

# Potpourri

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## Herbal Greetings!!

Tis the season! With the cooler weather finally here, we can now indulge in foods we don't wish to have during the hotter weather. There is nothing like a great bowl of gumbo or chili to comfort you! And no dish would be complete without our wander herb - garlic! For herbies, just the thought of garlic gives us such comfort! Garlic is a great herb to build your immune system, so eat plenty during the winter. Roasted garlic is a great spread on bread or mashed in potatoes. Be sure to add garlic at the end of the dish...it's medicinal value is best when not overcooked.

Vee Fowler, our speaker at the November program on Eating for your Health, boasted about the great qualities of parsley. A super-easy morning drink is to add a few sprigs of parsley (cut fresh from your garden) to your orange juice in the blender. You can add parsley to any juice or smoothie. It's easy, delicious, and so good for you! Other great herbs in season are arugula, fennel, dill, and cilantro. We can buy these year round but cannot grow them here until the winter season so now is the time to enjoy them from your garden! We are so fortunate to have a winter growing season in central Texas!

Speaking of growing, next time you are at Zilker, take a few minutes to wonder through our herb gardens. The existing garden will be going through many transformations as we make improvements to the hardscape and the garden beds. Simultaneously, the new Vee Fowler Native Herb Garden rock walls will be built and it will also transform monthly. It is an exciting time at the garden! And we are so thankful for all volunteers who have worked at the garden over the years. We know it hasn't been easy to brave the heat and dry spells, and we appreciate your dedication to our little piece of paradise in Zilker.

With the holidays upon us, the new year is right around the corner. Be sure to mark you calendar now to set aside February 25 for the AHS 2006 Annual Seminar with special guest speaker, Susan Belsinger. To learn more, see page 3.

We wish you a safe holiday season!  
Jan Bland and Cindy Boyle,  
Co-Presidents

### **Tuesday, December 6** **AHS Member/Sponsor Holiday Bazaar, 9:30am at** **Zilker Botanical Gardens**

The holiday bazaar is an annual AHS tradition where you will find plants, essential oils, herbal and non-herbal products. You will be able to purchase gifts for Christmas, birthdays, other special occasions and/or for yourself. Members may reserve a table for their wares by calling Cindy Phillips at 264-2779.

**There will not be a Study Group or Field Trip for the month of December.**

**Tuesday, December 13**  
**Zilker Park Herb Gardening Day is the 2nd Tuesday of the month starting at 9:30am.**

**Tuesday, December 27**  
**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!

### **Education Outreach**

Greetings from the Children's Education Outreach. We are in the process of working with the University of Texas again to sponsor and educate elementary school children about the many wonderful uses and history of herbs. Dianne Folkerth of the Texas Memorial Museum on The University of Texas campus has contacted Gwen and me about helping them with another school for the 2006 UT Science Fun Day. Gwen and I have done this event for many years and have found the experience to be one of our most rewarding ventures. In the past we have met the teacher and the children in November where we do an introduction to some of the culinary and medicinal uses of herbs. We usually stick to herbs that grow well locally when possible. From then till the day of the children's presentation, we meet at the school regularly and often to help the students come up with their own unique ideas of how and what to do for their presentation. They will be the ones talking with the public and educating them with their newly acquired knowledge. Their imagination and thinking processes at this age are a joy to watch as they incubate into a final event. The date for the UT Science Fun Day is Saturday March 25th 2006, from 11am-5 pm. Anyone interested in volunteering their time for this worthwhile endeavor should contact Lydia Noble at 512-266-7174.

We also do many presentations throughout the year at different elementary schools in and around the Austin area. This year we have done repeated presentations for several classes at Lake Travis Elementary and Lake Travis Middle School. We also did a presentation for ESL kindergartners at Pflugerville Elementary. The help of a translator was a must but so much fun. We are happy to visit home schools also if they are interested. If you know a school that would enjoy having an herbal presentation done for their students, please have them contact Gwen Sederholm or myself.  
A fruitful harvest for all,  
Lydia Noble & Gwen Sederholm

## New Website for Andra Millian.

Doctor of Chinese Medicine and AHS Sponsor speaker Andra Millian L.Ac.C.H. Has a new website. Schedule or change your own appointments online! Order gift certificates for the holidays online and download lots of great information; go to [www.andramillian.com](http://www.andramillian.com). Remember to mention your AHS member discount.

**Thursday, December 1, 2005,**

**4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.**

Our sponsor, The Crossings, extends this holiday invitation to join them for their Second Annual Holiday Open House featuring our Wellness Spa. Enjoy their thoughtful campus design and explore the seasonal sites surrounded by more than 200 acres of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve. Visit their Bookstore, Spa Life Store, Theater, and Wellness Spa to experience:

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Hors d'oeuvres and beverages at the Treehouse Cafe

Door prizes and entertainment

Join this **FREE** event to discover an experience at The Crossings! To RSVP, email Dara Hanel or 512-225-1075 x-4113. Don't forget! The gift of wellness and relaxation makes the perfect holiday treat. Gift certificates are on sale now. Call 866-533-2318 to make your purchase today. Gift certificates may be used with spa treatments, consultations, workshops, conferences, or spa retail and bookstore items. Invite a friend or family member to join you. Visit the Crossings online: [www.thecrossingsaustin.com](http://www.thecrossingsaustin.com)

Diana Hyland

**December 15, 6:00pm - 8:30pm**

### **SOL Reflections, Reiki Energy Healing Circle**

This involves a 30-to-45-minute Reiki Energy healing session with a Reiki practitioner. The Reiki circles are held 4th Thursday of every month with the attendance of 4 - 6 practitioners. Cost: a love donation which will help pay for the space used to hold the wonderful energy healing sessions (a regular session cost \$40 - \$65).

If you have never heard of Reiki Energy Healing, this is a great way to check out the wonderful energy healing of Reiki. Or if you know about Reiki, this is a great opportunity to be rejuvenated.

SOL Reflections, located at 620 Center, 107 RR 620 South, #105, Austin (Lakeway), 78734

ph: 263-6900 \*please RSVP\*

\*\*one mile north of Lakeway golf-ball water tower, 620 Center on right hand side of the road, in the same shopping strip mall as China Pacific restaurant\*\*

**Friday, February 24, 2006 8:30-4:30**

### **2nd Annual Southwest Lavender Conference**

#### **Inn on Barons Creek Conference Center**

**309 S. Washington, Fredericksburg, TX 78624**

All day bus tour to local lavender farms with demonstrations, with lunch at Becker Vineyard featuring a cooking demo by Susan Belsinger

**Friday 6-9p.m.** Reception, roundtable discussions, trade displays

**Saturday, February 25, 2006, 8a.m.-5p.m.** Conference, featuring Dr. Art Tucker and Professor Charles Martin

Bus Tour: \$50.00 (Lunch Included). Optional Lunch with Susan Belsinger at Becker Vineyard for anyone not on the bus tour: \$25.00. Conference: \$125.00

To register: [gabrielvalleyfarms.com](http://gabrielvalleyfarms.com) Or call: (512) 930-0923 E-mail: [gvfarms@att.net](mailto:gvfarms@att.net)

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### **Apple**

Even though tradition may hold that the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden was an apple, it's now valued as the quintessential medicinal fruit. Perhaps that's why American folk hero Johnny Appleseed sowed apple seeds across the country. Whatever his reason, we are the beneficiaries of his efforts. The healing value of the apple was known more than two thousand years ago, when Ayurvedic physicians in India prescribed the fruit for alleviating diarrhea. Its well-deserved reputation for aiding digesting and regulating the consistency of the stool is due to a high-fiber substance called pectin. Recent studies suggest that pectin may also perform a wide range of other roles, from lowering cholesterol to controlling blood-sugar levels in diabetics. Ongoing research may discover whether pectin can discourage certain kinds of cancer, too. Prized by all nutritionists, there is not doubt that making apples a regular part of your diet can be a great boon to your health.

*Apple basics:* When choosing apples, make sure they're both firm to the touch and brightly colored. Avoid discolored or soft fruit. Keep apples crisp by storing them in a perforated plastic bag in a cool place. Apples lose nutrients when their flesh is exposed to air, so cut them just before use. If you think eating an apple is a hassle, stock your fridge with juice. Recent research shows that apple juice has similar benefits.

*Therapeutic Effect:* High-fiber pectin is responsible for the apple's ability to regulate the digestive system; it keeps stools moist, moving them through the bowels. It is believed that pectin has the valuable potential to reduce elevated cholesterol levels, stabilize blood sugar and even prevent certain kinds of cancer.

*Components:* An apple with its peel contains not only pectin but fruit sugars, potassium, phosphorus, iron, organic acids, calcium, and magnesium, as well as niacin (B3) and vitamins A, E, C, B1, B2, and B6. New research indicates that apples contain substances that act as antioxidants; these make apples valuable for preventing heart disease.

*For digestive disorders:* Though it may seem to be contradictory, apples can prevent constipation as well as control diarrhea.

**SAVE THE DATE! The Art of Flavor: Using Herbs In Both Savory and Sweet Recipes, Saturday, February 25, 2006, 9am until 12noon. Zilker Botanical Garden , 2200 Barton Springs Road**

### **Spring Seminar with Susan Belsinger**

Plans for the AHS Spring Seminar are proceeding apace. Noted culinary educator, food writer and photographer, Susan Belsinger ([www.susanbelsinger.com](http://www.susanbelsinger.com)) is traveling to Austin to present *The Art of Flavor: Using Herbs in Both Savory and Sweet Recipes*. She will do two demonstrations on Saturday, February 25, 2006 between 9AM and 12PM. The first will be *Cooking Under the Influence: Using the Mediterranean Herbs* followed by *Not Just Desserts: Sweet Herbal Recipes*. Susan will prepare and provide samples of two or three recipes in each category. The cost of the seminar is only \$25 for AHS members and \$30 for non-members and light refreshments using some of Susan's recipes will be included.

Seminar attendees are in for a real treat. Susan is a vibrant speaker who shares her vast knowledge of herbs and their uses in a very accessible and entertaining way. She has taught vegetarian cooking with herbs at L'Académie de Cuisine, an accredited cooking school in Bethesda, MD for more than 20 years. She is a member of Les Dames d'Escoffier, a prestigious leadership culinary organization for women who have not only achieved success in their profession, but who contribute significantly to their communities. Susan is a member of the Potomac Unit of the Herb Society of America, Garden Writers Association of America, and recently received a Professional Award for her outstanding contributions to the herb industry by the International Herb Association.

You may be familiar with Susan from reading one of her many articles that have appeared in *The Herb Companion*, *The Herb Quarterly*, *Herbs and Health*, *Gourmet*, *Food and Wine*, and *Kitchen Gardener* and other magazines. She is also the co-author of a number of award-winning cookbooks, some of which will be available at the seminar along with her other products.

Susan travels the United States and Canada giving lectures and demonstrations on herbs, edible flowers, chiles, garlic, Southwestern, Italian, and vegetarian cooking, cooking with kids, gardening, and using herbs for aromatherapy and a healthy lifestyle. As she says on her website, "Growing vegetables, herbs, and flowers organically, harvesting them at their peak, and bringing them in to the kitchen to create healthy, good-tasting dishes is a way of life for Susan Belsinger. She is passionate about herbs and her work - sharing the joy of gardening and cooking through teaching and writing - and inspiring others to get in touch with their senses of smell and taste."

Don't miss meeting Susan and experiencing this celebration of culinary delights. It will be a wonderful way to welcome spring back into our lives. Pick up a registration form at the Herb Society meetings or from one of our sponsors. You can also print the form directly off the AHS website [www.austinerbsociety.org](http://www.austinerbsociety.org). Register early if you can as it will help us in planning the refreshments. If you would like to help out with the event, sign up at the December or January meeting or email [gayleegal@ev1.net](mailto:gayleegal@ev1.net).

**The following recipe is from Susan Belsinger's new book, Not Just Desserts - Sweet Herbal Recipes.**

### *Nectarine and Plum Cake with Bergamot*

This is not your typical peach cake with fruit slices arranged on the top. Although the fruit is placed on top of the batter, the batter is so light; the fruit has a tendency to fall. Some of the fruit stays on top and some sinks to the bottom--this results in a very moist cake with fruit and herbs throughout.

All nectarines or all plums can be used to make the cake but I like the combination of the two fruits together. If you don't have bergamot leaves, use the same amount of orange mint, or any of the lemon herb leaves for an equally delicious flavor.

Makes a 9 x 13-inch cake.

Fruit: 3 medium-sized ripe nectarines 3 large, ripe but firm, plums 1/4 cup sugar 2 to 3 tablespoons lemon juice 3 3-inch sprigs bergamot or orange mint

Peel the nectarines and plums. Slice the nectarines into twelfths and the plums into eighths and put them in a shallow bowl. Sprinkle the fruit slices with the sugar and lemon juice and toss with the herb leaves, bruising the leaves against the side of the bowl to release their essence. Let the fruit and herbs macerate, stirring occasionally, while preparing the cake batter.

#### Cake:

14 tablespoons unsalted butter

5 extra large eggs

2 extra large egg yolks

1 1/3 cups sugar

2 cups unbleached white flour

1/2 teaspoon salt

Finely grated zest of 1 lemon

About 20 bergamot or orange mint leaves (1/4 cup loosely packed herb leaves cut into chiffonade).

Butter and flour a 9 x 13-inch pan and preheat the oven to 375° F. Melt the butter over low heat and set aside to cool.

Beat the eggs, yolks, and sugar until the mixture becomes pale yellow and fluffy. This should take about 5 minutes.

Sift the flour with the salt. Gently fold the flour, one-third at a time, into the egg mixture. Carefully fold the melted butter, one-third at a time, into the batter. When the batter is thoroughly blended, fold in the lemon zest.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan, spread evenly, and strew the herbs over the batter. Arrange the fruit slices on top (the leftover nectar is for the cook to sip).

Bake for 40 minutes until pale golden brown, the cake pulls slightly away from the pan, or a tester comes out clean. Do not overcook. Cool the cake in the pan on a baking rack. The cake can be cut into squares and served from the pan, or the cake can be turned out onto a baking rack, inverted, and served from a platter. Serve alone, or accompanied by fresh whipped cream, garnished with bergamot flowers and leaves.

© Susan Belsinger

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