

NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY

JULY 2020

#### PLANT A POLLINATOR GARDEN !

We are very lucky to have Drake White join us on Thursday night, July 9. When we contacted her early in the year we did not hear back. Apparently, with everyone sheltering in place, interest in gardening went way up. Her business is an essential one, so she has been snowed under with business. A good situation to be in, but this explains why we did not get in touch for a while. Pollinators are essential in the garden, and many herbs attract pollinators.



Drake White, is the founder of The Nectar Bar, a native landscape company and small nursery, that is dedicated to the conservation of our pollinators. It is located at 1604 and Bulverde Rd, San Antonio, 78247. The Nectar Bar (not to be confused with a place downtown on Broadway that sells libations) specializes in native pollinator habitat, habitat restoration within ecoregions, and community stewardship practices, for both business and residential.

Drake is also the Chief Docent Manager for the Monarch Butterfly and Pollinator Festival, where she takes charge of the Docents & tagging 700+ butterflies, for public education.

She is also a Texas Master Naturalist, along with Project designer & Manager (2015-Present) of the Butterfly Learning Center at Phil Hardberger Park; an outdoor classroom for the public to learn about native plants, butterflies and other pollinators. Drake is Native Landscape Certified (NLCP).

She has spent the last 7 years raising butterflies of many species & educating others on their needs in the garden & landscape. Drake also educates on proper and safe practices for rearing butterflies in the classroom, or from your own backyard at home.

Drake continues to learn & develop skills in conservation/restoration efforts.

Members, come ready to ask questions and to learn all there is to know. We will again be having a Zoom meeting. July 9, at 7 p.m.

San Antonio Herb Society will meet by Zoom July 9,2020 7pm

We will miss having all of you for pot luck. Looking forward to the time when we can meet again for a meal.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:	
Weed & Gloat	4-5
From the Prez	2-3
Member Recipes- Pesto	10
Officers Contact numbers	8
June In the Garden To-Do List	7=8
Herb of the Month– Mint	5-6
Minutes	5



#### July 2020

My memories of July are from Virginia. July was Japanese Beetle Season. My job each day was to capture and poison in a glass jar as many beetles as I could catch. There was a penny bounty on every one of them, and I was money hungry. Each day my dad would count out pennies for beetles. Then we would take paper lunch bags and cover more bunches of grapes on his vines. The bags kept the birds from eating the grapes and they ripened in the bags just fine.

It was high season: tomatoes ripening on the vines, rhubarb for pies, trying, unsuccessfully, to keep the squirrel from eating the apricots, harvesting raspberries, and picking blackberries in the wild.

Texas is a whole different story. The garden, with the exception of okra. which loves the heat, has up and died. If you are lucky there are a few hearty tomatoes that you can prune back, fertilize and hope they will resurrect in the cooler weather of the fall, but you have a long two months of watering ahead of you.

So, you trade January in Virginia for July in Texas. No fireside to sit by, but maybe an umbrella by the pool will do. Get out those garden catalogs and begin dreaming of your fall garden. And your journal, if you kept one. In spring, it seems like everything has to happen at once. Tomatoes to baby-sit, putting them out during the day, sheltering them at night to harden them off. Beds to prep, seeds to sow indoors and small plants to put out, lots of plants to put out. You may have some onions and strawberries from last fall, but everything is crowding up to be planted right away!

VEG TRANS-SEEDS PLANTS From Dr. Tom Harris's 52 Weeks of Gardening EGGPLANT 25-Jul 1-Jul PEPPER 1-Jul 25-Jul TOMATO 1-Jul 25-Jul CORN 1-Aug PEAS, SOUTHERN 1-Aug PUMPKIN 1-Aug 10-Aug SQUASH WINTER BEANS, LIMA 20-Aug BRUSSEL SPROUTS 1-Sep 20-Sep **BEANS SNAP BUSH** 1-Sep CABBAGE 1-Sep 20-Sep 1-Sep 20-Sep CAULIFLOWER CUCUMBER 1-Sep ΡΟΤΑΤΟ 1-Sep KHOLRABI 10-Sep SQUASH SUMMER 10-Sep GARLIC CLOVES ОСТ CHARD, SWISS 1-Oct COLLARDS 10-Oct LETTUCE 10-Oct PARSLEY 10-Oct BEETS 15-Oct BROCCOLI 15-Oct 20-Sep ONION SEED 1-Nov CARROTS 1-Nov MUSTARD 1-Nov TURNIP 1-Nov SPINACH 15-Nov RADISH 25-Nov

Continues p 3

#### From the Prez continued

Fall, however, is more leisurely. I think that must be because it is so darned hot out there. Choose the earliest daylight hour to take advantage of the cool of the day. Work in the shade if possible. Knock off when the sun begins to bite, then come back the next day. Black plastic construction bags make good material to solarize the soil: raising the temperature to kill weed seeds and insects in the surface of the soil. This gives you a head start for the plants.

Make a plan for the garden. Choose the plants you particularly like to eat. Network with friends in the Herb Society for purchasing plants or seeds. If your garden space is limited, no need for six poblano peppers, buy a six-pack and trade three with a friend for something they have extra. Fall planting comes in waves. You can pace yourself.

Remember that Herb Market is the second weekend of October. A great time when the weather has finally decided to let up a little and nights begin to cool. Great time to replenish your herbs and add some new ones. Add companion plants with your vegetables.



June 9, 2020 GENERAL MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by Robin Maymar, president. We dispensed with the minutes of the last meeting, as they were published in the Yerba Buena. Announcements: we are considering meeting at the Garden Center for the next meeting and would like your feed-back as to whether you would want to attend in person. The Garden Center is planning on opening on July 1. We will also Zoom the meeting even if we meet in person. We have contacted the Botanical Gardens about weeding the herb garden there. They have not connected back with us.

12 members attend our meeting. Grace Emery had invited all of our Facebook friends (800 or so) and we expected some would join us, but they did not.

Herb Gardening in Deer Country was our featured topic. Ted Kelly, is a Master Gardener, a real estate agent, and a blogger. He began by introducing the enemy: two kinds of local native deer and two more exotic ones found mostly in the hill country. In regards to garden protection he has a three pronged approach. There is probably nothing that is completely deer proof, but one can take precautions.

First, plant things that deer do not care to eat. Things that are hairy, stinky, thorny. If deer find these they may go looking elsewhere for better fare. Rhubarb, social garlic, fennel, onion, garlic are all good. Taro gives deer severe mouth irritation, which might really discouragethem.

A second tactic was to put lots of variety and color in the garden. It is a camouflage, that confuses the deer. If they see a neat path, they will follow it, but if the area is covered with a profusion of different colors, textures and heights, this may help to baffle the deer.

Thirdly, he presented a wide variety of fencing and structures that would help keep deer out of the garden. Because this is such a perennial issue with many gardeners, we hope that Ted will return in person next year to give more gardeners and update report. We greatly appreciate his talk.

# WEED AND GLOAT SIG

Mr. Le Bay is the fellow who supervises the gardens at the Botanical Gardens. When we contacted him, he was very hesitant to have us return. We agreed that two only would work at a time, and I planned on having a 9 o'clock and a 10 o'clock crew. He was going to send me all the parameters and rules for working in the garden. So far, nothing has appeared. I continue to call and leave messages. We have a new director at the Botanical Gardens, and she has just arrived. Rather than push things, and because of the dire statistics about hospital admission, and closing of recently opened businesses, we will not meet. In the meantime, try hand watering...

According to SAWS "The best way to keep your landscape happy in the heat is to water with a hand-



held nozzle or water wand. Our clay soils generally don't allow water to soak in rapidly so watering by hand is always the best method. Plus, it's an enjoyable, relaxing way to spend time in our yard, and your water bill will be lower for it."

I have damage in my lawn because a large limb fell. The sawdust from cutting it up was raked over the grass. We hoped it would compost in place, but months later, there are patches where there is no grass. The sawdust and wood chips have composted, but the impact of the tree had smashed the grass and it died. So, I have been watering, and sure enough, grass is sending out runners to cover the spots. Eventually it will be all grass again, and I will have enjoyed the time in the yard.

# Feel welcome to come to join us <u>next month</u> in the sunshine.

Next Weed and Gloat is scheduled for Monday July 27, 2020. Keep your fingers crossed that we will actually be able to meet. To be included on our notification list, contact robinmaymar@gmail.com

Weeding from 9 to 10 Then off to coffee and a chat.



# Kerb of the Month: Basil is a Must in the Garden

## By Lisa Kelly

Herbalist John Parkinson said of Basil "the smell thereof is so excellent that it is fit for a king's house." Basil is one of the most popular herbs and rightfully so. With over 150 varieties of Basil to choose from, Basil can please anyone's taste. Sweet Basil is the most commonly used variety, with its clover-like scent that is preferred for pesto.

Other varieties to try include:

Lemon Basil --- the scent of lemon goes well with fish or in potpourri

Cinnamon Basil - used in sweets and fruit

Anise Basil- - has a licorice flavor

Purple Basil — is beautiful in a cut flower arrangement and has a very strong flavor but can loose it's purple color (Purple Ruffles variety retains its color better and makes a beautiful lavender herbal vinegar)

Spicy Globe --- is a low growing Basil and excellent as a border or in a container

Holy Basil--- a sweet smelling variety used in Hindu ceremonies

**Description:** Basil ranges in size from the 3-inch mini-leaf bush Basil to 2 ½-feet sweet Basil. Color and leaf size vary widely, all are annuals. Basil loves the heat but will die at the first frost. Scents and flavors vary widely from sweet to camphor. The name "Basil" is thought to be derived from the Greek word for king (Basileus).



**Uses:** Most Basil is used for culinary and medicinal purposes. The leaves, stems, flowers, and seeds are all useful. Basil can be added to butter, tea, and vinegar. It is simply the best when combined with home-grown tomatoes. The flowers enhance soups and marinades. Dried Basil can be added to potpourris and sachets and herbal bath mixtures.

As a companion plant it is a must to grow with tomatoes. It

is said to help tomatoes grow larger and have more flavor. It repels white flies. The flowers are attractive to bees and butterflies.

## **Basil continues**

**Growing Tips:** Plant Basil in late April or when the soil temperature is 70 degrees or above. Start from seed (basil has very distinctive leaves when it sprouts, so it easy to tell basil from

weeds) or transplants. Basil needs well-drained soil and full sun. You will need to keep the soil moist and mulch well. With Basil, the hotter the weather the better and that makes it perfect for our summers! Basil loves to flower but you must keep the bloom stalks cut off to prolong the life of the plant.

**Harvest:** Pinch back anytime and use the fresh leaves often. To dry, place leaves between paper towels and leave



in a cool, dry place until it is crumbly. Do no dry leaves in an oven or sunlight. For winter use, just chop two handfuls of leaves and add to ¼ cup of cooking oil. Place in an airtight container and freeze. If you are adding to oil make sure the leaves are dry, not moist, as moisture will promote the growth of molds.

#### -----Basil Butter-----

Place one room temperature stick of butter and 1/3 cup of minced fresh Basil in a blender or food processor. Puree contents. Place in an airtight container and store in the refrigerator. Use as a sandwich spread, on cooked vegetables or on grilled meat

#### VIRTUAL BOOKSHELF:

*Animal, Vegetable, Miracle,* by Barbara Kingsolver,. This was a great read. Kingsolver picks you up and carries you through her life. Each chapter has a small part written by her daughter who is keeping chickens or other daughter who is studying nutrition. It also has parts written by her partner, who has more of a global, philosophical approach. You are invited into her home and made to feel welcome. A wonderful read for those sheltering in place, and wishing for a place to go.

Out on loan, but returning is Secret Life of Compost by Malcolm Beck If you would like to read the brief autobiography of a very successful entrepreneur, this humble book is an excellent model of how to run a business. His innovative style is wonderful to read about. He also teaches the reader a lot about the simple art of compost. A quick but enriching read.

These books are now part of our <u>Herb Society Bookshelf</u>. Contact Robin Maymar, or Miss Dewey to borrow any book.



# IN THE GARDEN JULY

**In The Herb Garden:** This is a maintenance month: continue to avoid drought stress, to check and replace mulch layers, and to pinch back blossoms.

\* Trim back mints to ensure a continuous supply of young, tender leaves. Continue to cut them back throughout the summer (keep them off the ground!!!).

\* Do not try to cure heat stress by spraying haphazardly during the mid-day. DO NOT OVERWA-TER.

\* Enjoy harvesting dill, cilantro, basil and other annuals that go to seed in the heat. Feed basil after harvesting.

\* <u>Note on saving seed</u>: ideal storage conditions are 45 Deg. (F) and humidity below 50%. Store freshly harvested seeds in brown paper bags until thoroughly dry. Try not to store for more than 1 year. Parsley seeds especially should be fresh each sowing season.

• Till, compost and prepare fall garden area.

•

**Birds:** Hummingbirds will be bringing their young to sugar-water feeders now. Keep feeders clean, dumping old solution once a week (twice a week if in the sun and the temperatures are in the 90's) into a shallow pan for butterflies.

A bird bath or other source of water will help birds, bees and other critters survive a drought condition.

#### Water:

Move conatiners from full to shade from 3:00 on Check the root balls of container plants to make sure they are absorbing water. If the root ball has dried out too much, water will just run down the side. If this happens, soak the plant for 10 to 15 minutes to correct the problem

#### Garden:

Use netting or Grow-Web to protect succulent fruits such as figs and peaches from BIRDS. It may not keep out squirrels and other mammals.

Don't waste water. Water most plants deeply on the day before they would have wilted.

If tomatoes are infested with SPIDER MITES, harvest the remaining fruit and pull up and discard the plants to the compost pile.

As temperatures rise, expect some leaves to fall from tree crowns. It is a natural survival tactic.

For hot-weather nematode control, plant Mari-Mum marigolds.

Continue to prune fall-blooming perennials through August.

Establish a new compost pile to accommodate the upcoming fall leaf accumulation.

#### Flower garden

Select day lily varieties this month as the plants reach their peak bloom. If you need more summer color in your landscape, use periwinkle, moss rose, firebush, lantana and esperanza in sunny spots. Use firespike, coleus, caladiums or impatiens in the shade. There is still time to set out another planting of annuals such as marigolds, zinnias and periwinkles. They will require extra attention for the first few weeks because of the heat, but the plants should reward you with color from late September until November. Turk's cap and shrimp plant are good blooming plants that attract hummingbirds and grow in light shade.

Seeds from many spring-blooming flowers are mature and can be harvested, stored and then planted later this fall in your landscape.

Take a critical look at your landscape and note plants that need replacing, overgrown plants that need to be removed and possible activity areas that can be enjoyed by your family. This will give you a head start on planning winter projects.

**Lawn W**ater lawns only when grass blades first show signs of wilting in the morning. Apply 1/2" to 5/8" on each of two consecutive mornings to encourage deeper roots. To save water if you have Bermuda, zoysia, or buffalo grass let some of it go dormant until fall.

Apply iron sulfate dissolved in water to St. Augustine grass to replenish iron and cure chlorosis.

If dead areas on the lawn pull up like a toupee, or looks moth-eaten, GRUBS probably are the problem. Verify by examining the soil underneath the dead patches. Treat with *Oftanol* or use a beneficial nematode treatment.

Lawn clippings left on the lawn decompose to provide nutrients and organic material. Do not waste landfill space by bagging clippings.

**M**aintain mulch over the root system of young trees to increase growth rate by as much as 50% by controlling the moisture content and temperature of the soil, as well as providing necessary organics.

Raise mower height in turfgrass to help provide more shade for roots. Mow often to keep grass low and dense (mow at recommended height to promote healthy turf).

#### PREVENTING MOSQUITO BITES OUTSIDE

Wear light colored clothes, light weight with long sleeves, pants that cover the legs. This one might seem absurd, but mosquitoes use vision (along with scent) to locate humans, so wearing colors that stand out (black, dark blue or red) may make you easier to find

Avoid being out at dusk or dawn

Remove all standing water: gutters that are clogged are an unseen hazard. Tip out birdbaths and replace water every other day or use mosquito dunks to prevent mosquitos from breeding.

Keep air circulating. A fan on the deck outside can help keep air moving.

Use an insect repellent

Twenty percent of people are especially delicious to mosquitoes. And, then again, another twenty percent are avoided by mosquitos. Why?

One of the key ways mosquitoes locate their targets is by smelling the carbon dioxide emitted in their breath, and can detect carbon dioxide from as far as 164 feet away. As a result, people who simply exhale more of the gas over time—generally, larger people—have been shown to attract more mosquitoes than others.

In addition to carbon dioxide, mosquitoes find victims at closer range by smelling the lactic acid, uric acid, ammonia and other substances expelled via their sweat, and are also attracted to people with higher body temperatures. Because strenuous exercise increases the buildup of lactic acid and heat in your body, it likely makes you stand out to the insects. Meanwhile, genetic factors influence the amount of uric acid and other substances naturally emitted by each person, making some people more easily found by mosquitos than others.

Other research has suggested that the particular types and volume of bacteria that naturally live on human skin affect our attractiveness to mosquitoes. In a 2011 study, scientists found that having large amounts of a few

types of bacteria made skin more appealing to mosquitoes. Surprisingly, though, having lots of bacteria but spread among a greater diversity of different species of bacteria seemed to make skin less attractive. This also might be why mosquitoes are especially prone to biting our ankles and feet—they naturally have more robust bacteria colonies.

Just a single 12-ounce bottle of beer can make you more attractive to the insects, a single study found. But even though researchers had suspected this was because drinking increases the amount of ethanol excreted in sweat, or because it increases body temperature, neither of these factors were found to correlate with mosquito landings, making their affinity for drinkers something of a mystery.

Pregnant women have been found to attract roughly twice as many mosquito bites as others, likely a result of the unfortunate confluence of two factors: They exhale about 21 percent more carbon dioxide and are on average about 1.26 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than others.

So why are twenty percent of people unattractive to mosquitoes? Scientists do not know, but are currently studying this issue intently. Stay tuned.

## VIRTUAL BOOKSHELF:

Still haven't sorted through that bookshelf yet? Shame on you. It'll only take a few minutes. Take out the ones you don't need here any more and recycle them. See, now everything looks tidy?

This month we have offerings from Judy Reynolds, who is a friend to the society. She is joyful to have more shelf space, and hopes you enjoy the cookbooks.

*Light and Easy Cooking Collection* By Oxmoor House. A ring binder collection of recipes that lies flat on the counter for easy access. Each bifold has a complete menu, recipes for each item. Nutritional values are included with each.

*Eat Health, Lose Weight* by Better Homes and Gardens . 270 + Great-tasting and Healthy Recipes. Have I mentioned that Judy has lost over forty pounds this spring through careful food management and daily exercise. This book is part of her good Karma.

Good & Easy also by Betty Crocker. This is the quick way to get dinner on the table every night. It also has nutritional information with each recipe

America's Best Brand-name Recipes Fix it Quick *Comfort Food Cookbook* This title says it all. I am more of a 'scratch' cook. However, in



these times when we may not be browsing the aisles, it is helpful to be able to find brand-named items for curbside pick-up. No mention of calorie counts; after all, it's comfort food.

9

Any book, one price \$4. Curbside? 100 W. Brandon, 78209. Call to make reservation: (830) 459-8415

Culinary Contributions

#### **Pesto- Two Different Methods**

**FIRST WAY** : from *The Sunday Telegraph Cookery Book* by Jean Robertson, PRINTED IN Great Britain

A Genoese sauce and the most seductive of all the sauces from the Mediterranean lands, it is a complex of mysterious tastes compounded of sweet basil, pine nuts (*pinole*), Parmesan or Sardo cheese and garlic, worked into a dry paste and then softened to the consistency of butter with olive oil.

As I first heard of this splendid sauce through Elizabeth David, and as, except when on holiday in Italy, I have never eaten it outside my own home, I cannot do better than repeat her recipe from *Italian Food*, which is the one I always use.

One large bunch of fresh basil (weighing about 2 oz. after the stalks have been removed)

2 cloves garlic

A handful of pine nuts (Robin substitutes pecans if budget does not allow pine nuts; best buy for pine nuts- Trader Joe's)

A handful of grated Parmesan cheese

Just under  $\frac{1}{2}$  gill olive oil (4 oz or  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup U.S.)

Salt

Crush the garlic, then pound it in a mortar (or moca jete) with the basil leaves, a little salt and the pine nuts. (We use a wand blender)

Add the cheese

- When the mixture is thick, start adding the olive oil a little at a time as you would for mayonnaise. Stir it steadily and be sure that the oil you have added is absorbed before adding any more.
- The finished sauce should have the consistency of soft butter. This can be made in larger quantities and stored in the fridge under a layer of olive oil

*Pesto* is used got dressing *pasta*, *gnocchi*, fish, and enriching soup. The Genoese put it into *minestrone*. Their Provencal neighbours combine it with a simple vegetable soup made of potatoes, beans and tomatoes which, in honour of the special dressing, they call *pistou*.

Basil can generally be bought (from July to September) by the bunch in some big London food departments such as Harrods or Selfidges, and in Soho. Alternatively, you can grow your own.

If there is no basil there is no *pesto* sauce, but if you can't get pine nuts (though many good grocers sell them these days), an authentic version of pesto can be made without them. (pecans or walnuts will work)

**SECOND WAY** Milk Street Radio version I tried recently and adored. They were saying that the pesto they made in the US never tasted like the Italian variety. So, someone had been to Genoa, and watched how they made it. Food processors handle things differently, but this was a good rendition, in their opinion.

Using a food processor, and about the same measures as above, change the order of ingredients.

Handful of pine nuts and the salt. Then add cheese Then add minced garlic, but use just one clove Shred the basil and add it, I used a lot more that 2 ounces, maybe 2 cups Then add the olive oil

At this point you have a bright green pesto.

Boil you spaghetti. When almost *al dente*, open your food processor, remove the blade and add one to two scoops of pasta water. Stir to a pancake batter consistency. The color changes to a lovely emerald.

Drain pasta, plate it and ladle pesto sauce over. Garnish with a dusting of cheese.

[We went nuts with the garlic, but the Italians used very little. Nuts and cheese also can vary according to taste. We <u>should</u> measure carefully as this is a high calorie sauce, but we usually let the quantity of basil dictate the amounts.]

Π

Π

## MORE BASIL

To soothe sore or aching muscles, inflammation, swelling, and tightness, dilute 2-3 drops of **Basil** Essential **Oil** in a preferred carrier **oil**, then **massage** it into the affected areas. Alternatively, this **oil** blend can be further diluted in Epsom Salts before being added to a warm bath.

Basil Essential Oil Blends Well With:

Bergamot, Lavender, Cypress, White Fir, Geranium, Helichrysum, Peppermint, Lemongrass, Marjoram, Cedarwood, Clary Sage, Ginger, Grapefruit, Lemon. In addition, basil essential oil is said to enhance mood, improve digestion, increase alertness, and soothe muscle aches. Basil essential oil is also sometimes used as an insect repellent.

# Herb Society Board

\_\_\_\_\_

Π

Π

Π

Π

Π

President Robin Maymar robinmaymar@gmail.com

1st Vice-President (Programs)
 Position vacant

Treasurer Debarah Wilson
Secretary Position vacant
Membership Milan Maymar, protem
Publicity Vicki Jamvold

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

#### **BUSINESS MEMBERS**

#### WE THANK OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT.

#### **MENTION YOUR S.A.H.S. MEMBERSHIP WHEN YOU PATRONIZE THEM!**



# Did You know SAHS Members get a 10% off discount at these local businesses?





Rainbow Gardens : 8516 Bandera Road

Fanicks Garden Center: 1025 Holmgreen Rd 78220