



## Herbal Greetings!!

With spring counting down and summer around the corner, our May was a delight of spring flowers and cool, breezy days. Those who attended our May garden tour were loving the chill in the air and amazed at the gardens we visited. Diana and Bill Hyland's garden started the tour and what a fabulous backyard suburban garden transformation! The delicious breakfast, great company, and fun quiz added to a great start. The Natural Gardener was our next stop. We had a delightful tour of the butterfly garden and shopped with a 10% discount given to all AHS tour participants. Our next visit was to Ellen Zimmerman's amazing garden with flowers blooming everywhere, whimsical garden delights, and a visit to with her chickens. Our grand finale was Pam Bell's fabulous hacienda home and garden. We enjoyed a delicious lunch with plenty of great desserts, and a gift of a basil plant from Barton Spring Nursery. Thank you to all above for your generosity and hospitality. We also thank all those who brought delicious dishes. It just doesn't get any better!!

We were fortunate to have John Dromgoole of The Natural Gardener as our May speaker. John gave us so much great information on composting, compost tea, and natural pesticides. What a treasure John is and a longtime friend and sponsor of AHS. Also, we installed the new Board and welcomed in our new Committee members. Thank you to American Botanical Council and our members who brought in so many plants to share.

Those who attended the May study group on Stevia and Sweet Herb of Aztec learned fascinating facts and tastings. We ended the meeting making our own toothpowder. Some fascinating facts on both herbs are on pages 2 and 3.

As we wind down to the summer months, we hope that it finds you venturing off to a summer destination for fun and relaxation!

What a delightful month of May!  
Cindy and Jan, co-presidents

### Tuesday, June 7

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

No speaker this meeting as we get together informally. Bring antique tools, photos, books, recipes, and gardening tips to share and WEAR YOUR FAVORITE HAT. There is a \$3 donation for non-members.

### Saturday, June - TBA

#### **Field Trip: Round Top Herb Farm**

Come tour Round Top Herb Farm, enjoy a nice lunch and possibly a concert and near-by antiquing. Contact Cindy Phillips at 264-2779 for location and time to meet. For more info on this wonderful place, please visit <http://www.rtis.com/reg/roundtop/netreg3g.htm> or [www.festivalhill.org](http://www.festivalhill.org).

### Tuesday, June 14

**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, June 28

**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: Judith Craft, ph: 451-2064, email: [sbarnes@grandecom.net](mailto:sbarnes@grandecom.net)

New member: Paula Scherr, 1107 Bordeaux Dr, Leander 78641, 260-3373, email: [ladymajolica@yahoo.com](mailto:ladymajolica@yahoo.com)

## Member Garden Tour

Just wanted to thank everyone for the wonderful garden tour. The gardens and hosts were lovely. Thanks for all the trouble each of you took and for making this one of the best garden tours ever. A special thanks to the folks at Natural Gardener, especially Roger who made us welcome with a guided tour of the Butterfly Garden and labyrinth, and Andy who provided us with special discount coupons, all on short notice at a very busy time for them. And thanks of course to John Dromgoole who is such a great supporter and sponsor of AHS and all things to do with organic gardening. Thanks again to Diana for arranging for free Basil plants from another sponsor, Barton Springs Nursery, and of course to the wonderful Barton Springs Nursery itself. Pam, Diana, and Ellen, you and your gardens are great. And thanks to Tom, Harvey, and Bill because I know there was a lot of behind the scenes help from you guys. A great time was had by all and we learned a lot, too.

From myself on behalf of all the Austin Herb Society, thank you, thank you, thank you, to all of you wonderful gardeners.

Cindy Phillips  
1st VP Programs

## MANDARIN ORANGE ALMOND SALAD

*from Swan Perkins*

2 heads of YOUR favorite lettuce  
(I like butter lettuce + red leaf butter lettuce)  
1 cup almonds (slivered or sliced)  
1/4 cup sugar  
6 green onion TOPS - thinly sliced  
2 - 11 oz. cans of mandarin oranges - drained & chilled  
Break lettuce into bite size pieces

Combine almonds & sugar in a sauce pan & stir until brown, but before they begin to stick together. This takes about 7 minutes.

Combine lettuce, almonds, green onion tops & mandarin oranges. Toss well and add as much dressing as needed.

### The Dressing

Combine the following:

1 cup vegetable oil  
1/4 cup white wine vinegar  
1/4 cup sugar  
1 tsp salt  
dash black pepper  
dash crushed red chili peppers  
1 Tablespoon parsley flakes

Combine, chill & shake well (So far, I have found that I have a lot of the dressing left over, but it keeps well in the fridge.)

## Aztec Sweet Herb

*Scientific Name:* Lippia dulcis *Common names:* Aztec Sweet Herb and Lipia Plant, *Type:* Perennial, *Where To Plant:* Full Shade, *Soil Types:* Average Zones -11, or pot plant, *Germination:* medium, *Number of Seeds Per Pack:* 50.

*Medicinal Notes:* Mexican herb from at least the time of the Aztecs, used to treat coughs, colds, bronchitis, asthma, and colic. Plant 1000 times sweeter than sugar, has too much camphor content. Fast growing, low creeper, with small white flowers; excellent in hanging baskets. *Caution:* Leaves contain the intensely sweet compound hernandulcin (300 times sweeter than sugar) but high camphor content makes them unsuitable for use as a sugar substitute.  
by Cindy Boyle

## Stevia May Help Prevent Tooth Decay

It is common knowledge that sugar causes tooth cavities. Certain bacteria in our mouths, particularly streptococci mutans, ferment various sugars to produce acids -- which then eat through the enamel of the tooth causing pockets or cavities. For a long time, scientists have searched to find alternative sweeteners that are not fermentable by bacteria and won't cause cavities.

Research has shown that Stevioside does not cause tooth decay or tooth cavities. This is because the substances in stevia that provide its sweetness do not ferment in the presence of bacteria. This is good news for children who suffer from tooth decay and cavities due to regular sugar consumption.

Stevia also inhibits the growth and reproduction of some bacteria and other infectious organisms, including the bacteria that cause tooth decay and gum disease. This is why users of stevia enhanced products report a lower incidence of colds and flu and why it has such exceptional qualities when used as a mouthwash or added to toothpaste. Many people report significant improvement in oral health after adding stevia concentrate to their toothpaste and using it, diluted in water, as a daily mouthwash.

### Stevia Toothpaste

2 tablespoons baking soda  
1/8 teaspoon white stevia powder  
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon powder Blend the ingredients in a small glass jar. Scoop on a dampened toothbrush and brush as usual.

By making it yourself you can adjust the level of sweetness and the strength of flavoring to suit your individual needs. Don't like peppermint toothpaste - well how about cinnamon, or choc mint, or orange! Once you have learned the basics, you can make any flavor or combination you like. Prefer a little less baking soda - or perhaps none at all. It's your toothpaste, you decide!

*submitted by Cindy Boyle*

## **Stevia: The Natural, No-Calorie Sweetener**

by Deborah Mitchell:

<http://www.somersetmedicalcenter.com/13801.cfm>

What's calorie-free, chemical-free, and up to 300 times as sweet as sugar? If you guessed stevia, you may be one of the many people in the U.S. who contributed to the estimated \$10 million in sales of this all-natural sweetener in 1998.

The "Perfect" Dietary Sweetener? Stevia seems to have it all. At 300 times sweeter than cane sugar, it has only 1/300th the caloric value—virtually zero calories. Health-conscious consumers like that it's all-natural. Stevia is derived from a perennial shrub, the stevia, that is native to Paraguay. It has been used by natives of South America for hundreds of years, both as a sweetener and for medicinal purposes, without any reported side effects. It has none of the synthetic chemicals associated with artificial sweeteners, such as aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame K, and sucralose. But there's one thing stevia doesn't have: the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) approval to be sold as a sweetener. Anyone who sells stevia cannot use the word "sweet," or any variation thereof when advertising the product. The FDA has mandated that stevia can be sold only as a "dietary supplement for nutritional benefits." But that's just the "official" stance. The FDA cannot dictate what consumers do with the product once they purchase it. And people are buying it in droves, despite the FDA's attempts to ban it.

Stevia and the FDA: What's the Scoop? In the early 1980s, stevia became popular in the U.S. and was a common ingredient in herbal teas, including Celestial Seasonings. That ended in 1986, when the FDA seized the company's stevia. In May 1991, the FDA warned other companies to cease using the herb because it was an "unsafe food additive," and then proceeded to prevent its importation into the United States. The American Herbal Products Association asked the Herbal Research Foundation to prepare a scientific review of the research on stevia for the FDA. A leading authority on natural nonnutritive sweeteners, A. Douglas Kinghorn, Ph.D., penned the safety review, which was scrutinized by plant safety experts. All concluded that the scientific research and past and current use of the herb supported its safe use as a food. The FDA did not agree. Dr. George Pauli of the FDA said the safety data in the review was "nowhere near what we expect." So, stevia was refused GRAS (Generally Recognized As Safe) status. Passage of the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994, however, allowed stevia to be sold legally as a dietary supplement, but still not as a food additive.

So, is Stevia Safe? Despite widespread use of stevia, especially in Japan, there have been no reports of side effects. In Japan, stevia has been used extensively since the government banned most artificial sweeteners for health reasons in the late 1960s. The government's National Ministry of Health and Welfare conducted extensive tests and failed to find any toxicity. In the U.S., Dr. Kinghorn's tests show that a lethal dose of stevia is more than two pounds (more than 480 grams) per day. To put that into perspective, Ray Sahelian, M.D., author of *The Stevia Cookbook*, notes that even if you replaced all of your daily sugar intake (estimated at 100 grams) with stevia, you would consume a mere 0.3 grams per day—far below the amount believed to be dangerous to

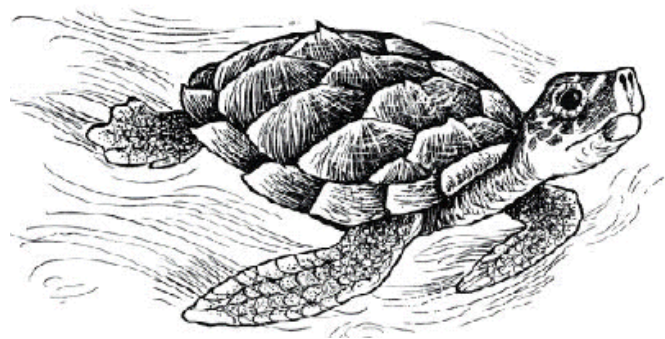
humans. In addition, Dr. Sahelian says stevia has a positive effect on health: "If stevia is substituted for sugar then the replacement will have a positive indirect effect because people will not be eating sugar." He also notes that stevia, unlike sugar, does not promote tooth decay.

Medicinal Benefits? Although many users and a few researchers claim stevia can increase glucose tolerance and decrease blood sugar levels, most experts disagree. "Any claims of health benefits including diabetes and hypoglycemia, I think, are completely unfounded," says Rob McCaleb of the Herb Research Foundation. Dr. Sahelian agrees, noting that "the amounts most people will ingest are small, so it's unlikely to have any medicinal effects."

Savoring the Sweetness of Stevia. Stevia's sweetness (a taste described as licorice-like, with a slight aftertaste) resides in its leaves in substances called glycosides. A major glycoside, stevioside, is extracted from the leaves and used in foods, such as teas, cider, baked goods, and cereals. Purists insist that the whole leaf—not just the stevioside—is the best way to use stevia. They believe nature intended for herbs to be used whole because all of their components work together. Consumers can choose the form of stevia that best suits their needs.

Using the Different Forms of Stevia: Concentrated liquid – green-black in color; 70 times as sweet as sugar. Use to sweeten coffee, tea, hot chocolate, cereal and baked goods. Dried crushed leaves – 30 times as sweet as sugar; usually sold in tea-bag like packets. Sprinkle on cereal and other foods. Concentrated powder – an extract of the glycosides; white or cream in color; 300 times as sweet as sugar. Suitable to sweeten foods and beverages and for use in some baked goods.

*submitted by Cindy Boyle*



### **Loggerhead Sea Turtle**

Loggerheads are capable of living in a variety of environments, such as in brackish waters of coastal lagoons and river mouths. During the winter, they may remain dormant, buried in the mud at the bottom of sounds, bays, and estuaries. The major nesting beaches are located in the southeastern United States, primarily along the Atlantic coast of Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Only minor and solitary nesting has been recorded along the coasts of the Gulf of Mexico.

### **Evening Primrose Oil**

Native to North America, the evening primrose grows wild throughout the United States and is cultivated in more than 15 countries. Unlike other blooming plants, the evening primrose

chooses to open its radiant yellow blossoms at night, as its name suggests. It was used medicinally both by Native Americans and by Europeans long before modern pharmacologists analyzed the plant's healing effects. The oil which is obtained from the seeds of the evening primrose contains both linoleic acid and gamma-linolenic acid, essential fatty acids that are vital to the body's tissues--especially to the nervous system. The oil is often used in capsule form as a remedy for eczema, as well as for PMS, arthritis and hormonal problems. This beneficial oil is unfortunately one of the costliest seed oils to extract in the world.

*Evening primrose oil for high blood pressure* The constituents of evening primrose oil strengthen the immune system, stimulate metabolism and reduce cholesterol--all of which help prevent high blood pressure. You can counter high blood pressure that is caused by stress, poor nutrition or smoking with evening primrose oil. Take 4-6 capsules of the oil twice a day for four weeks.

*Therapeutic Effect:* The body converts the gamma-linolenic acid in evening primrose oil to a form of the connective-tissue hormones known as prostaglandins. Prostaglandins help regulate metabolic functions. For example, they control nervous-system responses and the secretion of sebum from the skin, regulate involuntary-muscle function, prevent the formation of enzymes that cause tissue damage and dilate the blood vessels.

*Components* The fatty oil of the evening-primrose seed consists of 71 percent linoleic acid (double-unsaturated fatty acid), which is essential to human beings but not produced in the body; it must, therefore, be absorbed through food. Evening primrose oil

is also 11 percent oleic acid (monounsaturated fatty acid) and 10 percent gamma-linolenic acid.

*To aid digestion* The prostaglandins which are formed from gamma-linolenic acid regulate the secretion of stomach acid, making evening primrose oil helpful as an aid for digestion. Take evening primrose capsules after each of your main meals.

*To curb a child's hyperactivity* Some studies have shown that the nervousness in hyperactive children decreases noticeably when they are treated with evening primrose oil. Apparently, the gamma-linolenic acid corrects the fat metabolism, which has been out of balance. Children who refuse to swallow the capsules can be given food with the oil mixed into it. Just puncture the capsule with a needle and squeeze all the oil into soup, cereal or other favorite foods.

*To improve dull facial skin* For poor skin appearance, clogged pores and disturbances in sebum secretion--as occurs with acne or atopic eczema, related to allergies--evening primrose oil can be helpful. Over a period of four weeks, that 5-6 capsules every morning and evening. Then reduce the amount to 3 capsules twice a day. This will stimulate circulation, increase hydration and help promote new skin-cell growth.

*Also* Evening primrose oil also works as an effective moisturizer. The oil will noticeably smooth your skin and, at the same time, improve its moisture content. For skin care at home, squeeze the evening primrose oil out of some capsules and add it to your bathwater. You can also apply it directly to dry (not oily) areas of your skin and gently massage it in. \*submitted by Brenda Davis, from *The Complete Guide to Natural Healing*

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