you to

Health *from the* Rainforest

with **LESLIE TAYLOR, ND**

Saturday, February 12, 2005 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM

-  A stimulating presentation about medicinal plants from the rainforest of South America
-  Includes a light breakfast and exotic treats of fruits, nuts, chocolate, teas and juices of South America
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AMERICAN
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ZILKER BOTANICAL GARDENS
2200 Barton Springs Road, Austin, Texas
Space is limited so register now.

\$20 for members of AHS, \$30 for nonmembers
Deadline for Registration is February 1, 2005. We cannot guarantee seating after this date.



Enclosed is a check/money order for \$ _____ for _____ (#) members of AHS (\$20 each) and _____ (#) nonmembers (\$30 each) to attend the AHS Seminar, Health from the Rainforest, featuring Leslie Taylor. Registration deadline is February 1, 2005.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Phone _____ Email (for confirmation of registration) _____

Make checks payable to the Austin Herb Society and
Mail to: **Diane Sandlin, 6313 Salcon Cliff Drive, Austin, TX 78746**
For more information email abc@herbalgram.org

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The Austin Herb Society, Inc

Zilker Botanical Garden

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Austin, Texas 78746

www.austinherbsociety.org