



NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY

AUGUST 2020

**AUGUST SHARE MEETING FOCUS ON INNOVATION**

There are always things out in the marketplace that are new, or that we have never bumped into.

I present here the Bettix Bottle. Invented in Germany, then produced by Paragon, then Texberry, the Hastagro fertilizer company began using these bottles here in Texas. Hastagro is a liquid plant fertilizer. Not quite completely organic, it is used by many organic gardeners. There are two marvelous things about Hastagro. Plants thrive when given this fertilizer. It is particularly good at getting buds to develop and fruit to form. But the other thing is the Bettix bottle it comes in. It has two lids. You leave the filler lid closed and open the measuring lid. Squeeze the bottle, and just the right amount of fertilizer fills the little measuring pod, which had convenient lines for portions of an ounce. One ounce in a gallon of water, and you are good to go fertilize the plants. Clean, easy to use, almost idiot proof.



Have you come across something good? Something useful? Something Fun?

This is our time to Share. See From the Prez for more details

August 13, Herb Society Zoom Share Meeting. 7 p.m

**San Antonio Herb Society  
will meet by Zoom  
August 13. 2020 7pm**

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

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## FROM THE PREZ-

This August meeting is always my favorite. Our Share Meeting is not scheduled every year, but this year, I think sharing will be particularly appropriate for a Zoom meeting.

I want us to focus on what is **new** that we have come across and what is innovative and what we have devised, because we no longer have familiar access. Our topics can range across everything we do in Herb Society:

- cooking and wonderful recipes (E-mail to Robin before the meeting so she can send them to everyone attending; faster, easier and uses less paper)
- gardening- what grew for you, photos of your harvest, new plants, old faithful plants, new techniques, etc.
- Garden tools are always popular, and we want to know what you found in the catalogue and the hardware store.
- Mosquito repellents- send recipes in advance, we are constantly trying new things.
- New clothes or patterns, hats, gloves, shoes and boots.
- New or useful websites- especially send to Robin.
- Techniques for preserving herbs.
- Books old or new
- Crafts or clever packaging you have used in a project.
- Recipes for hand sanitizer and soap. Patterns for masks.

I am sure you will think of something not on this list. The rules of the Share Meeting are:

You do not need to bring anything, but it is lots more fun if you do.

People used to come empty handed, felt guilty about it and made a batch of fudge or brownies. Unfortunately, that is no longer an option.

We used to pass the microphone around, so that everyone could share. **Good news**, we can now mute everyone but the speaker, so there will be no echo, or mumbling because the mike has been put down. We will all be able to hear and see equally.

You can share **BIG TIME** if you want to: because it is on Zoom you can show us a slide of a photograph- it will fill the screen and we will all be able to see it. (Or send it ahead to Robin who will project it while you speak and you won't have to fiddle with the technology)

So anything that goes through e-mail would be good to share. We will have to wait until we meet in person for the free samples, which also made the Share Meeting so fun.

No excuses: don't drive at night? Too far to go? Can't find a baby sitter? No problem! We are as close as your computer or telephone. (Call Robin a day or two before and she will help you connect)

See you August 13

# Meeting Minutes

## MINUTES OF SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY MEETING

Thursday, July 9, 2020

Meeting was held via ZOOM due to COVID-19. Meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM by Robin Maymar, President. Brief hellos were exchanged between participating members. Robin asked if anyone knew if the San Antonio's Gourmet Olive Oils was open for business; she is investigating to see. Special thanks were expressed to Lisa Kelly for her Herb of the Month articles for our newsletter; she is doing a great job. Robin also mentioned having delicata squash seeds to give away. Please contact her for a mailing.

The evening's program was presented by Drake White, owner of the Nectar Bar in northeast San Antonio. Drake presented a fact filled program on pollinators and how to attract them. The highlights were:

Summer is excellent time to begin. You must know what pollinators you want to attract to know which plants to grow. Plants are host specific, as well as nectar specific. A host plant is where an adult butterfly will lay eggs and the baby caterpillars will eat.

DO NOT SPRAY PLANTS WITH INSECTICIDES or buy "organic" plants without knowing the seller's reliability. (Or technically the grower's reliability). The chemicals ingested will kill the caterpillars and thereby deplete the butterfly/moth population.

Expect that the host plants will be eaten and may not be aesthetically pleasing. Plant different depths so that the eaten plants will be disguised by nectar plants.

For success, plant native plants. Milkweed was used as an example. Native plants are more self-sufficient and drought tolerant. Always verify the reliability of your source for native plants.

Be patient with milkweed. Most varieties need at least 3 years to firmly establish and bloom sturdily enough to be host plants. You can net them until they are strong enough to protect themselves. Best natives for Bexar County are Zizotes, Tuberosa, Texana, Antelope Horn. Descriptions were given. A recommendation is to plant groups of 3 or more host plants scattered among the nectar plants. Research to determine which host and nectar plants the pollinator prefers and pair them to increase success of attraction. Remember that you are developing a habitat that is part of an ecosystem. You will draw predators as well as pollinators but Nature must take its course. In planting or transplanting milkweed, DO NOT DISTURB ITS ROOTS as it will not grow. The plant has a long central taproot that needs to be firmly established.

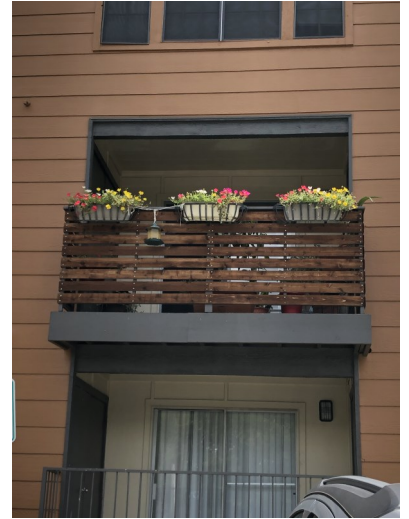
Frostweed is a preferred nectar source of monarchs. Likes shade. It is also a host plant for the Border Patch butterfly.

- Herbs are good host plant. Remember to plant some for the host plants and some for you if this is the route you take. Parsley is the host plant for the Black Swallowtail. Tomatoes are the host plant for the Sphinx Moth (hornworms). Rue is a host for Giant Swallowtails. Lovage is a host for the Black Swallowtail. Flame Acanthus Is

"hummingbird crack" as well as a nectar source for several other pollinators including the Crimson Patch and Texas Crescent butterflies.

For those who live in apartments, condos, or are land challenged, many of these plants can be grown in containers

Questions followed. Robin asked about her flame acanthus that is large but not bloom producing; the suggestion was to trim it and force it to send energy to blooms instead of leaves. Dill was suggested as another good host plant. Reminders were given to plant more plants than you need so there are enough for hosting and for other uses. Another reminder is to consider that some caterpillars are toxic to birds and lizards; Monarchs and Queens were specifically mentioned.



This is the website <https://thenectarbar.wixsite.com/website>,  
YouTube channel for instructional learning videos  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC138nTrO2Z6Mqhqkfd5UXKw>  
Facebook business page <www.facebook.com/TheNectarBar>.



**Come weed with us at the Botanical Gardens!**

**Feel welcome to come to join us next month in the sunshine.**

Next Weed and Gloat is scheduled for Monday August 31, 2020. We will meet early to beat the heat 8 a.m. There are new rules to follow so be sure to contact [robinmaymar@gmail.com](mailto:robinmaymar@gmail.com) for simple safety measures we need to take  
See you then



## My Dehydrated Vegetable Revelation: Lessons For Gourmet Camping

By Aubrey Langford

Until last month, dried foods were beyond the scope of my snobby culinary consideration. Only the freshest ingredients were suitable for my kitchen and I had no tolerance for second-rate shortcuts. But I have a confession: I am now a believer in dehydrated foods.

During a time when grocery stores are to be avoided due to the pandemic, dried foods make it easy to cook quick flavorful meals with a variety of vegetables yet with less food waste and dishes to wash. And contrary to my preconceptions there is no significant loss in flavor or nutrition.

In June I planned to go to Colorado for a backcountry camping trip. I realized I would need light-weight foods but I didn't want to subsist on Cliff Bars and prepackaged vegan meals from REI. I searched for "DIY gourmet backpacking food" and found BackpackingChef.com. Chef Glenn showed me that dried ingredients (plus herbs and spices) make for delicious meals on the trail: be it chowder, curry and rice, or even peach cobbler. In addition to inspiring recipes the website also has a trove of information on how to properly preserve each ingredient.

Robin loaned me her dehydrator which I used to dry mushrooms and herbs from my garden. I also ordered a backpacker's kit from HarmonyHouseFoods.com for a variety of dried beans and vegetables.

I have another confession: satisfying my personal cooking standards on the trail wasn't the sole motivation for my dehydration endeavours. Nay, there was also a handsome camping companion to woo with my vegan culinary prowess – and I was determined to meet this challenge, even nine hundred miles away from my herb garden and without a kitchen.

For our first camp dinner I dumped a jar of marinara into a pot, sliced in fresh garlic, and added dehydrated tomatoes, carrots, onions, bell peppers, cabbage, shiitake mushrooms and herbs. It simmered while my companion prepared linguine. Our efforts combined, sporks were raised and we feasted until rain forced us to take shelter.

That morning awoke cold and damp. As the sun rose, I brewed ginseng green tea, listened to birds sing, and made a soup from dried potatoes, corn, celery, cabbage, peas, red pepper flakes and oregano. The hot, healthy breakfast brought me back to life for another day of adventure.

For the next dinner, I combined a can of kidney beans with fresh tomato, dehydrated black and red beans, carrot, onion, peppers, lentils, herbs, spices and chili powder, and served it with leftover focaccia. It was a delicious success, but I was grateful that we maintained separate tents as the cacophonous dinner aftermath must certainly have deterred any wildlife from approaching.

At a later stop, I reconstituted mushrooms, peppers and onion, added cayenne pepper, and stirred in refried beans. Then I warmed corn tortillas over the burner and served us tacos with Cholula.



*My new favorite kitchen is in the shadow of 14ers (fourteeners are peaks 14,000 feet high, 430 in Colorado)*

To be fair, dehydrated camping food is made more delicious by beautiful scenery and inclement weather. However, though I'm back home in Texas I continue to integrate dried foods into my regular cooking. Dried veggies have a different texture, and in many recipes this can be an advantage such as with soups or chilis, or mushrooms in a stir-fry. Unlike canned vegetables I can pick the exact quantity needed without worrying about leftovers. I either toss the vegetables directly into my sauce, or I put them in a bowl of water and microwave it for a minute or two. Note that water-soluble vitamins, such as B vitamins in legumes and leafy greens, will get leached into the water when reconstituting. Avoid heating the water to the point of evaporation and make sure to incorporate the excess water into your dish to preserve these vitamins.



To easily keep my pantry stocked, when I chop fresh ingredients for a meal I prepare twice as much as needed and put half in the dehydrator overnight. This is especially convenient for vegetables that come in larger quantities than I usually cook with and would otherwise become compost. Once water is removed, dried vegetables require much less storage space than their fresh or frozen counterparts and have a long shelf-life.

Fresh ingredients are still the spotlight in my cooking but augmenting dishes with dehydrated ingredients is now a part of my routine. To even the most skeptical cooks, I proffer this challenge: find a dehydrator and give homemade dried vegetables a try.

Resources:

Backpacking Chef:

<https://www.backpackingchef.com/>

Harmony House Foods:

<https://www.harmonyhousefoods.com/>

Nutritional Value of Dehydrated Vegetables:

<https://www.livestrong.com/article/340760-nutritional-value-of-dehydrated-vegetables/>

Vegetables with High Vitamin B Content:

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/edible/vegetables/vgen/veggies-with-high-vitamin-b.htm>

There is a dehydrator in our Lending Library. Contact Herb Society to borrow.

# Herb of the Month: Sage – Cornerstone of the Herb Garden

By Lisa Kelly

Sage has been called the favorite plant of the kitchen garden. As a culinary herb, it is known throughout the world as a favorite ingredient in cheese, sausage, poultry dressings and stuffings, vinegars and even desserts.

This is garden sage or *Salvia officinalis*. There are 800 plus varieties of *Salvia* and due to the constraints of space and time (and our attention spans), we will concentrate on the common, garden plant. However, some of the others certainly worth trying are: pineapple sage, mealy blue sage, cherry or autumn sage, and Mexican bush sage

**Description:** Sage is an evergreen shrub from the northern shores of the Mediterranean. It is a grayish-green color. The leaves are a rough texture and strongly scented. After the first year, it becomes a woody shrub about 2 or 3 feet in height.



**Uses:** The word sage comes from the Latin “salvere” meaning, “to be saved”. The Greeks and Romans used it to calm the stomach and sage was a sacred ceremonial herb of the Romans. In the Middle Ages it was cherished and valued as a cure-all, being used commonly as we do aspirin. Thought to bestow wisdom, it is common to hear someone offering “sage advice”.

The Chinese thought it a symbol of immortality. Many kinds were used as a substitute for tea in China and preferred to their own native teas. The Native Americans chewed fresh leaves to whiten teeth and strengthen gums. More recently, sage is found in toothpowder, deodorant, soap, hair preparations to prevent gray hair, and lotions for oily skin.

In the garden, sage attracts bees and butterflies when in bloom. It makes a good companion plant to rosemary, thyme, and lavender. It is simply beautiful in wreaths and nosegays and a wonderful addition to potpourris.

Sage, when eaten, helps digest fats. Nibbling a sage leaf will freshen breath and removes traces of garlic and onion. Try serving a small bunch instead of the usual parsley garnish. It is wonderful in herbal butter or vinegar. Sage is a very pungent herb that becomes more so when dried. It has a bitter, somewhat astringent taste—a little goes a long way!

**Growing Tips:** Like most herbs, sage likes a sunny spot and well-drained soil. Heavy clay can be a problem, so add plenty of compost to break up the soil. It is a hardy perennial but degenerates after 3 or 4 years. Because of this loss of vitality, it is best to propagate new plants every few years. If started by seed, sow in the spring and when the seedlings are 4 inches tall, space 2 feet apart. Keep seedlings moist when young but when they are established, water only when the weather is dry. They are prone to fungal diseases so be cautious about over watering. Once a woody shrub (after a year or so), trim to encourage new growth and flowers.

**To Harvest:** It is best to harvest before flowering. Tie bunches together and hang in a dark, dry place until the leaves have dried. Once brittle, remove the leaves from the stem and store in the refrigerator or freezer. Fresh leaves may be chopped and placed in an ice cube tray with water and then frozen. Sage has heavily concentrated essential oils that can become rancid if not stored properly. If you think that the smell has become too strong, it is best to throw it out.



SAGE continued

**For a nice treat**, core and chop 6 large tart apples. Place them in a heavy saucepan and stir in 1/3 cup of light local honey, 2 sage leaves, and 1 tablespoon of lemon juice. Cover and cook over low heat for about 20 minutes or until completely soft. Remove the sage leaves and serve chunky or pureed in a food processor. Yummy!



## WEED AND GLOAT JULY 27 2020

Cue the confetti! Pop the Champagne! At last! We have broken the code and returned to the Botanical Gardens herb patch. Special thanks to Marsh Wilson who braved the heat with me to spruce up the garden this month.

We realize that with the shut-down of quarantine, many workers at the gardens were let go. The few that remained had to wear many more hats to keep things watered, weeded and maintained. Communications became slow. To put the beds to rest for a while, they were weeded and about six inches of mulch applied, to prevent further growth of weeds. So, when we returned Monday, there has been wonderful growth of many of our herbs, and then some have struggled through the mulch to survive.

Our Facebook friends want to know what herbs to grow and where to grow them. That is a large answer question. It is only in the growing that we can see what herbs need to go where. For example, we put in eight or so Dittany of Crete in a shady part of the herb patch. They were small plants, and we expected they would spread out and get much larger as marjoram and oregano do. We spaced them way apart from each other. Then six inches of mulch went in for them to struggle through.



You can see from the picture, they remained very small; they have delightful flowers. This was one of those herbs that Mary Dunford suggested we grow and dry for arrangements. Now we know to bunch these together in a mass, perhaps move some to a sunnier location. You can hardly see them in our bed filled with mulch and confettied with crepe myrtle flowers.

I strongly urge all of you, including our Facebook friends, to come by the Botanical Gardens especially the last Monday of the month, to see what is there and how it is growing. We will be there August 31 at 8 a.m.



The Bot supplies tools, and bins for compost waste, but we always bring a few favorites. Mary usually brings a broom, which is very handy for cleaning up. I bring my favorite paint-scraper weeding tool. Contact Robin Maymar at [robinmaymar@gmail.com](mailto:robinmaymar@gmail.com) for instructions on where to park and all the new rules. Parking has been simplified and does not require much walking. I am submitting a 'wish list' of herbs we could plant for fall, so we will have both weeding and planting to do. Keep in touch, and I am looking forward to seeing you in August.



## Weed and Gloat Continues

We planted a small Mrs. Read Rosemary to remind us of Julie Hudgins. She told us this rosemary makes a good rinse for the hair. Her mother used it in her beauty shop, helped keep customer's hair dark. The rosemary in our garden has grown tall and is filling in. A fine example of rosemary. We were so glad we planted it by the back fence, to make a good backdrop for the lower herbs in front.

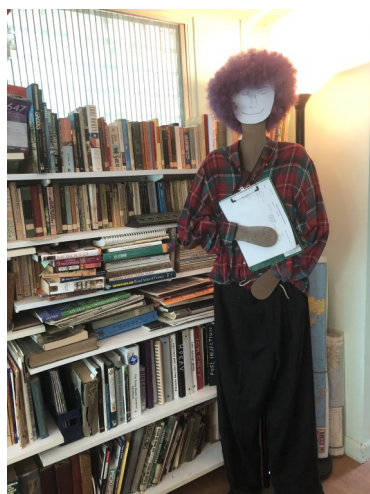
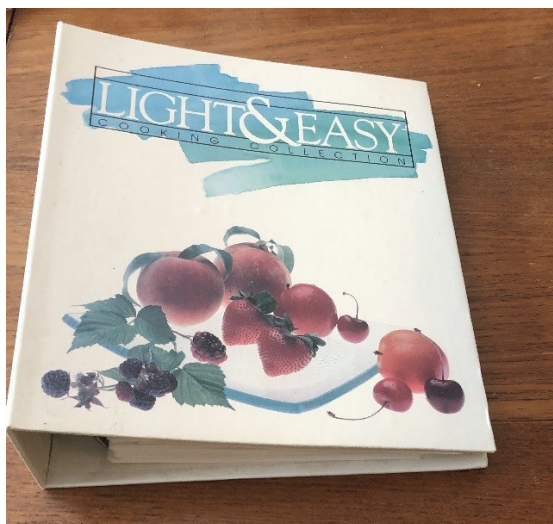
The eucalyptus tree has returned. How can a tree wander off for the winter and return to us in the spring? Instead of putting it in the ground, we dug a hole and lowered the potted plant into it. We are thinking that the tree is getting tall enough that it will interfere with the ash tree above. No problem, next Weed and Gloat, we dig a hole, and move the tree to a sunnier spot.



## VIRTUAL BOOKSHELF:

Any book, one price \$4. Curbside? 100 W. Brandon, 78209.

Call cell to make reservation: (830) 459-8415



## NEW THIS MONTH: BOOK RECYCLING SERVICE

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?

Dewey, our faithful librarian, stands ready to help. Our New Cookbook Service: use sticky notes to mark up to ten recipes in a book, supply a thumbdrive. Dewey will faithfully transcribe your recipes onto the thumbdrive, which will then be returned to you. The book will then circulate to Herb Society for sale. Everybody wins. You get more shelf space without losing your favorite recipe, the Herb Society has a book to sell for the Scholarship Fund.

# Comfrey: Risk vs. Benefit

By Jean Dukes

Comfrey has been the subject of controversy for many years and here we'll discuss the risk vs. the benefit of using comfrey for health and healing.

Risk is defined as “physical, psychological or social harm that goes beyond expected experience in daily life.” Exposure to certain substances increases the risk of likelihood of developing a certain condition or disease.

Benefits are helpful; when exposed to a certain substance, if a person has a positive, desired effect—such as disappearance of a symptom—there is value.

Historically comfrey has been used for centuries. The Latin name for comfrey is *Symphytum officinale* which means to “unite or knit together.” It is an evergreen perennial native to Europe but is now commonly found throughout the world. Its uses and benefits are numerous—particularly for pain, musculoskeletal injuries, burns, bruises, wounds, bites, inflammation, arthritis, thrombophlebitis, gout, and diarrhea. The root, as well as the leaves can be used, fresh or dry.

VanSeters relates a story about an accident his friend had. He was changing a router bit while holding it between his knees. The router slipped, switched on, and resulted in severe cuts to his hand. On his way to the house his friend plucked a comfrey leaf and began chewing it. He ran into the house, sprinkled on some cayenne pepper, and applied the chewed up comfrey leaf to the wound, and then bandaged it. Several weeks later, his friend related the story, showed the injured area, and it was so well healed a scar wasn't even visible.

Comfrey's mechanisms of action are not completely known, however allantoin and rosmarinic acid are compounds thought to create its pharmacological effects. Allantoin, a substance also found in placentas, proliferates cell growth, causing cells to reproduce rapidly, literally speeding healing. This is one reason why it is so beneficial for wounds and burns, and it even heals broken bones more quickly—hence its common nickname, “knitbone.”

Comfrey is also known as “healing herb” and its leaves and roots can be used in numerous ways; it can be applied as a poultice or a salve, or taken internally as a tincture. It is helpful for healing ulcers and gastritis, though never documented in clinical trials. It is also beneficial in capsule form for allergies, arthritis, bronchitis and diarrhea.

Comfrey has numerous nutritional benefits including vitamins, minerals. It is especially rich in vitamin B12, which is unusual for plants.

Much has been written about the dangers of comfrey due to its chemical constituents called pyrrolizidine alkaloids. Over 350 pyrrolizidine alkaloids are found in comfrey and approximately half of these are toxic. These substances may present health hazards to humans and are the main cause of toxicity from many herbs. They are related to liver problems and even cancer (however this has not been linked to humans, only rats). The mechanism which causes the damage is not understood, but it's thought that these alkaloids are transformed in the liver into alkylating agents causing cirrhosis of small hepatic veins, thickening of the venous walls, congestion, and subsequent liver failure. The main presenting symptoms are fatigue, mild diarrhea, abdominal pain, and eventually an enlarged liver, portal hypertension and lung problems.

There seems to be a relation of hepatotoxicity and the ingestion of comfrey, however the dose necessary to





cause the problem is not clear. Also, the health of patients who suffered hepatotoxicity after ingesting comfrey was not determined—whether or not they had previous liver disease. It is believed the benefits far outweigh risks.

A 49-year old woman developed veno-occlusive disease purportedly due to taking six comfrey-pepsin capsules daily and also daily doses of comfrey tea. It is estimated she ingested approximately 85 mg of pyrrolizidine alkaloids per day. The comfrey capsules contained a white powder. This was clearly not natural comfrey powder.

A double-blind clinical trial was conducted with 120 patients with back pain. Some were given a cream containing comfrey and the others a placebo cream. The pain decreased in the comfrey group on average 95.2% and 37.8% in the placebo group. The same cream was used in a double-blind trial with 220 patients with knee osteoarthritis. Each patient received either 2g of the above cream or a placebo cream, using it three times a day for 21 days. There were some minor adverse reactions, however perfumes were added to the creams to try to achieve blinding, which could have caused the reactions. Several recent randomized clinical trials confirmed the efficacy in the treatment of pain, inflammation and swelling in the case of degenerative arthritis, acute myalgia in the back, sprains, contusions and strains after sports injuries and accidents, also in children aged 3 years and older. Comfrey root is a valuable and rational therapeutic option for patients suffering from muscles and joint pain.

Over the years many natural herbs and traditional remedies have come under scrutiny. Scientists and researchers do not often fully understand the benefits, value or proper use of many natural products. Some pharmaceuticals can cause kidney and liver damage and in my opinion may cause greater harm than herbs ever have. Disagreement exists regarding comfrey and it is challenging to discern the toxic potential of certain comfrey constituents. Some plants *are* harmful and should be avoided. Due to controversy and lack of dosage standards, comfrey should be used cautiously, however it appears that the benefits of this amazing herb far outweigh the risks.

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# IN THE GARDEN AUGUST

## GARDEN

- Garden in the morning or in the evening when it is cool. Drink plenty of fluids and wear a hat. Gardening should be fun and not a threat to your health.
- MULCH! MULCH! MULCH! Prepare for fall garden by accumulating a stockpile of mulch.
- Use the intense heat and sunny days to solarize the veg. garden by applying clear (black plastic will only heat the top couple of inches of soil) plastic over tilled soil.

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 to 8 inches.

## TOMATOES

- 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. Buy the tallest, lankiest plants you can find and bury in 1-gallon containers all the way up to the first set of leaves (if these leaves are withering, take off and plant at next set of leaves). Roots will form all along the buried stem and produce a good root mass. When established, then remove and plant.
- A good tomato for containers is Patio. For Patio tomatoes, buy the shortest plants.
- Tomatoes planted in the first weeks of August may not have grown much with excessive heat. Mulch the plants and keep them watered so the roots will be established and plants can grow when temperatures fall in September. Using ollas around the roots of the tomatoes helps deliver water where it is most needed. With rains and cooler weather, the fall vegetable should be starting shortly.

You might want to provide some shade to tomatoes planted now. Covering the upper half of tomato cages with *Grow-Web* or other shade fabrics, can help the tomatoes survive a hot August.

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.

Plant beans, lima beans, cucumbers, sweet corn and black-eyed peas for the fall harvest

\*\*\*We would like your opinion on fall tomatoes. Which ones have produced for you in this last year?

**In Our Herb Garden:** 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. The plants (all) should be mulched to conserve moisture.

Seed frost tolerant herb perennials indoors for later transplanting. \* Start indoor cuttings of perennial herb to promote fall plantings. Or use layering outdoors to create new plants \* Use mornings to prepare garden soil for fall herb garden by adding and spading in manure, peat moss, compost, coarse sand, or a combination of these \* 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. - *HERBS: A Resource Guide for San Antonio*

Don't let your fall garden transplants wilt; keep them watered and mulched to establish vigorous root systems.

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.

Prune autumn sage to encourage a fall bloom.

Develop a landscape plan now so you can take advantage of autumn planting weather.

**ROSES** Feed roses lightly also according to rainfall (water before and after feeding) Anything that can be done to reduce stress will build a better bush and provide the basis for the best flowers of the year in October.

Watering every day is advisable and water-washing 2 or 3 times a week around 7:00 pm (just as the sun is going down, but enough time to allow leaves to dry) can be used to supplement the water needs and provide mite protection. Whatever your schedule permits, the roses will respond to just about any extra water you can give them (remember to mulch them). Flowers will be small during this period, but with frequent small amounts of additional organics (fish meal, kelp, blood meal) and additional chemical fertilizers (cut normal amounts at least in half, but keep up the watering), the bushes should continue to maintain or even grow bigger and occasional basal breaks may appear. Mid to late August is the ideal time to apply the organics for the fall bloom cycle. The work outside during these dog days can be hazardous, but it doesn't have to be done all in one day. Stretch it out, but most important take care of yourself!

**FLOWERS** Order wildflower seeds for planting this month or next. Plant heat-loving plants such as lantana, bougainvillea, allamanda, hibiscus, mandevilla, copper plant, zinnia, portulaca and salvia. \*Start sowing flowering winter annuals, such as Alyssum, Calendula, Larkspur, Poppy and Stock. \*Include Mari-mum marigolds and shasta daisy transplants in the landscape for bright blooms through October. \*Clean up iris beds and thin out clumps if crowded (showing small, poor blooms). They can be transplanted and divided from now until October.

**BIRDS** Hummingbirds are everywhere. Attract them to your yard with a sugar-water feeder. Use four parts water and one part sugar (no honey or sugar substitutes).

**WEEDS AND PESTS** 1) Spider Mites On roses- They are here, you better believe it. Check the bottom side of your rose foliage for fine, white webbing while the topside and edges of the leaves will show a rusty coloration. If you have mites, either spray with *Greenlight* mite spray (2 tsp. per gal. of spray) or water wash the bottom side of the foliage for 9 days at 3 day intervals. 2) Thrips- If you want to keep blooms clean; just mist the buds and flowers. Thrips will migrate from pastures, fields or other host plants in the area like honeysuckle, oleanders, magnolias, etc. Use Orthene at 2 tsp. (powder), or 2 Tbsp. (liquid) per gallon of mix. \* Visit the San Antonio Rose Society's web site @ [www.sarosesociety.org](http://www.sarosesociety.org).

**LAWN** July/August is an ideal time to seed buffalo grass and Bermuda when water is available. Mow lawns weekly (at least every other week if we are in a drought situation), you should be removing no more than 1/3 of grass blade height and leave clippings on the lawn. Both lawn and soil will benefit. Mowing your lawn often will help prevent weed seeds from germinating. Vary direction of mowing to avoid developing a grain (blades growing/leaning in one direction) to your lawn

If you must put down sod now, water as you lay the sod. A delay as short as 2 to 3 hours in watering could result in dormant grass

If part of your garden is infested with NEMATODES, forgo a fall crop of vegetables in favor of African or American marigolds. The marigolds are beautiful; they will make for a great fall showing, and will help to reduce population of root-damaging pests. Buy them as sturdy transplants without blooms. Plant the flowers every 8 to 12 inches.

Many trees and shrubs are dropping yellow leaves in a natural response to normal heat and dry conditions.

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# Culinary Contributions

QUICK, FOOD PROCESSOR PIE CRUST AND LEMON CHESS PIE contributed by Robin Maymar

Stolen, unabashedly from a magazine... which I did not document. Looks like Martha Stewart I tried this today and it is so easy... I felt I had to share.

Makes enough for 1 nine-inch double-crust pie. The vinegar in the crust makes it more tender.

## Ingredients:

2 ½ cups all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon sugar  
12 tablespoons unsalted butter (1 ½ sticks) cut into small pieces and chilled  
4 tablespoons shortening, chilled  
1 tablespoon white vinegar

## Preparation:

1. Place flour, salt and sugar in the bowl of a food processor: pulse a few times to combine. Add butter and shortening to the flour mixture and pulse until the mixture resembles coarse meal, about 10 seconds.
2. With machine running, add vinegar and 3 tablespoons ice water in a slow, steady stream through the feed tube of food processor until dough holds together. Do not process for more than 30 seconds.
3. Divide dough in half and turn each half out onto a piece of plastic wrap. Press each half into a flattened circle, wrap it in plastic and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.
4. Using two pieces of waxed paper and your pie dish, draw a circle around the rim of the dish. Turn the paper over (so ink does not transfer to dough) Roll out your piece of dough to for the lower crust of the pie, extending it a little further than the rim you drew on the paper.
5. You can bake the crust 'blind' or fill and bake as in this lemon chess pie. To bake blind: chill crust in freezer 20 minutes, remove and line piecrust with parchment then fill with pie weights or pinto beans. Bake 350 degrees for 15 minutes or so. Let cool to fill.

## LEMON CHESS PIE from *The Washington Post* (for a 10-inch pie)

Mix together in a large bowl: 2 cups sugar  
1 tablespoon flour  
1 tablespoon yellow corn meal

Add to this:  
4 unbeaten eggs  
1/4 cup melted butter  
1/4 cup milk  
4 tablespoons grated lemon rind  
¼ c lemon juice



Mix well and place in unbaked pie shell. Bake at 375 degrees for 35-45 minutes. \*I usually use the amount of rind that I can get from however many lemons I use for the juice needed.

The pie tends to be brown on top when it is done. It may be cut hot. Freezes well.

I am so glad they put in “May be cut hot” because once you have tasted this pie, you will not want to wait until it cools down. Also, that thing about “Freezes well.” This theory has never been tested. I have never had a piece left over that I could freeze. I guess this means that if life has handed you lots of lemons and you got really ambitious, you could make two pies and freeze one.



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