



NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY
NOVEMBER , 2020

HERE'S OUR HOLIDAY CHALLENGE



Becca Gallardo is currently studying Nutrition and Dietetics at the Alamo College Complex. She asked me if she could be of service to our group, so I gave her a big challenge: Imagine that everyone has to make Thanksgiving at home, and it is just two people. How can we make the “traditional” Thanksgiving dinner delicious, small and healthy all at once? I think we often learn when we are faced with a real-life challenge. What plans have you made? How can we enjoy a holiday when we are all locked down? I give you, Herb Society members, the same challenge. Put your thinking caps on and come with suggestions.

Join us on Thursday November 12 let's see what she has come up with. Let's share all our ideas

Along with nutrition and dietetics, Becca is currently exploring vegan recipes as well. She loves nature and enjoys all things fitness and dancing. She is interested in gardening, art and anything with positive vibes. A representative for Healthy Living aromatherapy oils, she also is in to mindfulness training. Her posts on FaceBook as Becca Marie are upbeat and cheerful. “Brighten someone's day! You never know what that could do for their entire life.” she says. We will be glad to welcome Becca Gallardo to our meeting November 12, 6:30 for chat and 7 pm for meeting.

**San Antonio Herb Society
will meet by Zoom
November 12, 2020 6:30 pm**

**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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PayPal Hooray!

I bought an I Phone just so I could use PayPay at Herb Society events. This is a tale of “No Good Deed Goes Unpunished”. Got the App on the phone and got it to function. Get to my very first event where I could use it, only to discover that the Triangular scanning device does not FIT into the little holes on my I Phone.

Months Later: My husband gives me a little gizmo that plugs into my I Phone, and I can attach it to something, I forget what, and can use it on my phone. It gets lost and refund around the house.

One Pandemic Later: I finally FIND the triangular scanning device (hidden in the back of the cash box, black, and invisible to the naked eye). It suddenly occurs to me that I can now PLUG IN the device to the GIZMO and the GIZMO fits into the flat plug space on the IPHONE.

I contact our treasurer. Yes, download PayPal into your phone and see if it works. I go to APPS, again, and look at PayPal apps. There are a lot of them.... Which one to choose....? The one Debarah is telling me to use has a picture of a cell phone with \$15 on the screen. Does this mean it costs \$15? If so, is that per day, per customer, per transaction? I do not know. I would hate to be the person to run up a stupid bill because I purchased something unnecessary. It is now late at night, I figure I can try this in the morning.

Next morning Herb Market: I borrow a phone, and call Debarah. It is raining; people are talking. I get in to PayPal and open the App, but nothing looks familiar. There does not seem to be a place to sell items. I finally give up.

A Week Later: Grace is headed by to buy sachets to bring as gifts.in Florida Wearing masks, we sit down, open the CORRECT APP, and it says QR code. We mess around with that for a while. This is the WRONG APP Eventually we try another CORRECT APP and, TA DAH! This is the screen where you can sell an item. We sell the sachets, she signs, and we send her a receipt. Done! Done! Done!

So, the moral of the story is that each step *was* fairly easy. Knowing how to take each step was *extremely* difficult.

Out of the woodwork will now come hoards of friends who will say “If you had only asked me, I could have helped you.” Or “I knew about that little connector devise.” Two people have already said they had the triangular scanning device and had just not turned it back in to the cash box.

Ok, group, then this is the second ask: Does anyone with a kind heart and some patience know how in blazes to get the Front Page changed on our website? I have reworked it, posted it, reviewed it, published it, and it REMAINS THE SAME. I am obviously doing something wrong and do not know how to navigate the cursed WordPress. Knock! Knock! Anyone in there that can offer a suggestion or lend a hand? I would really appreciate it.

Meeting Minutes

San Antonio Herb Society Meeting

The meeting was called to order by president Robin Maymar at 6:30 October 8, 2020

We had a round table question "If I could get anything to grow in my garden, what would it be?" We had lots of delightful answers/

Upcoming events :

- Market October 17th at the Pearl we will have a table. We could use more volunteers to staff our table.
- Rainbow Gardens Table: This Saturday, Oct 10th, from 9 am until 12 or 1 pm, We will have two volunteers at a table at the Bandera Road Rainbow Gardens. We will be giving out information on membership and selling Ollas.
- Weed and Gloat, Social distancing, wear masks, spacing out the volunteer arrival time. Arrival at 8, 9, or 10 am. October 26th at the Botanical Garden.
- Next Meeting November 12th on Zoom.
- November 16th the Garden Center will be re-opening.
- December Meeting Garden Center should be open by then, we could have a banquet, can get caterer, but we cannot bring own food. Could have food truck also. Max 50 people.
- This Month it's a great time to buy pansies

We have received a gift of seeds from Jackie Compere. We have available: hot pink poppy, elephant garlic, mild and easy to grow, large cloves, bluebonnet seeds (ladybird blue, pink, maroon, and purple mix), bunny ears larkspur. cilantro seeds

(contact Robin Maymar if you are interested and you can pick up from her porch)

Program : Our guest was Alma Romanger from Compost Queens Compost Queens was started by a mother and daughter in San Antonio. They collect and transform food waste into rich organic material and then return it to local farms and gardens.

Dirt V.S. Soil: Dirt is compacted and has very little air, water, or organic material, or microbes. A helpful analogy is that dirt is like flour and bread is like soil. Water will roll off the flour, but soak into the bread. The key to successful gardening is taking care of the ecosystem in your soil.

The Problem: We have lost 1/3 of our farmable land in the last 30 years. 80 billion pounds of food is wasted each year.

The average American family wastes \$1,600 of food per year. Food waste ends up in landfills, where it rots and releases harmful greenhouse gasses.

The Solution: Composting! Composting protects against extreme weather and erosion, revitalizes local water systems, and restores local rain systems. Composting also regenerates soil health and microorganisms which in turn help our plants thrive; also lessens our dependence on harmful chemicals. Feed the soil to feed your community and help reverse climate change. Alma recommends watching *Kiss the Ground* on Netflix for more information. Project drawdown is another good source for information. Compost Queens offers commercial and residential services. They use Bokashi composting, which is actually a fermentation process. The process has no smell, no pests, and you can include all solid food waste, even meat and dairy. They also offer a DIY Bokashi Home Composting Kit. If you don't want to do the fermenting yourself, they offer pick up and drop off services. You drop off your food waste and then can pick up finished compost twice a year. Compost Queens also offers compost consultations and soil enhancements. www.compostqueenstx.com, info@compostqueenstx.com

@compostqueens on facebook and Instagram Seminar next Thursday, October 15th at 5 pm, see their facebook for more details.

WEED AND GLOAT AT THE BOTANICAL GARDENS

Six! Six volunteers came to help maintain the San Antonio Botanical Garden Herb bed. We are so blessed! Pam did all the “standing up straight” jobs- trimming rosemary that is too tall and giving the lemongrass another haircut. Our new member, Laura, set a good example for us all by actually digging out the bulbs of the oxalis. It will be interesting to see next month if more show up, or that by pulling the bulbs we can eliminate them.

We identified the Dutchman’s Pipe vine, and, even though it is not an herb, we left it for visual interest. It has such a cute little pipe-shaped flower. Marsha cut back rosemarys and Mexican petunias which had overtake the main walk.

Cindy joined Laura to weed around our newly planted dills. All of the plants we put in in September are thriving. Sorrel, dill, basil, thyme and salad burnet are doing well. The Cuban oregano has completely covered a burnet, plant so we transplanted it to an empty spot by the walk way. The only plant that had been chewed on was the chervil. The sages against the back fence are filling well. The rue is growing, but not abundant yet. We need to mark the calendar for next year that this is the best time to put in new herbs

Gloria took control of the north end of the garden. Two plants there were confusing. We thought they were all ginger plants, or that maybe one was a turmeric. However, both are now blooming. The ginger, a lovey yellow “soap” ginger adds fragrance to the whole area, even with masks on. The other, with slightly larger leaves, we thought was a turmeric, turns out to be an exotic canna. It has grown to about twelve feet and has a spiky red flower. I am sure it has been introduced by the wind or the birds and is on display somewhere else in the garden. We weed out small cannas almost every month. They grow with such exuberance. If you feel you have no green thumb, cannas will encourage you to garden. We are always will to share our ‘weeds’

The roses, invading from the next garden over, are producing rose hips. The rose is considered an herb. The hips are rich in vitamin C. Jane McDaniel, one of the founders of our group, home recovering from a procedure, is researching about how to harvest and use rose hips. We’ll publish more about rose hips next month. We trimmed back some of the canes and wove some of the longer pieces back through the fence.



Note: Commonwealth Coffee was closed for renovation. We went to La Madeline further up Broadway. They had a lovely large table outside. We highly recommend “infinite ventilation” when eating out.

**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 November 30, 2020. We will meet early to spread out volunteers 8 a.m.

Contact robinmaymar@gmail.com for simple safety measures we need to take . See you then.



Oxalis literally means "sour" and it gets that name from its oxalic acid content. **All** parts of wood sorrel are **edible** including leaves, flowers, seed pods, and roots.

FROST: WE EXPECTED YOU

"Only a fool or a newcomer will try to predict Texas weather."



NOW is the time to prepare for that dreaded day when the weatherman says “Oh, and by the way, it is expected to drop below freezing tonight.” Make a plan for your garden and get busy before there is a wild rain, sleet and you are out in the yard trying to cover the kafir lime tree.

Weathermen, unlike gardeners, are concerned with people living inside houses, who look out the window and decide what clothing to put on. They go into their heated garages, the garage door opens automatically, they drive to school and drop the children off. At which point, for the first time, the children, clad in summer shorts, flip flops and tank tops, realize that it is freezing outside! Weathermen tell us that it will be chilly and we need a jacket, or it will rain, or be “very cold”. On the short trip from the car to the classroom, relative terms work. Watch the local weather, but take into account that sometimes they are reporting the “feels like” temperature, considering wind chill, rather than the *actual* temperature.

Keep track of weather (From Jerry M. Parsons) - *When should a gardener use frost protection? I wholeheartedly rely on our local weatherman and subtract a degree factor of "8" for safety. For instance, if your favorite weather forecaster predicts a low of 36 F, you'd better cover your plants. If the forecaster is right and the temperature only falls to 36 F, you've merely experienced a trial-run plant protection alert.*

There is a reason for this discrepancy in accuracy. When the earth is experiencing rapid radiation cooling, heat is rising rapidly. Therefore, it's warmer 4 feet off the ground than at ground level, and the lowest few feet are dramatically colder. Just barely above the ground is the coldest. A thermometer can read 33 to 34 F at 4 feet off the ground, yet there can be frost on your turfgrass. If you were to place a thermometer at grass level, one at 2 feet, and another at 4 feet, the temperature can be 33 to 34 F. At 2 feet it can be 31 F, and at grass level it will be 29 to 30 F. There can actually be a one-degree drop per foot.

Because temperatures can differ at various heights off the ground, the National Weather Service places its recording instruments exactly 4 feet above ground. Gardeners would do well to do the same, so as to have a common frame of reference. Just remember that on a dry, cold night the ground can be as much as 4 to 5 degrees colder (or as little as 0 to 1 degree colder), depending on cloud cover, dew point and wind.

In the event of a freeze warning, here are your biggest concerns:

- * Plants that are dry are vulnerable. If it's been a while since you had rain or ran the sprinklers, consider irrigating before the cold arrives. Dry plants will always be hurt worst. That's also true for new pansy beds and turf that has been planted this fall.
- * Plants that are growing in containers are most likely to have damage. Their soil balls freeze where plants in the ground would not. Loosely speaking, you sacrifice about 20 degrees of winter hardiness when you have plants above ground.
- * Don't leave hoses attached to faucets. Wrap exposed pipes to protect against freezing. Drain all hose-end sprinklers. Water expands as it freezes and has the power to rupture pipes and equipment.
- * Gardeners in the southern half of Texas, where temperatures are expected to reach freezing for the first time this fall, need to be sure all tender plants that are going to be saved are brought into protection.
- * If you have a greenhouse, be sure the heat source is functioning properly. Have a back-up heat source in case of power outage.
- * If you're buying a poinsettia in the next few days and if temperatures are below 40 degrees, have your car warm as you get ready for the trip home. Do not let it be exposed to freezing temperatures for more than a few seconds. Covering it with a lightweight fabric or even paper can give you several minutes longer.

In short, use your common sense and prior experiences to cope with this cold spell. While it's going to be unpleasant and a big change from what we have grown to know and love these last several days, it should not pre-



sent any clear and present danger to the majority of our Texas plantings.

HARVEST: Basil *will* die. So, harvest it on a sunny morning, make a huge batch of pesto in freeze it in small jars. Nothing warms a winter pasta like warm pesto and some good Parmesan

HARVEST tomatoes If it is predicted to be below 32 degrees for a number of days. We have a good recipe for Green Tomato Pie. You can use them a variety of ways in cooking. Place near-ripe tomatoes out to turn red. They will. It may take a bit of time.

COVER If the weather will take a quick one-day dip to 19 degrees then pop right back up for many weeks more of sunny warm weather, cover your tomatoes. Use Thinsulate or other crop covering cloth, or old bed sheets or mattress pads. You can string old fashioned Christmas lights, that get hot to the touch, around under the cover, to keep the temperature up.

COVER If you have tender plants that will make it through winter, but you have just planted them, cut the bottom off a plastic milk jug, lid on, to cover your plant.

MULCH Strawberries, broccoli, cauliflower, beets, carrots. Other than basil most herbs will weather the winter. I have had parsley, chives, garlic chives, onions, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, beets come through cold weather. Some may die back then return in the spring (salad burnet,)

Some Satsuma tangerines will be fine down to 19 degrees, others will not. This is where knowing your variety will help. Some citrus plants are acclimated and some are not. If they have new roots and have only been in the ground a short while they are less tolerant. I would cover, out of caution.

As you look at your garden, it is helpful to make notes after a frost. That will help you to determine where to put your efforts the next time.

We had excellent luck with a Rodeo Tomato, planted way too late in the season. By October it was six feet tall and lush. It had some blossoms and a huge tomato cage supporting it. When frost was predicted, we covered all the way around with thinsulate, and mulched about a foot at the bottom of the cage over the fabric. It dropped to 19, was cold and rainy for a week. When it got sunny again, I opened it up so it would not bake. To my surprise, the whole plant was covered with blossoms. It continued to grow, developed lovely tomatoes, which we harvested through January, as there were no more frosty days.

Be prepared to mulch freeze-sensitive and "new" roses, (transplants & seedlings) plants as they may succumb to frost or freeze. Don't forget "Airport" landfill on Bitters Rd. as source of "inexpensive" compost for mulching. Mulch deeply all subtropical perennials (listed earlier) until March.

Our first freeze usually arrives in late November, with the actual freeze typically coming on the following night after a severe cold front arrives.

Herb of the Month: Sorrel

Growing Sorrel for the kitchen- from Sunset Magazine April 1975

Scarcely known in this country, sorrel is a staple in French cooking, under the name of *oseille*, and in eastern European and Jewish cuisines, where it is known as *schav*. To botanists it is *Rumex scutatus*, a species of dock.

It tastes like a sharp, sprightly spinach but is a much better performer in the garden. A perennial, it will bear for many years. It's indifferent to heat and the mild winters of the West and produces leaves all year. (The plants go dormant in winter where the ground freezes but re-
vive earlier than other vegetables.)



Red-veined sorrel

Sorrel seeds and plants are not easy to find; search the herb sections of nurseries, seed racks, or catalogs. Plant seeds as soon as possible; sow thinly in ¼-inch deep rows 18 inches apart. Thin seedlings to 8 inches apart in rows. (We have found them at Milbergers, Shades of Green and Rainbow on Bandera)

Nursery plants, where obtainable, are usually in 2-inch plants bands. Set them out at once; divide next spring to increase your supply. A dozen plants supply plenty of sorrel for a family of four. Plants thrive in ordinary good garden soil and will tolerate more shade than most vegetables. Occasional light feeding will increase leaf growth; regular, deep watering is necessary. Groom plants by pulling off old, yellow leaves and by pinching off flower stalks that form in midsummer. If plants become crowded after two or three years, dig and divide in spring, replanting the divisions in enriched soil.



al

How To Use Sorrel With its lemony tang, sorrel is good raw or cooked. You can use the tender leaves in place of lettuce in hot or cold meat and cheese sandwiches, or hamburgers. Offer finely shredded or chopped sorrel in tacos and tostadas, tuck it into... (page torn, sorry)

The internet says "This spring green is packed with potent astringency and a lemony, citrus-like flavor. It bumps up the acidic quality of salads (just use less vinegar or lemon juice), and is great eaten raw. It also cooks down quickly in a sauté pan. It gets "mushy," which makes it ideal for blending into sauces and vinaigrettes."

"Most folks use [raw sorrel](#) as an accent, but young spring sorrel can be wonderful tossed into salads, making for a nice citrusy bite. You can even drop a handful in the blender before blitzing up your [smoothie](#). This is the kind of green that will refresh you, wake you up, and remind you that it's spring. When it's cooked, however, sorrel's tartness wanes, making it a wonderful complement to chicken or fish and an excellent candidate for homemade sauces. " Inspired? Send us YOUR recipe.

TO DO IN THE NOVEMBER GARDEN

When the world wearies, and society ceases to satisfy, there is always the garden.

IN OUR HERB GARDEN:

Start collecting seeds of your favorite plants now. #1 coin envelopes (available at stationery stores) make an excellent container for seeds. Be sure to identify plant, and the collection date on the envelope. Baby food jars, or empty prescription bottles also work well.

If above average temperatures prevail; wait until after Nov. 15 to plant cool-weather plants such as pansies. Fall fertilizing is even more important than spring. Use a fast release 3-1-2 fertilizer - don't use anything high in nitrogen. Complete harvesting of cold sensitive herbs and apply compost as winter mulch if not done in Oct. Mature herb plants will be high in essential oils and this is a good time to preserve them.

VEGETABLE GARDEN: Seed nasturtiums, sweet peas, radishes, carrots, rutabagas, English peas, sugar snap peas, onions, collards and spinach to supplement cole crop transplants in the winter garden. Leek, lettuce, mustard, onion, radish, rutabaga, Swiss chard, and turnip may be planted, especially during the early part of November, for a fall vegetable garden. Do not plant beets, carrots, cabbage, lettuce or mustard too deep. Plant spinach transplants for a nutritious, attractive vegetable that can be harvested all winter. Tomatoes, peppers, okra, beans, and Southern peas will continue producing as long as warm weather prevails. Continue harvesting fresh vegetables from your garden.

Sow Elbon (Cereal) Rye in bare parts of veg. garden as both a nematode trap crop and a "green manure" to be tilled into soil in late winter. Remove debris (leaf litter falling from the plants themselves, leave the mulch in place) from flowerbeds and gardens to control disease and insects. Dispose of diseased leaves from roses, Indian hawthorns, photinias, or fruit trees to reduce the chance of reinfesting the plants. Look for HORNWORMS and CABBAGE LOOPERS on vegetable plants. Both can be treated with Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), products such as *Thuricide*, *Dipel* or *Bio-Worm*. After first freeze, clean up gardens. Any plants with BLIGHTS or MITES should be thrown away, not composted.

If above average rain has struck tomatoes, inspect plants and leave green fruit on the vines as long as they have green leaves. Harvest the coloring fruit to reduce stress on the plant (you may want to pull back the mulch for a day or two to allow for some drying, then put mulch back and add more if necessary).

FLOWERS

Divide irises and day lilies now. Replant the rhizomes and bulbs in full sun in compost-enriched soil.

If SLUGS and SNAILS are feasting on pansies, bluebonnets and other plants, apply slug and snail bait or put out beer traps to slow them. The bait also will control pill bugs. (A thrifty way to control slugs and snails and help with recycling; take a 3-liter soda bottle, cut the top third off the empty bottle, push the top portion into the body of the bottle ((with the spout down inside!)). Use two or three staples around the rim to hold the parts together. Pour snail bait or use some bread with a little beer down the "funnel" and lay your trap down horizontally among your plants and the snails will come calling. When it's full or you're just tired of looking at it, just dispose of it and make another one. - Brian Townsend

When planting for effective color, group your selections in mass or drifts because they will stand out in the landscape. Plant petunias and stock now so they can develop before winter cold. Set out alyssum, asters, snapdragons, calendulas, dianthus, ornamental cabbage and kale, pansies, phlox and Shasta daisies, stock and flowering kale transplants for winter color in your yard. Enjoy the bright flowers of salvias, Cape honeysuckle, firebush, firespike, esperanza and poinciana, which will bloom until the first serious cold wave. Prepare flowerbeds and plant pansies where they will get at least 4 hrs. of sun per day. Still time to plant hardy annuals like violas and snap dragons for winter and early spring color. Plant in a bed with good soil and lots of organic matter and add blood meal for an extra boost. Most need sunny sites. Plant daffodils, irises and day lilies now. Make sure short-day bloomers (Poinsettia, Christmas Cactus and Kalanchoe) are not exposed to artificial light at night. Plant dianthus,

Sow wildflower seeds. Bluebonnet transplants are available at area nurseries. Plant them 2 ft. apart, water them once and apply snail bait. They won't grow much until March. Be careful not to overwater. Plant pansies between them for color until April.

If you want a challenge, plant sweet peas on a trellis. The color and fragrance are unmatched if the plants do not freeze or get too hot.

In Our Rose Garden: The fall colors and bloom size of our November blooms here in South Texas are a sight to see, the cooler weather slows down the growing speed, increasing size and intensifying colors. It is time now to stop drastic cutting. Continue to use your roses but cut with short stems. Keeping all the leaves is essential to this process. The mineral content of the canes is of primary importance in determining their cold hardiness, and the starch content has a lot to do with the vigor of the spring growth. Water becomes less critical as the plants go dormant but the beds should not be allowed to get too dry. Normally in our area little attention to watering is needed in November or December, but in the unlikely event we get extended drought in these months, infrequent but deep watering is in order. Early November is the time to develop that new bed you meant to start in September. It will be messy when the December rains set in. And the Canadian roses will be arriving soon.

BIRD Birdscaping hints: Plan and plant ahead. Remember, annuals yield quick results; perennials produce seed crops year after year. Be sure to provide a good mix of native and well adapted plants in your scheme and allow for some naturalizing! Resist the temptation to neaten or "deadhead" seed-laden plants. In fall and winter, make the birdscape even more inviting by offering energy-packed suet, protein-rich peanut butter, and a source of (and probably the most important point) clean water (heated, if necessary). Clean martin houses of sparrow debris and close them up until mid February. Put out birdseed for migrating birds. Shallow dishes of water will help quench their thirst.

YARD Young deciduous trees and shrubs requiring transplanting can be moved as soon as they enter dormancy. Heavy rains can cause some leaf drop on trees. Time is the best cure; do not fertilize plants showing stress from leaf drop.

This is the last call for planting rye grass as a temporary cool/cold season lawn because the nights are getting too cool for quick and high percentage germination of the seeds. Plant early in the month, if possible. Check all (plant) containers for proper drainage and condition of plant (worn-out soil, root-bound, poor quality potting soil, etc.) for winter storage. Re-pot to a larger container, and with a high-quality potting soil, or cut off an inch around the root ball so you can add more potting soil

Stored pots that you plan to recycle can contain fungi and pathogens that could be harmful to the plants you plan to grow in them. To avoid that problem, mix a little bleach in some water (about 1 part bleach to 9 parts water) and pour the mixture in and over the pots before reusing. Repair lawn and garden equipment. Sharpen mower blades and drain equipment of old gas before storing. Check your irrigation system for any broken heads or emitters.

Take advantage of the off-season for contractors and consider building decks, retaining walls or pools

Hibernation begins at this time for the ladybug, and goes through to January. Clean out Ladybug house,

COMPOST:

This is a good time to build a compost bin. (See page 3) Leaves can be raked and composted and ready for spring gardening. Leaves are too valuable to put in the garbage. Mow them and let the material decompose on the lawn. It also makes good mulch or compost

GOOD USE FOR A HACKBERRY

In our household there are two opposing parties that cling tightly to their opinions. Arguments often break out. Politics? Religion? No, hackberry trees!

Hackberry trees grow rapidly. They provide good shelter for birds. They have lots and lots and lots of berries that the birds love. Pollinators love hackberries. They provide reasonable shade. The “WE LOVE HACKBERRIES” factions point out that hackberry wood makes good hammer handles, because it is a strong and resilient, reducing shock to the hand when hammering.

Birds eat the berries, sit on any fence available and poop out the seeds from hackberries. I think if you did a study of seeds hackberry seed would probably be the most fecund of any. Or, maybe the word is fertile. I would expect it is close to 100% Every seed that falls to the ground produces a tree. And ALL these trees grow up right into the wires of the chain link fence. Left to their own nature, they continue to weave themselves through the fence, making it well nigh impossible to remove the tree.

I personally are in the “I HATE HACKBERRIES” club. Each month I am out on patrol, removing the shoots, using a pickaxe to remove the roots, covering the roots with heavy black plastic to keep stems from growing more shoots.

We cut one tree down because it was menacing the house. We left another one, ‘for the birds’ but that is it, no hackberries on the fence lines. War is declared.

Recently, I have found a good use for hackberries. You know all that wood you leave for brush pick up each year? It goes to the Brush Site (there is one on Wurzbach Parkway on the north side). There they are crushed up and shredded into mulch. Coarse ground mulch is in huge dunes and that stuff is FREE. Fine ground mulch is available per pound. Here’s the system we use:

Plan ahead: mask or bandanna (it is very dusty there), gloves, garden shovel or pitc fork, truck that you do not mind getting dusty or dirty, tarp to cover, and netting or string to tie over the tarp. Choose a dry day after weeks of dry weather.

When you enter the site there is a ramp and a traffic light. Go to the Residential side, speak to the clerk inside the building. They weigh your vehicle, make a note of make/mode/color of car and direct you to the location. Three choices are : Compost, Fine mulch or Coarse mulch. Coarse and Compost are free, Fine is \$0.03 per pound. Dry mulch costs about \$16 for a level load, about \$20 for a heaped-up load (so you can’t see out the back window). Wet mulch costs considerable more, so don’t go after drenching rain.

Usually someone comes by in a truck or car to take your order, a front loader arrives pretty promptly and asks how much you want. These drivers are genius at directing a whole huge scoop of dusty mulch just exactly into your truck bed. Stay in your vehicle while they load, it is very dusty. If you must be outside, stay upwind so you don’t get a facefull of dust. They load little by little so the vehicle is not hit with a heavy load all at once.

Then the fun begins. Spread the mulch out as evenly as you can with shovel and fork. I scoop up the spilled and put it in. Dust off the back bumper and the dust on the window. Blue tarp goes over the whole load.



I use an elastic net to tie down the tarp. This is an on-going source of irritation to my husband, who dislikes untangling all the hooks. We put rings around the bed of the truck to tie loads down. The hooks on the net are made to hook directly to the curved edge of the bed. Finding the two hooks buried under a foot of mulch behind the cab is always an issue.

Once the top of the net is hooked in, we go down the sides, hooking the net along, then stretch the final hook down to the ring on the bumper. (I do this a lot, so we have a good system) Rope works well, too. You want to secure the tarp over the mulch. Usually nothing at all blows off, but it is a city ordinance.

Finally, dust off the vehicle, go back to the weigh station to pay.

THEN TEST YOUR BRAKES! You have just added a heavy load and the brakes will respond in a different way. Be careful. You will be returning to a high speed road at Wurzbach parkway, and we advise, stay in the slow lane.

I always feel like I have won something when I bring home a whole truck load of crushed up hackberries, and can now spread them all over my garden, to protect the plants from drought and frost. Thankfully, no hackberries have ever generated in the garden where I have put the mulch. I also use the mulch, especially the free stuff, to make paths between the raised beds. It prevents some weeds from coming up and makes a moist mat that begins to decompose to compost. If weeds come up, they are very easy to remove.



Did you know

An interesting item from hipmamablog.com explains those little stickers on the produce at the grocer's store. "A four-digit number means it's conventionally grown. A five-digit number beginning with a 9 means it's organic. A five-digit number beginning with 8 means it's genetically modified."

Mayflower Thanksgiving

by Pat Hasser

Being a Mayflower descendant, Thanksgiving has always held a special place in my heart: a gathering of family and friends enjoying turkey, mashed potatoes, corn or succotash, cranberry sauce, mulled apple cider and, of course, pumpkin pie with whipped cream. These were my thoughts for many years until I started researching for a program on cooking in Colonial Days and cooking over wood fires and hearths, I prepared a whole thanksgiving dinner this way. What I learned was a shocker. In 1621 there were no mash potatoes, sweet potatoes, sweet corn, wheat or flour yet for bread cubes, neither cows for cream, or apples for mulled cider.

What was most likely served was venison, fish, mussels, turkey and other fowl stuffed with herbs, nuts and wild onion or leeks, corn pudding and cranberries plus plenty of seafood. There were many native herbs like plums, grapes, beans, melons, squash and which includes pumpkins as well. (Some may ask why I refer to these as herbs), Herb: noun any plant with leaves, seeds, or flowers used for flavoring, food, medicine, or perfume.

We know that the English brought many herbs with them to the new world and these would have been used in the feast some of these would be parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme. For drink, there could have been cider which was originally made from plums, peaches, pumpkins etc. in the New World long before apple cider as we know it evolved. Could have been some wine brought over on the Mayflower but water was the most likely beverage. If there was bread to be had it would have been made from pumpkin flour, but no stoves at the time so might have come later.

Thanksgiving as National Holiday People believe that Thanksgiving became a recurring celebration for the Pilgrims, there is no history so this is not clear. It was never called Thanksgiving either until George Washington made a proclamation that it would happen the 4th Thursday of November at the Continental Congress in 1789 but it was not a national holiday. Five presidents were asked to have a national holiday for Thanksgiving and finally Abraham Lincoln supported legislation making it a national holiday in 1863. America was in

the middle of its bloody Civil War at the time and Lincoln hoped the new holiday would unify the bitterly divided country. The holiday was finally a success and Thanksgiving has continued as a national favorite



Culinary Contributions

Pumpkin Flour

Pumpkin flour is a great substitute for use in just about any recipe that uses flour. “Pepon” or Pumpkin is referred to as squash since it is part of this family. Pumpkin flour and corn flour were the original flours of the pilgrims. In the colonial days rods were placed across the rafters in the kitchen and rounds of pumpkins were hung from these to dry close to the open hearth where all the family cooking was done. The fire very seldom was completely out.

Pumpkins are rich in vitamins. One half cup of prepared pumpkin will provide over 450 percent of the required vitamin A. It can also help prevent some cancers and helps build the immune system. Good for all around tissue building that same half cup serving will also supply 15 percent of our daily vitamin C. Pumpkin also has a lot of fiber which helps defend our bodies from developing tumors.

To make pumpkin flour

First clean the seeds (save them) and fibers out of the pumpkin. You can use any kind of pumpkin; if you use a sugar pie pumpkin it will make sweeter flour.

Then cut the pumpkin into rings. This is easier to handle when you remove the pumpkin from the skin with a very sharp knife. Slice pumpkin into thin cubes around the size of a sugar cube and set out to dry. A food dehydrator is helpful. When pumpkin is completely dry, place the dry pumpkin into a food processor and grind into a flour-like texture.

Place pumpkin flour into an airtight container, and store in a cool, dry place.

Using Pumpkin Flour:

Pumpkin Flour can be used in any recipe that calls for flour. You can rehydrate the pumpkin by adding water. Most recipes suggest substituting pumpkin flour for up to 1/4 of the amount of regular flour.

Drying Pumpkin Seeds

You can dry your pumpkin seed plain or with a little sea salt on them and grind them up to use in place of nuts for those who are allergic to the nuts.

However, there is a difference between **pepitas** and **pumpkin** seeds. Pumpkin seeds are the white or cream-colored, oval-shaped seeds you find inside of pumpkins such as those you use to make jack-o-lanterns. Pepitas are seeds without a hull. They are found in specific types of pumpkins such as oilseed pumpkins and Styrian pumpkins.

To have tasty and healthy pumpkin seeds, you need to soak them to rid them of enzymes and make them easier to digest. Soaking pumpkin seeds is a simple process that can be done in less than a day and allows you to dehydrate pumpkin seeds for snacking or sprouting.

To roast, begin by drizzling the seeds with a couple teaspoons of olive oil. Use your fingers to toss the seeds around to coat. Then salt and season the seeds to taste. Pop them in the oven at 300 degrees for an hour or so, until the seeds are light golden brown.

PUMPKIN SEED FLOUR (AN ALTERNATIVE TO ALMOND FLOUR) After drying seeds thoroughly, grind the pumpkin seeds in a spice/coffee grinder a few tablespoons at a time until a meal is formed. Repeat. This can also be made in a blender with a dry container attachment. I do not suggest trying it in a food processor. Run through a sifter (or a colander with smallish holes) to catch any big pieces and run them again. Store processed pumpkin seed flour in an air-tight container in the fridge for a few weeks, or in the freezer

DOUBLE CHOCOLATE PUMPKIN BREAD by @sunflower_inthe city

Ingredients

1 1/2 c. pumpkin purée	3 tbsp. coconut oil	1/2 c. maple syrup	1 egg	1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 c. cacao powder	1/4 c. pumpkin flour	1 c. oat flour	1 tsp. baking powder	
1 tsp. baking soda	1/4 tsp. salt	1 tsp. cinnamon	1/2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice	
1/3 c. cacao nibs (or choc chips)	1/2 c. shredded coconut			

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Beat together the wet ingredients.
3. Mix together the dry ingredients in a separate bowl, then add to the wet.
4. Fold in chocolate chips and coconut if using.
5. Pour into a lined baking sheet and sprinkle on more chocolate and coconut.
6. Bake at 350 for about 45 minutes.

Let cool, and enjoy!

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