



## Happy New Year Everyone!!

The month of January can be a welcome respite from the holidays just preceding it. January is a great month for new starts – lifestyles, plants, and experiences. To brighten up cold dreary days we might expect in January, peruse catalogs of plants, classes, and travel. Make your travel reservations early this year. Enroll in that gardening, cooking, or herbal class that you have been meaning to take. Don't forget exercise. Sign up to work in one of our gardens for some great educational exercise. Bundle up and take a walk or bicycle rides in the crisp air. In Texas, we might even have warm January days. It has been known to happen.

Now is a very good time to plant your garden, especially bulbs, trees and shrubs. It is also a good time to plan the spring garden. I recently read a great idea from *The Sage Cottage Herb Garden Cookbook* by Dorrie Baird Norris. Pick your proposed plants, copy the description of each from the catalog onto a 3x5 card, (or a notebook page, or computer file), then research the suitability of the chosen plant in regional gardening books. Enter that info also. This will help you make wise choices, and give you a good reference file for your garden. Update your info with observations on how the plants fared in your garden. You could add plants already existing in your garden to this file also.

Not everyone will take to this method of planning a garden and that's all right. An easy way to make wise choices is to buy from locally-owned garden centers that specialize in native and adapted plants. We have several who are sponsors. They are listed in our brochure, at the end of this newsletter, and on the website ([www.austinherbsociety.org](http://www.austinherbsociety.org)). Many give discounts. Be sure to ask, identify yourself as an AHS member, and tell them thanks for being a sponsor.

Don't forget your health. It is a good time to "detox" from holiday splurges. (See related article on page 4.) Eat your greens. They could be organically grown in your own garden as they are easy to grow and cold hardy. Winter herbs such as sage, parsley, rosemary, and winter savory spice up your soups, stews, and meat dishes, as well as providing healthy minerals and vitamins. A good herbalist can help you to choose herbs that fit your needs.

Make your new year a time of rejuvenation and hope.

Green and growing blessings in the New Year!

Cindy Phillips and Andra Millian  
Co-Presidents AHS

**Green Corn Project**  
**Zilker Garden Center, Thursday, January 10,**  
**NOTE THAT THIS MEETING IS ON THE**  
**SECOND THURSDAY OF THE MONTH**  
**9:30AM – 12 noon**

What exactly is the Green Corn Project, what do they do, and how do they do it? Mitch Mills will join us to tell us all about this local Austin nonprofit and the good work they do in the community. At the same time he will introduce us to their planting methods, which include double digging and a version of bio-intensive planting. This will be a great winter program to inspire your spring projects.

**Culinary Group meeting, Friday, January 18,**  
**10:00AM – 12:00PM, American Botanical**  
**Council, 6200 Manor Road**  
**Chocolate Delights!**

Ah, chocolate – favorite “herb” for many of us. Barbara Broering and Michele Lofstrom will be doing the presentation and bringing chocolate treats for us to sample. Everyone is asked to bring their favorite chocolate recipe to share. You don't have to make it for us; just bring 10 copies of the recipe to pass around. Isn't this just the best way to get prepared for Valentine's Day in February?

**Zilker Park Herb Gardening Day.** Call Judith at 944-2787 or Michelle at 343-7677 to volunteer to help out in the Zilker Herb Garden or the Vee Fowler Native Texas Herb Garden.

**Mayfield Park Gardening Day.** Call Julie Crouch at 339-0193 to find out if she'll be working at Mayfield this month.



## AHS Business, Updates and Related Announcements

### Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who participated in the **Holiday Bazaar and Inaugural Tea** in December. We got so many compliments (and a few suggestions) and everyone seemed to have a great time. A very special thank you goes to our culinary group who worked so hard for so many months to plan such a lovely tea for us. Thanks to Michele Lofstrom for coordinating the sweet treats and to Betty Williamson for coordinating the savory treats and to Gayle Engels for the teas. And a really special thank you to Sandra Holland, chief cat herder, for keeping the group in line and on track. The comestibles were luscious and the servers were so gracious! Thanks to everyone who made something for the tea or helped to serve, set up and clean up. Many hands really do make light work. A special thank you goes to Pam Bell for her (as usual!) gorgeous decorations. And, of course, a big thank you to all our vendors for bringing such a wonderful variety of items for us to choose from.



### **Herbal Happy Hours - Traditional Chinese Medicine for the Texas Medicine Cabinet**

Co-president Andra Millian is starting a new program in 2008 – Herbal Happy Hours. These will be held at her office, Austin Onsite Acupuncture, at 401 E. 53<sup>rd</sup>, Suite 204. If you are interested in attending any of these programs, please RSVP by the Monday prior to the event by calling 512-892-0288. Refreshments, recipes and samples will be provided and a \$5.00 donation for materials is suggested.

Wed. Jan. 16 from 5:15pm to 6pm – First Defense for Cold and Flu Season

Wed. Feb. 13 from 5:15pm to 6pm – Eating for your ailments - Medical Properties of Common Foods and Herbs for Your Healthiest Goals

Wed. Mar. 12 from 5:15pm to 6pm – Nip Spring Allergies in the Bud with Chinese Medicine



### Letter from Dick Pierce

[Editor's Note: Dick's letter came too late for the December Potpourri so this letter has been edited to eliminate offers that have passed.]

Dear Austin Herbalists,

Thank you so much for having me as your November speaker. Your reaction to Permaculture and its practical principles for gardening and living in Austin with its challenging soils, growing seasons, and climate, was great. Many of you indicated interest in our schedule of upcoming classes. Any or all of these ([Hands-on Organic Gardening](#), [Permaculture Basics](#), and [Permaculture Design](#)) would make great and thoughtful presents for family, friends and, of course, yourself.

Also linked is the tentative line-up for the [2008 Winter Series of Talks](#). These are free and open to the public and serve as an adjunct to the formal class and are a way for us to introduce more of Austin to various aspects of sustainable thinking. They are fun, relaxing, and informative sessions for individuals, families, and groups of friends/neighbors to enjoy an evening out and kindle community and thoughts of a more sustainable world.

Perhaps the Christmas present that you'll give to the world, to your local area, and to Mother Nature will be enrolling yourself, a family member, or a friend in one or more of these classes.

Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, Great Gardening, and Joy to the World – it needs your help (locally).

Dick Pierce  
[DickPierceDesigns@gmail.com](mailto:DickPierceDesigns@gmail.com)

<http://permie.us/>

The Austin Herb Society invites you to join us for our spring seminar featuring

## Phyllis Hogan

Executive Director of the Arizona Ethnobotanical Research Association, herbalist,  
and proprietor of Winter Sun Trading Company

# Plants and People from the Land of the Colorful Corn

Saturday, February 23, 2008 • 9 AM til Noon

Zilker Botanical Garden • 2200 Barton Springs Road • Austin, Texas 78746

- A visual journey of the plants and people of the Little Colorado River Basin of northern Arizona will show the importance of contemporary applied ethnobotany for today's society
- Unique plants that have sustained tribes of the area for centuries
- Common plants used in many ways by all tribes that are considered to be veritable medicine chests in themselves
- Rare plants found only in this region with significance in obscure, ancient ceremonies that only a few practitioners still remember
- Phyllis will be focusing on all of these important plants, their uses, and their tribal and ecological significance

### **AHS Members - \$25; Nonmembers - \$30**

Space is limited. Please pre-register to ensure seating.  
Light refreshments will be provided.

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Enclosed is a check/money order for \$\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_ (#) members of AHS (\$25 each) and \_\_\_\_ (#) nonmembers (\$30 each) to attend the AHS seminar, Plants and People from the Land of the Colorful Corn, featuring Phyllis Hogan.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email (for confirmation of registration) \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to the Austin Herb Society and mail to:  
Robin Carter  
8911 Dorella Lane

## **Digestives for a silent night after feasting** **By Paulette L. Prudhon (reprinted with permission)**

“Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way” - no doubt some of the sweetest sounds of the season.

However, they're not so sweet when they toll in the tummy as the jingling and rumbling resulting from too many parties, cookies, dinners and drinks. Indeed, holiday fare flush with fats, starches, sugar and alcohol can sour many merry moods.

To quell the toll on digestion, most American revelers turn to the medicine cabinet.

Instead of resorting to pills or tonic, other cultures often include natural digestives alongside their cuisine. For instance, the lively ginger slivers and sinus-clearing wasabi paste aren't chosen as the sidekicks for sushi for flavoring alone. They both have powerful medicinal attributes as ginger supports digestion while wasabi fights bacterial infections.

It actually pays to be more mindful of what is eaten after the meal rather than before it. Appetizers to whet the appetite are routine choices, but digestives, or in the French lingo, digestifs, to remedy gastronomic excess are mostly ignored in our culinary world. For the French, digestifs are usually spirited after-dinner drinks like brandy or cognac.

In other European lands, bitters, made from aromatic herbs, spices, flowers, roots and plants, are popular digestive aids.

That dish of seeds offered after Indian fare isn't for the birds. Those fragrant tidbits help with digestion as well as freshening the breath. The American tradition of serving peppermints after meals is supposed to have the same effect. However, most of those mints are chock full of sugar, which can defeat the purpose of peppermint.

To find out how to defuse the damage from the usual problematic culprits, read on.

### **DAMAGE CONTROL**

Some of the most remarkable remedies for counteracting the effects of too much sugar and alcohol come from the Asian world. Miso soup, a combination of miso (fermented soybean paste) and hot water, isn't just for kicking off a Japanese spread. It's perfect for counterbalancing a sugar binge or neutralizing sour tastes after eating too many baked goods or sweets.

One of the best kept secrets for slicing through the ravages of too much sugar or alcohol is by chewing on a few umeboshi plums. These pale purplish Japanese plums, cured in brine with red shiso leaves (an Asian herb with anti-inflammatory properties), are a popular condiment accompanying most Japanese meals.

Combating the effects of consuming too much fat is as close as your refrigerator. A common, often-ignored veggie that should be in everyone's crisper is the radish. These unpretentious jewels work to dissolve fat, thus assist in clearing up congestion and excess mucus.

Its exotic cousin, the daikon, contains an abundance of the enzyme diastase, which aids in the digestion of starchy foods such as grains, pasta and potatoes. A couple of cups of peppermint herbal tea or lemon tea simply made with the juice of a fresh lemon also work wonders to break up undigested fats.

*This simple slaw brims with bright flavors and sports the secret benefit of aiding digestion to make it a perfect adjunct to fatty foods.*

1 cup shredded daikon radish (see Note 1)  
1 cup shredded fresh fennel  
2 cups shredded carrots  
1 cup seedless cucumber matchsticks (see Note 2)  
1/4 cup minced fresh chives  
sea salt  
freshly ground white pepper  
1 lemon, zested and juiced  
extra virgin olive oil

Place radishes, fennel, carrots, cucumber and chives into a large nonreactive bowl. Sprinkle with sea salt, white pepper and lemon zest. Drizzle with lemon juice and about 2 tablespoons olive oil, and then carefully mix all ingredients together. Adjust seasonings, if necessary.

Makes about 4 servings.

Note 1: Use a food processor to shred vegetables for the best results. With the shredding attachment in place, position the vegetables (about 3-4-inch long pieces) lengthwise in the feed tube. Vegetables can also be shredded using a hand grater with the coarsest setting.

Note 2: To make matchsticks, stand a 4-inch length of cucumber on end, trim off a thin slice of peel, and then cut into thin slabs (about 1/8-inch thick). Stack slabs on top of each other and cut crosswise into matchstick-sized pieces.

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