



NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY December 2019

San Antonio Herb Society – Holiday Potluck Banquet - “Friends Old and New”

By Robin Maymar

Date: December 12, our next meeting will be our annual Holiday Banquet.

Time: 6:30 pm

Where: San Antonio Garden Center, 3310 N New Braunfels Ave., San Antonio, TX 78209

The San Antonio Herb Society has had several new members and we are thrilled to have new faces with different likes, interests and information to share about their experiences planting, growing, and using herbs. Several new members have volunteered for our community events and we are so grateful for their time and talent.

With that in mind, we also enjoy seeing our current members and miss seeing some of our past members. Christmas is a time for family, miracles, fun, sharing, food, and the promise of what's to come in the new year. So, **Our Theme this year 2019** is “**Friends Old and New**”. It's fitting since we are closing out the decade of 2010, and ringing in the first year of the 2020 decade.

Decorations:

We are going to change things around this year and have **members and guests decorate the tables**.

We are asking you to donate decorations ahead of time to be used as part of the table decorations. I bet you have some ribbon, Christmas ornaments, candles, table runners, etc. in your closet that you aren't going to use and there must be some fresh, dried, silk, or paper greenery in your closet or yard that you can donate. Similar to the designer's flower arrangements at the Festival of Flowers, you will use whatever is on the table you choose. (Donations to Robin at 110 W. Brandon, 78209 before Dec. 12, or to the Garden Center 1pm on the 12th)

During the table decorating competition, board members and guests will be passing out champagne, virgin bubbly, and hors d'oeuvres for your sampling pleasure.

After the tables are decorated **there will be a prize for the most designer looking decorated table**. And, one person at each table can take the centerpiece home.

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San Antonio Herb Society – Holiday Potluck Banquet - “Friends Old and New”

(continued)

We are looking forward to seeing all of you and having a good time with “FriendsOld and New.”

Dinner:

The Board will supply *turkey, ham and a vegetarian main dish, paper products, cups and cutlery.*

Members should bring either a *side dish* or an *hors d'oeuvre*.

Desserts: We have twelve people who have already signed up to bring desserts, and three offered that will be auctioned off. If you would like to bring a potluck dish and a dessert, we will **auction off your dessert** also. Proceeds will go to support the programs at the San Antonio Herb Society with a portion to be designated for our Scholarship Program.

The board wants to welcome old friends of the Herb Society as well as all current members.

Do you miss someone that no longer attends? Please email a board member with name and address and we will send an invitation, or you may call them yourself to extend the hospitality. Robin Maymar - robinmaymar@gmail.com and Debarah Wilson - debarah_wilson@bellsouth.net.

We are looking forward to seeing all of you and having a good time with “FriendsOld and New.”



From the Prez

We are looking forward to the Banquet. We hope that the idea of table decorating is fun and stimulates happy conversation. At a time when we feel so much pressure, our hope is that we have a cheerful relaxed and enjoyable experience with friends. See you December 12.

Meeting Minutes

San Antonio Herb Society November 14, 2019 General Meeting

SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY

By Robin Maymar

GENERAL MEETING AGENDA November 14, 2019 Garden Center

Loretta Van Coppenolle took minutes

Meeting called to order at 7 p.m. by President Robin Maymar

She thanked everyone for coming to the meeting on a cold rainy night.

A reminder was posted to please silence your cell phones.

We had one new member: Susan Ruch

We also had one guest: Paula

We thanked Cyndy Moore, Sandra Woodall for setting our table theme of Juniper, complete with live juniper plants! And all of the members for preparing such lovely food. We asked members to forward recipes to Tera Marshall, for inclusion in the Newsletter.

Robin forgot to mention that we have a copy of the treasurer's report; see Debarah Wilson

We forgot to thank our: Debarah Wilson and Jane McDaniel for displaying their wares.

We had an Herb Society table, not live herbs today, but plenty of merchandise, as well as books and a Free table on the North wall.

Minutes from the last General meeting were in the newsletter. Are there any additions or corrections? No

We participated in Herb Market October 19. We brought in \$517. We particularly wanted to thank our volunteers: Sherri McShane, Loretta Van Coppenolle, Roel Gonzalez, Carissa Strong, Debarah Wilson, Sandra Woodall, Linda Henderson and Delores Moore

Weed and Gloat meets November 25 at 10 am. See Mary Jo and Basil for information, and directions on where to park. Or contact Robin Maymar for a map.

November 25, 26 and 27- Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday before Thanksgiving, The Garden center will be having Operation Christmas Cheer. This is a crafting workshop to make wreaths, gift baskets and other holiday items that will be donated to local organizations serving disadvantaged children, teens and adults. Jamie Whitfield filled in a lot of the details about the event. This is a 'come and go' situation and most of the work is done on Monday and Tuesday, which she encouraged us to attend. We are planning on attending on Tuesday the 26th. But you could attend any day 9:30 am to 3 p.m. Suggestions on what to bring are on the San Antonio Garden Center website. Flyers about this event were passed out to members.

San Antonio Herb Society November 14, 2019 General Meeting

(cont)

We will have a last opportunity to sell Christmas Items December 4 from 10 am to 1 pm here at the Garden Center. We sent around a sign up sheet. But, if you do not want to sell, come and shop. It is sponsored by all of the groups that meet here at the Garden Center. There were no volunteers for this event.

Herb of the Month is juniper. Be sure to read about it in the Yerba Buena. Not covered was juniper berries give gin its name and flavor. Use sparsely as a seasoning for game, pork and veal; add to marinades for meat; try sprinkling a little over potatoes as they cook, whole or sliced in butter.

Resource Guide is an on-going project. Robin asked for volunteers to meet and make calls as a group, to hasten the update. A sheet was passed around with prospective dates. Monday December 16 was chosen as the day. Members unable to sign up are encouraged to come and help out.

Speaking of Holidays, our next meeting will be our Holiday Banquet. We have decided on the theme of "Friends Old and New" It is our next meeting time, December 12. We have a new format

Tables will be dressed with tablecloths, place mats, napkins and flatware between 1 and 3

At 6, choose a table, group with the next few people that arrive, and decorate a table. We will have all sorts of herbs to arrange, ribbons, ornaments, glitter and holiday baubles, at least we hope to. We would like everyone to donate some decorations of some kind. They can be dropped off at Robin Maymar's house from now until the 12th or bring them to the Garden Center after 1 pm. We will make these available. The idea is that this is our 'ice breaker' where you work together with other members, and have some fun sharing

During the decoration phase, hot foods will be kept hot on hot trays, hors d'oeuvres will be served as well as Champaign in champagne flutes (or bubbling grape juice)

When all projects are assembled we will sit for dinner.

Then have wonderful desserts.

Some people will notice that we did not include a gift exchange. The feedback was that this dragged, especially for those not participating. So, in lieu of gift exchange, we are going to have a desserts auction. Robin sent around a sign-up sheet for desserts. If you want to make extra, or you just want to contribute a dessert, sign up ahead, so that we know how much space to allot. Twelve people volunteered to bring dessert. Two more for both and one just for the auction. If anyone else wants to contribute to the auction, just bring it on the day.

Our Program: Leslie Bingham could not be here tonight to introduce our speaker. Unfortunately, Mary Dunford is ill and could not give the presentation on Herbs for Wreaths. Instead we have Basil Aivaliotis to speak to us about growing roses. Robin will prepare a fact sheet, as well as putting a short summary in the next Yerba Buena. Contact her by e-mail for a copy.
(robinmaymar@gmail.com)

San Antonio Herb Society November 14, 2019 General Meeting

(cont)

Basil Aivaliotis stepped in at the last minute to bring his special knowledge of roses to share with the Herb Society during our November meeting. We especially appreciate his effort. Robin Maymar, with help from the internet, pulled together pictures of the roses that thrive well in our San Antonio climate to accompany his talk. We have a link(here) to Basil's complete notes, for those who would like a copy. The following are some of the high points of his talk.

Roses are considered an herb, partially because they form hips, which can be used for tea and flavoring and are often high in vitamin C. We include some information about cultivation of roses in the "In the Garden" column in this newsletter.

From Basil's notes, here is the American Rose Society recommended mix of organic ingredients per bush:

- 1 cup of bone meal or superphosphate
- 1 cup cottonseed meal
- ½ cup fish meal
- ½ cup Epsom salts
- ½ cup blood meal

Remember to wear a mask while mixing these ingredients. Start the monthly fertilizing schedule for mature plants, after you have completed the springtime pruning (usually in February) and continue until the end of September. Water first, then, spread fertilizer. After scratching the top one or two inches of soil, water again. Roses are heavy feeders. If you have decided to go organic, feeding must be provided on a monthly basis. Basil prefers organic fertilizers because they release their active ingredients slowly; they will not burn the plant roots. In addition to the main active ingredients, organic fertilizers contain trace elements and micronutrients which promote microbial life in the soil to benefit the overall health of the plant.

The top three recommended roses for our gardens are: Old Blush, a China, pale pink rose; Belinda's Dream. A shrub pink rose, and Drift Knock Out, a trailing pink/red rose.

Roses like their feet moist though not flooded! The only exception to this rule is the swamp rose. Overall, a slow watering system designed to release the water close to the soil, is the best method to keep your plant happy. Water early in the morning and do not get the foliage wet. Wet foliage and direct sunlight ensure plant damage. The best watering technique is with a hose and wand, which enables the gardener to precisely direct the water where it is needed by the plant.

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Grow Your Own Bay Leaves!

Bay Laurel (Laurus Nobilis)

Not to be confused with California Bay or Mountain Laurel (which has poisonous leaves)

Bay Laurel is an evergreen tree or shrub in the lauraceae family. Its leaves are oval shaped, and shiny, deep green, with a leathery texture. Native to the Mediterranean, it is considered to be one of the oldest of cultivated trees.

A Bay Laurel tree can grow to 55 feet high, although is usually trimmed to a more manageable 6-8 foot height. It will be much smaller if grown in pots. It is hardy to Zone 8 and can flourish here in San Antonio. Bay Laurel is sold at local nurseries, in the herb department.

Plant your Bay Laurel in full sun. If you buy one in a 4 inch pot, you should plant it in a larger pot until it is bigger, re-potting every 2-3 years, as it grows. You may be surprised at how fast it grows. It can eventually be planted in the ground as a tree or shrub, or into a permanent container. It will grow best if it is fertilized regularly with general purpose fertilizer. Be sure that it always has good drainage. As it grows, feel free to prune it and train it to grow as you wish. Trunks can be trained into braids and spirals, or as topiaries. Use the trimmings for decorative uses, or wreaths or dry the leaves for kitchen use.

Bay Laurel leaves are often used to season Italian pasta sauces, soups and stews. Most commonly, a whole leaf is simmered, then removed before serving the dish, due to it's leathery texture.



Fresh bay leaves can be ground into powder, and used like a spice.

They are a rich source of iron, Vitamin A, C, iron and potassium..



SAHS is participating in the HOLIDAY SHOPPING MART at the San Antonio Garden Center on December 4, from 10 am to 1 pm.

Volunteer to help with our sales booth and also plan to do some Christmas Shopping!

We really need a **La Yerba Newsletter Editor!**

Full training is available, we'll walk you through the whole process. It's easy! So if you think you might be interested, contact Tera Marshall unicorn45@yahoo.com



Culinary SIG

Culinary SIG was not held in November 2019
Cookie Exchange and luncheon will be held December 7



We have openings in the Culinary SIG!

The Culinary SIG meets the 4th Thursday of each month at 6 pm. We rotate in turn, between members .

At each member's turn, they can choose to meet at their home (and choose a theme) or at a restaurant of their choosing.

When meeting at a member's home, each person brings a dish and explains it, as we all sample the dishes and share recipes.

When meeting at a restaurant, we go dutch.

Culinary SIG is limited to 12 members, and right now, we have a few openings. If you would like to join our happy-go-lucky eating bunch, just contact Robin Maymar.

Herb Society Board

President

Robin Maymar robinmaymar@gmail.com

1st Vice-President (Programs)

Leslie Bingham lesliegw@live.com

Membership

Position vacant

Secretary

Position vacant

Treasurer

Debarah Wilson debarah_wilson@bellsouth.net

Member at Large

Jane McDaniel janesirish@att.net

Our website: <https://sanantonioherbs.org>

Get a drop on Annual Dues!

Pay your dues now and cover 2019 and all of 2020 in one fell swoop! (be sure to fill out an application and bring to meeting)

Dues can be paid by Paypal or credit card at any meeting or on our website: <https://sanantonioherbs.org/membership/>

Dues are:

- Single person \$35
- Dual persons in same household: \$50
- Business membership (with free ad in each newsletter issue) \$65

DECEMBER IN THE GARDEN

By Brian Townsend, condensed by Robin Mayar

In the Herb Garden:

First week is typical for freezes!!

Replenish winter mulch as needed

Should a freeze warning occur, water plants thoroughly 12 to 24, but not more than 48 hours prior to, to protect roots. Cut back tender perennials that freeze and need to be trimmed before reemerging in the spring: Mexican mint marigold, chives, tarragon, lemon verbena and lovage.

Plant seeds of California poppies, nasturtiums and sweet peas

Now is the time to plant a number of spring-producing herbs including dill, garlic, cilantro, fennel and parsley. (This is a surprise to newcomers to San Antonio, and to newcomers to herb growing, since in other parts of the country these are planted in the spring)

Move hibiscus, plumeria and bougainvillea and other tropicals into freeze-protected storage.

Pansies planted now will provide color all winter (violas, also called Johnny-jump-ups are perfect border plants for pansy beds)

Mow your leaves and let them decompose on the lawn or use them for mulch or compost.

Cut back lantanas and salvia after the tops freeze.

December is spring bulb, corm, rhizome and tuber planting time in Texas to have a show of color from these plant selections next spring.

Spinach is available as transplants. Plant English peas, snap peas and snow peas.

Leave hummingbird feeder up, even though the 'traffic' has slowed down. Native and migratory hummers are still around. Keep your feeder about ¼ full and change about once a week. You might put a little more sugar in the mixture. A red feeder is enough to attract the birds, although red flowering plants such as the shrimp plant close by will help even more. (avoid red dye in the sugar water mixture)

Have the soil tested in your vegetable garden, rose garden, perennial garden, lawn or any other special area in your landscape this month. The results of the test will offer recommendations to help you achieve the most results from your gardening activities. Now is a good time to check the pH and add lime (or for those of us in Bexar Co., sulfur) if needed. Ground dolomite limestone (granular sulfur) is best because it acts slowly, lasts a long time, does not over alkalize the soil and adds magnesium.

Complete the new bed you meant to start in August and should have done in Sept. Oct. or Nov. Don't do like some folks who buy bushes with only a vague idea where to put them.

DECEMBER IN THE GARDEN

(cont)

For the Birds: prepare your backyard now for winter feeding. Most birds establish their feeding territories in the early fall.

Clean all feeders

Remove seed hulls from under feeders (use in compost)

Check stability of pole' tighten screws in feeders

Add different types of feeders

Stock up on seed and suet

Be prepared to empty concrete birdbaths during freezing weather, replace with a plastic dish

Clean out nesting boxes and leave up for roosting. Put up roosting boxes to attract owls, flickers and bluebird

Add a squirrel feeding station. (They're not birds but they are fun to watch and it will keep them from eating all the bird seed)

Roses:

Even though our bushes might not be growing vigorously above ground, their roots are growing and picking up all kinds of nourishment. So, we need to provide moisture for the roots to absorb and store this spring energy. Keep potted roses watered.

Before you lay your winter mulch down, scatter gypsum liberally through your rose beds. Use about 2 cups sprinkled around each bush. This will help loosen up your soil and also provide for better aeration. Then lay down about 2" of your favorite composting materials. Continue to cut roses as long as they are pretty.

Keep weeds pulled. If we can keep chickweed out now, there will be a lot less next spring.

Winter Pests: if we have cycles of dry warm weather spidermites will thrive. If you see some foliage at the bottom of the bush beginning to yellow, check the bottom side of the leaves for a fine white webbing with a salt & pepper looking effect. If left unchecked, the mite infestation will move up the bush gradually. Water wash the affected bush with a hard spray (bottom side of foliage) for nine days at three-day intervals.

Watch for Japanese beetles on roses and other plants, use Orthene or organic products such as Green Light's "Rose Defense". The best advice is to buy fresh liquid sprays for the new growing season. Powders spray materials will carry over well if stored properly and kept moisture free. Most of these powder sprays can have a shelf life of 3 years or more.

Get your Monthly Garden Tips from Brian Townsend on our website. Your entire "to do" list, all in one place, for each month.

<https://sanantonioherbs.org/monthly-garden-tips/>

Culinary Contributions

Hummus

Submitted By Jane McDaniel

1 16 oz can chick peas
¼ cup fresh lemon juice
4-6 cloves garlic
¼ cup fresh parsley leaves, clipped
¼ tsp cayenne pepper
Salt and pepper to taste
½ - 8 oz can crushed tomatoes

Throw everything except tomatoes into food processor. Liquidize. Add about ½ the tomatoes blend until smooth. If mix is too thick add more tomatoes. Hummus should not be runny! Can be refrigerated for up to 2 weeks. (Doesn't last that long in our house.)

Red Cabbage with Juniper Berries

Submitted by Jane McDaniel

3 tablespoons canola oil
1 red cabbage, quartered, cored and thinly sliced
3 large bay leaves
Salt and pepper
1 teaspoon each mustard seed, caraway seed, and coriander seed
6 juniper berries
1/3 cup cider vinegar, preferred brand Bragg's
¼ cup light brown sugar
1 Pink Lady or Honeycrisp apples, peeled and chopped

Directions:

Heat canola oil in a large pot with a lid over medium-high heat. Add cabbage, onions, and bay leaves, season liberally with salt and pepper. Add seeds and juniper berries and cook to soften a bit, 10-15 minutes. Add the vinegar, sugar, and apples; reduce heat to medium and cover. Cook 1 hour, stirring occasionally, until tender. Adjust seasonings and serve. From: Racheal Ray

Culinary Contributions

Greek Cheese

Submitted by Delores Moore

Serves 12

Serve as a spread for crackers, toast, or hot bread

1 clove garlic

8 ounces cream cheese, softened

¼ cup plain yogurt or sour cream

2 ounces crumbled feta cheese

1 tablespoon chopped fresh mint

2 teaspoons chopped fresh oregano

Pinch each nutmeg and cinnamon

Salt as needed

Bring all ingredients to room temperature and combine in a mixer (not blender or processor)

Taste for salt. Allow time for flavors to meld.

From: Southern Herb Growing by Madalene Hill & Gwen Barclay

Grilled Artichoke Pesto Zucchini Bites

Submitted By Pat James-Hasser

Serves 4-6

2 Artichoke hearts

2 cloves Garlic

1 cup half a bunch of Parsley, leaves of

1 Lemon, zest of

2 lbs Zucchini

1 tbsp Lemon juice

1 pinch Salt and pepper

Oils & Vinegars

1/4 cup Olive oil, extra virgin

1/4 cup Walnuts

1 oz Parmigiano reggiano, grated

Thinly slice the zucchini into long wide strips, roast the artichoke hearts and then blend all ingredients except zucchini in your food processor to make a pesto, spread pesto at the beginning of the strips of zucchini and if you wish to add any other vegetables to add flavor and color you can make thin strips of the additional vegetables and place on zucchini strip and roll place on end and add a piece of parsley to garnish.

Culinary Contributions

EASY DILL HUMMUS

(With Toasted Pita Wedges, if desired)

Submitted by Grace Emery

2 15-ounce cans garbanzo, drained

¼ cup plain yogurt

¼ cup olive oil, plus extra if serving with pita wedges

¼ cup lemon juice

2 Tablespoons freshly chopped dill leaves, plus extra for garnish

1 teaspoon ground cumin

2 teaspoons hot paprika, plus extra for garnish

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

6 pita pockets

In a food processor, add 1 can of beans, yogurt, olive oil, lemon juice, dill, cumin, and paprika. Pulse until smooth. Add the second can of beans and pulse until beans are incorporated but still chunky. Season with salt and pepper. Serve garnished with dill and paprika.

Pita Wedges:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Cut each pita pocket into 6 wedges and place on a baking sheet. Brush lightly with olive oil, sprinkle with salt, and bake for 5 minutes or until crisp.

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