



La Yerba Buena

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY

NUMBER 209, AUGUST 2007

visit us online at www.sanantonioherbs.org

The San Antonio Herb Society is organized to bring together those who are interested in using and growing herbs and to promote general knowledge of herbs to the membership and the public at large.



Care to Share?

One of our favorite meetings of the year—the annual sharing session—is now upon us.

Bring anything herbal to share with others. It could be plans for a raised, three-tier herb garden, a recipe for rosemary muffins, a newly discovered book on herb growing, or a method for making scented herbal greeting cards or bath salts. Handouts, samples, and examples are often provided as members gather in a large circle to exchange resources and inspiration.

This meeting is a treasury of ideas from some of the best herb growers in the region—us! Join us on August 9th, (6:30 pm for food & fellowship; 7 pm for the actual meeting) to teach and learn about the useful herbs that we all love.

Be prepared to be surprised and have fun! Lyn Belisle

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Members with the last names beginning with E-K are asked to bring refreshments to the August meeting. If you miss your turn, please bring food the following month. Please arrive by 6:30 so all can enjoy your dish. Don't forget to email your recipe to karyrebecca@yahoo.com and we'll likely publish it in the next newsletter.

SAVE A TREE



If you are willing to receive your newsletter electronically, please contact Lyn @ belisle@satx.rr.com to sign up. Advantages? Receive the newsletter before everyone else; all photos are in color (so your newsletter looks really great when printed out); and it saves our SAHS valuable resources, such as stamps & paper. **GO!!! GREEN!!! GO!!!**

TUSSIE MUSSIES...

...To Mary Lee Estess for the creative cards she makes for all our speakers. They are always clever and appropriate, and a great representation of the San Antonio Herb Society.

Five Easy Green Grocery-Shopping Tips



Buy all-white paper towels and napkins instead of those with "cute" colored designs – colored dyes pollute the water, and patterned paper products use more chemicals in the manufacturing process. Besides, white products just look classier. Look for local brands and save "food miles." Even generic brands are sometimes (not always) produced and marketed closer to home. You may have to look on the lower shelves because higher-priced top brand items are often in the middle. Buying seafood? Before you do, download and check out the free Marine Conservation Society (MCS) free Pocket Good Fish Guide:

http://www.fishonline.org/information/MCSPocket_Good_Fish_Guide.pdf

It supports sustainable management of wild and farmed fish and seafood. (continued on page 2)





MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Getting the Best of Garden Pests, Naturally, with Nematode Nick

by Jane McDaniel

You might think that a college degree in radio and TV broadcasting, and years' experience in broadcasting and food distribution would be the last things to prepare anyone for a career in organic landscaping, but the sheer effectiveness of beneficial nematodes was one of the factors that persuaded Nick Vann of Nematode Nick's to follow his heart's desire when he studied landscape design while working at Schultz Nursery just east of San Antonio (830-914-2384, two blocks off Highway 78 at 100 W. Huebinger in Marion, TX). His father didn't help much. "He was a perfectionist," comments Nematode Nick. "We had 300 linear feet of ligustrum hedging in our garden; my job was to trim that. My parents used to beat me to do gardening." Slight pause for thought. "Gardeners can't be perfectionists" is Nick Vann's conclusion.

These early close encounters with the hedge trimmer did not deter this budding gardener from cultivating a love for growing plants. "In the days when I had a real job, I did a lot of gardening on the side," says Nick. "My wife and I bought property in St. Hedwig, where we wanted to eventually retire and create a nursery, specializing in native plants and herbs."

Three years ago, Nick decided to follow his heart and start charging money for all those free tips and advice he'd been giving to friends and neighbors. That was when he founded Nematode Nick's Landscape Design and Installation. At Schultz Nursery, Nick had initiated an organic gardening program that went over well with customers. As he puts it, "There was a need for organics on a larger scale [than then available], so I started putting together a program for organic fertilizing and pest control for the garden. I soon found that people were more interested in landscape design." Undeterred, Nick turned the bulk of his

Balance means that the soil population of insects, worms, and other pests do not constitute a problem if they are controlled. Healthy soil is host to microbial and beneficial nematodes that attack and destroy plant-eating nematodes (those are the bad guys).

efforts to landscape design and installation, including, along the way, education in organic pest control and teaching people how to achieve organic soil *balance*. That has paid off, and nowadays, Nick Vann works to keep his business intentionally small, and to enjoy life. As he puts it, "I like hands-on experience. I am doing what I enjoy."

And how does he do that? With something called "Picture Perfect Landscaping," a computer program

familiar to many who are addicts of HGTV yard improvement programs. When your lawn is yellow, your tomato plants scoff at you, your basil's quietly die, your roses wither from black spot and thrips, the trumpet vine starts to attack the house, and you can't see the street for the weeds, you call Nick. He will come and, using his laptop, feed pictures of your home-grown disasters into the handy program mentioned above and, with your input, work out a viable garden design. And, in a few days, you will have the yard you've dreamed of, plus instructions on how to keep it that way. He does the initial digging and planting, not you.

Not from nowhere does this ability come, nor just from a lifelong fascination with gardening; Nick is a life and charter member of the National Gardening Club, a member of the Native Plant Society (New Braunfels chapter), and member of the Texas Nursery and Landscape Association. Add that to the aforementioned apprenticeship to a landscape architect while employed at Schultz Nursery, and you can see that Nick knows what he is talking about when he mentions establishing and organically maintaining mini-eco-systems when he "does" landscape design.

The name of the business, Nematode Nick's, refers to beneficial nematodes, which are squiggly, translucent worms that attack army worms, cutworms, grubs, potato beetles, and corn rootworms. Nematodes are such handy helpers and their method is simple and deadly: they enter through a pest's body openings and, once inside, feed and reproduce until the host is dead. Then, new nematodes emerge in search of new victims. Practical, effective, good. The rainy weather we've been having is perfect weather for spreading millions of beneficial nematodes. Call Nick Vann (also known as Nematode Nick) at 210-667-1500 or try nematodenick01@cs.com

(Green Tips continued from page 1)

Buy in bulk whenever possible and repack in sustainable glass or recyclable plastic containers when you get home – grains, pastas, and dried fruit are good candidates for bulk buying. Avoid over-packaged products!

Finally - use pencils instead of plastic pens for making grocery lists and notes – pencils are much more environmentally friendly (plus you can erase mistakes!)

Lyn Belisle

SAHS Green List Coordinator



Member Recipes

Healthier Spinach Dip

Contributed by Jean Dukas

2 10 oz packages of frozen chopped spinach, thawed & squeezed dry
 1 can water chestnuts, drained & chopped
 ½ cup frozen peas thawed
 4 green onions finely diced
 1 cup plain yogurt
 ¾ cup Vegennaise (purple top, made with grape seed oil)
 1 small jar pimentos drained & finely chopped
 salt & pepper to taste
 Mix all ingredients together in a medium sized bowl. Chill before serving.



Lavender and Lemon Bread & Fluffy Butter

From the Kitchen of Lorna Peters Dressler

1 t. dry yeast	Fluffy Butter
2 1/3 c. white bread flour	1 c. powdered sugar
2 T. sugar	1 1/2 c. butter, softened
1 T. dry milk	3 T. sour cream
1 t. salt	Combine and beat until fluffy.
1 T. butter	From <i>Popovers, Peaches and Four-Poster Beds</i> by Patsy Swendson.
2 t. lemon zest	
1 c. water	
3 T. dried lavender flowers	

Place all ingredients in bread machine in the recommended order by the manufacturer and follow directions for basic white bread.
 From *Hill Country Mornings Cookbook* by Patsy Swendson

June 2007 Treasurer's Report

Submitted by Jennifer Hubbard

BEG. BALANCE	\$5,597.00
INCOME	\$60.00 MEMBERSHIP DUES
	\$343.00 COOK BOOK SALES
EXPENSES	(\$25.00) CLOGGERS GROUP
	(\$85.00) GARDEN CENTER FEE
	(\$25.00) GS ATTENDANT
	(\$83.31) BRISKET / BANQUET
	(\$49.50) CHICKEN / BANQUET
	(\$22.46) NEWS LETTER / PENS
	(\$26.76) NAME BADGES
END. BALANCE	\$5,682.97
2 YR CD	\$1,058.80
SAVINGS ACCT	\$1,016.61
\$ TRANSFERS	\$0.00
TOTAL ASSETS	\$7,758.38

Up 'n' Coming Opportunities

Herbal Crafts SIG

Next meeting: Saturday, August 18, 2007; 10 a.m.–12 noon

Topic: A summer canning project

Presenter and hostess: Sandra Lyssy

Contact Rebecca Kary (karyrebecca@yahoo.com)

Farmers Market at Pearl Brewery

When: Fridays, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.; July 2007 through January 2008

Where: Parking lot for Pearl Stables at corner of Pearl Parkway and Avenue A.

Organized by Brian Montgomery, Owner/Chef of Farm to Table Cafe

(<http://www.texasfarmtotable.com/>)

16th Annual San Antonio Herb Market

celebrating the **Herb of the Year 2007: Lemon Balm:**

Saturday, October 20, 2007

9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Location: Aggie Park

The event is free and open to the public. Find herb plants, herbal products, and food for sale. Speakers include Ellen Zimmerman from Austin School of Herbal Studies (medicinal program), John Marr of Marr's Nursery with Shane Dunsford of Nature's Herb Farm (organic herb gardening), our own Diane Lewis (local herb instructor, herb basics 101), and a cooking demonstration by a local chef. The San Antonio Herb Society will demonstrate **Herbs in Everyday Products**. We will provide samples of recipes from our cookbook to encourage brisk cookbook sales and new memberships. Find your favorite finger food recipe in the cookbook and watch for the sign-up sheet at the meetings. Help us by signing up for a 2-hour shift to visit with people who love herbs. You will have fun and learn a lot. Members, contact Diane Lewis 210-495-6116 or lewisdr@swbell.net to volunteer. For public information, call 210-688-9421 or in October, visit www.sanantonioherbmarket.org.

(continued on page 7)

Minutes of July Meeting

The meeting was under way by 7:10 p.m. after we all scooted our chairs into the side room where it was cooler.

Announcements

Jane McDaniel: Volunteers needed for the herb garden at the San Antonio Botanical Garden. Next gardening session: Saturday, July 31; 9:30–10:30 a.m., followed by refreshments or brunch.

Carol Hamling, Membership: The cutoff for signing in at the front desk before our meetings is 7 p.m. To sign in, just write your name on the back of the ticket and drop it in the box.

Carol-lee Fisher: Because of the incredible work by our Program Chairman, Lorraine Jennings, the society is now up to 150 members from a low of 75. Our break-even point and next goal is to reach 200. Mary Lee Estess volunteered to assist Lorraine with her program work.

The Program

Program Chairman Lorraine Jennings introduced our speaker, Patricia Meyers. Patricia proceeded to tell us many stories and details about Thomas Jefferson and his home and gardens at Monticello. Among other things, Jefferson was the third president of the United States and was a well-traveled statesman and one of the original seed savers. He traded plants and seeds with many people and brought back and documented many plant materials from many places, including the Lewis and Clarke expeditions. He took painstaking notes on the varieties of fruits, vegetables, and herbs grown in the orchards, groves, and gardens at Monticello.

Tansy, burnet, sorrel, and southernwood were among the most-used herbs grown at Monticello, which also included garlic, parsley, sage, mint, lemon, thyme, chamomile, rosemary, lavender, hyssop, marjoram, nasturtiums, shallots, horseradish, rue, mustard, cresses, wormwood, and tarragon.

Visit www.monticello.org for more information on every aspect of Monticello and Jefferson.

Patricia Meyers was given an honorary membership in the San Antonio Herb Society.



Board Members Rebecca Kary, Lorraine Jennings & Jean Dukes visit before the meeting

President, Carol-lee Fisher gives Patricia Meyers a thank you hug for her fascinating presentation about Monticello





Hot Soap!

by Yvonne McGowan



The last meeting of the Herbal Crafts Special Interest Group was on June 16—a very hot day indeed! The hostess was mortified as her air conditioner had conked out two days prior, so she placed fans placed strategically around the downstairs of her home. She and her husband dutifully cleaned and arranged the kitchen for the project at hand, all the while truly believing that the rainy weather and e-mail difficulties would contribute to a poor turnout.

Little did she know that ten talented, interesting women would show up to make magical microwave soaps. The biggest turnout ever for the SIG. How delightful!

While the group munched on delightful appetizers (dip, pan dulce, watermelon, grilled fruits, donuts, coffee, and iced ginger tea), Anne Sturdivant went over the basics of melting, mixing, pouring, and molding the glycerin soap base like a wise woman passing along a long-forgotten lore. The group then went to work with Anne's continued guidance, coloring the soaps, adding beneficial essential oils, and infusing the soaps with green tea, cornmeal, and lavender flowers to make decorative and therapeutic soaps.

The choices for additives and combinations are endless. For exfoliants and skin stimulants, you can use cornmeal, ground espresso coffee, ground oatmeal, ground almonds, cranberry seeds, crushed grape seeds, dill seeds, strawberry seeds, ground loofah, white or blue pumice, or bentonite clay. Other additives that are decorative and sometimes therapeutic include flowers and petals, green tea, mace, cinnamon, coloring agents, and even small toys or interesting objects. Essential oils that are nice to use alone or in various combinations: lavender, bergamot, rosemary, sandalwood. Stable colorants are available, as are natural sources of color: **yellow**—annatto (achiote), saffron, turmeric, carthamin (derived from safflower); **green**—chlorophyll, spirulina; **brown**—the cocoa bean (pods, shells, stems), cocoa powder, fermented tea; **red**—paprika (may be irritating). Just experiment.

Members brought their own distinctive molds to share for added variety and interest. When it was time to open the freezer, which was used to hasten the setting process, they were glad to linger and cool off their faces, too! Everyone learned a lot, talked a lot, laughed a lot, and the session ended with everyone admiring their soaps and eating dessert.

Epilogue: After everyone left that day, the hostess went back to soap-making using fresh basil flowers (thanks, Sally Ann) and made a large bar of gorgeous green soap using basil flowers and some cornmeal...which she now looks forward to bathing with each day!

General instructions: In the microwave, heat the desired amount of glycerin-based soap squares in a measuring cup for approximately 30 seconds. Add your favorite color, fragrance, or essential oil. Pour into the mold and let cool (about 1–30 minutes). Apply gentle pressure to release the soap from the mold.

Facial soap: Add tea tree oil and ground green tea leaves to the glycerin soap. The tea tree is a gentle antibacterial, and green tea, with its polyphenolic antioxidants, acts as a wonderfully soothing and moisturizing treat for your face.

Citrus soap: Add either orange or lemon peel, and your favorite brand of fresh orange or lemon essential oil to the glycerin soap. Using the essential orange oil in a kitchen diffuser always yields a fresh clean smell, and now you can feel the freshness as you wash your hands.

Soap-making ingredients and supplies: They can be found in most craft stores, such as Hobby Lobby and Michael's. Essential oils can be found at Florame (a business member of SAHS that gives members a 20% discount), Sun Harvest, and Whole Foods. Many terrific online retailers carry full lines of soap bases, fragrances, molds, coloring agents, and additives, along with many creative ideas: www.fromnaturewithlove.com, www.brambleberry.com

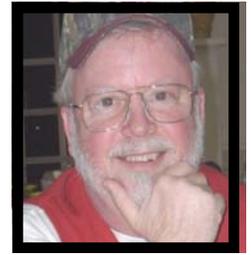
Recipes: Many websites have fabulous recipes. Do a search or just try www.eaudrey.com www.soapdelicatessen.com

Contributors: Ann Sturdivant and Rebecca Kary

Brian's August To-Do

Compiled by MG Brian D. Townsend

Read Brian's unedited to-do list on our website at www.sanantonioherbs.org/todo.htm



Effort is only troublesome when you are bored.

—Christopher Lloyd

1st Week:

- Fertilize summer-blooming perennials lightly with 16-8-8 or 15-5-10.
- Add compost to the vegetable gardens before planting tomatoes, peppers, okra and southern peas this month. Spread 2 inches of compost and till to a depth of 6-8 inches.
- Harvest okra every two days to maintain a crop of tender pods. Discard large, tough pods.
- Perennial plants should be cut back during the stress of the hot days. Allowing leggy, old growth to remain is doing a disservice to them, as this old growth uses up moisture. If the plant is showing new growth at its base, the plant should be cut back to that point. Mints, as an example, should be cut back to only several inches in height. All plants should be mulched to conserve moisture.
- Tomato, eggplant, and pepper plants can be transplanted into the fall garden now, but the tender plants will need protection from scorching sunlight and pests.
- The best tomato plants to grow here are Sunmaster, Tomato 444 (Healthy Surprise), Celebrity, Amelia, and Merced. Also try Solar Fire, Sunpride, Top Gun, and Surefire. A good tomato for containers is Patio. For the former, buy the tallest, lankiest plants you can find and bury in 1-gallon containers all the way up to the first set of leaves. Roots will form all along the buried stem and produce a good root mass. For Patio tomatoes, buy the shortest plants.
- Plant heat-loving plants, such as lantana, bougainvillea, allamanda, hibiscus, mandevilla, copper plant, zinnia, portulaca, and salvia.

In the Herb Garden:

- Seed frost-tolerant herb perennials indoors for later transplanting.
- Start indoor cuttings of perennial herb to promote fall plantings.
- Preserve your herbs by drying them in the air, refrigerator, or microwave. Freeze in ice cube trays or as an oil paste. Make herb flavored vinegars, jellies, butters, oils, honeys, pickles, relishes, or mustards.

2nd Week:

- Cut back Poinsettias and pinch back subsequent growth.
- Pinch shoot tips on Mums and Asters.
- Cut back 'Texas Gold' columbines if they are looking ratty. They will put on new foliage next month.
- Endure August heat and consider these plants for colorful fall: Marigolds (Discovery Gold & Discovery Yellow); Zinnias; Celosias (Cockscombs); Joseph's Coat; Mexican Bush sage (Salvia leucantha); Fall aster (Blue); Chrysanthemums (garden-type); Spider lilies (reds); Belladonna lilies; Fall crocus (Sternbergia lutea); Sweet autumn clematis; Coral vine or Queen's wreath.
- Trim lantana and verbena with a string trimmer for consistent blooms.
- Southern peas, pumpkin and winter squash seeds can be planted now for harvest in fall.

3rd Week:

- Languishing spring-blooming perennials may be cut back and divided. Replant immediately and water them in.
- Trim leggy petunias and impatiens to encourage new blooms.
- Plant beans, lima beans, cucumbers, sweet corn and black-eyed peas for the fall harvest.
- Trim cherry sage (Salvia greggii) and mealy blue sage (Salvia farinacea) for more blooms. Cut spent blooms and a few inches of stems.
- Caladiums need plenty of water during drought-like conditions to remain active and lush until fall. Also apply 1/3 to 1/2 lbs. of a 21-0-0 fertilizer per sq. ft. of caladium bed. Water in thoroughly.
- Now is a good time to choose crape myrtles for your landscape. They are blooming, so you can be certain of the color of the blooms.

4th Week:

- Start sowing flowering winter annuals, such as alyssum, calendula, larkspur, poppy and stock.
- Cut back mallow hibiscus plants to 8 inches to encourage a second bloom this fall. (continued on page 7)

(Brian's August To Do continued from page 6)

- Include Mari-mum marigolds and shasta daisy transplants in the landscape for bright blooms through October.
- Prune autumn sage to encourage a fall bloom.
- Fertilize flowering plants. Use a foliar spray to give leaves a boost. Apply in the morning or evening to prevent burning.
- Prune summer-blooming shrubs and vines as they finish flowering.
- Clean up iris beds and thin out clumps if crowded (showing small, poor blooms). They can be transplanted and divided from now until October.

Thanks to MG Brian Townsend for this monthly article. Brian has culled this information from the wisdom of a number of local and regional gardening experts, plus our own HERBS: A Resource Guide for San Antonio.

(Up 'n' Coming continued from page 3)

New Herb & Design classes forming! Diane will be guiding informative tours of herb gardens, herb farms, and nurseries with herbs and native plants. All classes include instruction, written handouts, and attendance prizes. Classes may include transportation, herbal crafting, design workshop, and/or lunch reservations. Customized tours and instruction available for your group. Call Diane at (210) 495-6116 or e-mail: drl designs@swbell.net

Upcoming classes taught by SAHS member Diane Lewis who is an herbalist, horticulturist, and designer through NEISD Continuing Education Classes (www.communityed.neisd.net)

Home & Garden: "Herbs for the Garden, Kitchen and Bath+; San Antonio Botanical Garden , 1 Session, Sat., Beg. 9/22/2007, 9:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m., \$35.00 **Food: "Dieting Made Tasty with Herbs" (New)** Community Learning Center Rm. 201, 1 Session, Fri., Beg. 10/5/2007, 11 AM-1:00 PM, \$20.00

Home & Garden: "Herbal Delights for the Eyes and Palate" (New) San Antonio Botanical Garden , 1 Session, Sat., Beg. 11/10/2007 (date to be confirmed), 10.00 AM-12:30 PM, \$27.00.

In Austin: HerbFest 2007

Saturday, October 13

9 a.m.–1 p.m.

At the Sunset Valley Farmers Market
Burger Center, 3200 Jones Rd., off 290 between Brodie Lane and Westgate Blvd.

Live music. No entrance fee for shoppers. Free parking. Kids activities.

Sponsored by the Austin Herb Society

www.austinherbsociety.org Contact Diana Hyland for information. Phone: (512) 402-9697, E-mail: hylandinc@austin.rr.com

DISCLAIMER

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

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Carol Hamling - Vice President Membership

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647-0838, dwilson@satx.rr.com

Business Members

We thank our business members for their support. When you patronize their businesses, be sure to mention your SAHS membership.

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www.avedaisa.com

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PLEASE SEND TO:

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!
Michelle Kollias, Wanda Walters,
& The Happy Gardener, Sheryl Raineri!

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