



NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY
 JANUARY 2021



Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Herb Of The Year for 2021 is Parsley!

We are delighted to announce that the Herb of the Year is an easy Herb – Grows well around here, easy to use in lots and lots of dishes, goes to seed to feed the birds, gracefully reseeds itself all over the place, and remains beautifully green and symmetric all winter and summer. What is not to love here?

Our first meeting of the year will be to introduce this most versatile herb. Is there a member who would be willing to do the program? We have a number of members doing research on different aspects of parsley. They may help with the presentation, We have not heard back from the Garden Center at press time, so do not know what the status is. The editor, at her most cynical, believes that we may be Zooming until June. So we are preparing for a Zoom presentation. Thursday evening January 14, 2021 at 7 p.m.

San Antonio Herb Society

Thursday January 14, 2021

Herb Society will meet via Zoom at 6:30 for visiting and 7 pm for business and Parsley, Herb of the Year

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From The Pres

Robin Maymar

The end of December finds us in deep lock-down and rising Covid-19 cases. Bars are again closed and restaurants have gone back to 50%. Weed And Gloat still meets in the Botanical Gardens, but we keep lots of distance between ourselves, masks and gloves on, we arrive at staggered times. We meet for coffee out of doors and keep masks on until we eat. We have gotten used to this routine because we all want to stay healthy and not share any virus germs at all. The good news is, with all this mask wearing, the flu season is off to a very slow start; cases are way down.

The Garden Center follows the rules for Parks and Recreation in San Antonio. We probably will not even be



thinking about meeting in person until March. However, we should be thinking about nominating new officers for the Herb Society. Nominations are usually in February, elections in March and hand-over to new officers in the April Banquet meeting. Our officers are: President, Vice-President (Programs), Secretary, Treasurer and Membership. These are all voting board members. Non-voting members of the board are Publicity, Newsletter. I would like to have an Historian and a Parliamentarian. This is an optimistic appeal, as we look around at the few members attending our activities. However, we do have lots of friends on Facebook, as well as people on our mailing list. When we meet in person, I expect we will have members eager to help.

We have found that no one office is overwhelming. Tasks can be broken down to smaller parts. What would work well is to have one person take the role, but someone else partner with. So they can be deputized if number one cannot make a Board meeting. Also, if two work together, the task is easier, and one trains another to take over the role the next year. So talk to a friend, volunteer together.

Herb Society is a not-for-profit educational group. We have lots more people to reach in our community and lots more fun to have. So, invite your friends, plant some seeds, and we will, we will meet again.



Meeting Minutes



For our December banquet we gathered outside in the front patio for a small Holiday Gathering and book exchange. We had planned on cold weather so we had the fire pit lit, and warm drinks. Then Texas decided to be warm and sunny.

We set up the hot plate, using all Milan's new outdoor electrical plugs. Robin made a large pot of vegetable soup, then used part to make turkey soup. Cindy helped ladle bowls.



Loretta and Melanie brought friends. It was so fun to see everyone in person. Each member brought a wrapped book, 'go with' for our soup dinner.



Not pictured but attending: Pam De Roche, Annette Hoffman could not attend but participated in the gift exchange. Many thanks to Mike and Cindy for sweet breads and candy.



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robinmaymar@gmail.com

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Position vacant

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Secretary Position vacant

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protem

Publicity Vicki Jamvold

Our website: [https://
sanantonioherbs.org](https://sanantonioherbs.org)

Mama T, gone and greatly missed.

JANUARY TO DO LIST

*In the soft, warm bosom of a decaying compost heap,
A transformation of life to death and back and again is taking place. –*

J.I. Rodale, Founder of *Organic Gardening* magazine

3rd WEEK: This is the beginning of the coldest part of winter (Jan.15 to Feb.15), though it may be hard to believe at times.

HERB GARDEN Plan spring herb garden, consider location, space, size, shape, sun, and plant groupings. * Plan companion planting. * Review seed catalogs and visit with herb growers as to new varieties and then order seeds. * Keep in mind as you read and plan that many herb books, and even seed packets, are written for growing conditions other than ours (we are zone 8b, and we even have our own microclimates). * Start seeds of perennials and later annuals in a cold frame or greenhouse. * Temperature extremes (abnormally high day/night, then a hard freeze blow in) during winter months may cause new growth for perennials and resultant freezing. Mulch should help protect plants. Wait until the ground warms to remove frost victims. * Spruce up the garden. Remove fall debris (and compost it).

Cut off the frozen tops of lantanas, firebush, poinciana, esperanza and other root-hardy plants and perennials at any time. If the brown foliage and stems don't bother you, leave them as cover, until early spring, for the base of the plant and for birds as foliage for shelter and to search out food. Do not be too quick to toss plants that appear to be frost-damaged. If the cold was not severe, the stems might not be damaged.

Get cold frames ready for vegetable seedlings and flowering transplants.

BIRDS Suet is a high-energy food for insect-eating birds and is beneficial during the winter months when other food sources are low. Put it in wire cages made for the purpose (allow some time for the birds to find it as the suet is not a naturally recognizable food source). Gather wood chips and wood mulch to put in woodpecker house (This lets them think they're cleaning/preparing their own "house" nest). 2ND WEEK It is time to think about birdhouses for your yard. Some birds begin breeding in February.

FLOWERS Enjoy blooming alyssum, dianthus and pansies. Plant tulip, daffodil and hyacinth bulbs no later than the first part of this month; plant Anemone and ranunculus bulbs late in this month. For terrific tulips guaranteed, you need to think "heads up"! Learn how to tell the nose of a tulip bulb from its toes. Then, plant it nose up. If you plant it upside down, the plant will waste a lot of energy better spent on flower production.

ROSES Make sure all new rose beds have been completed so the soil will have time for settling. (*Water them to hasten settling. Don't depend on Mother Nature!)

Check winter dressing of compost or manure and keep at least a 2" depth on the beds into February. Also, you might consider kelp, fishmeal, blood meal, alfalfa, or other organics that take time for the microbes to make their goodies available. Some rosarian's use soil conditioners about this time of year. Nitron A-35, Medina, or even gypsum are used just before or sometime after the organics are added. Order new labels. You know the names of your roses but your visitors do not.

GARDEN Protect tender plants with covers or mulch when freezes are forecast. Remember that plastic and/or cloth over a plant or a greenhouse will heat up if the sun appears. Be prepared to open it up for ventilation. Plastic directly against leaves in a freeze can actually conduct heat away and freeze-burn the leaves. Finish planting spring flowering narcissus bulbs. Plant pansies, violas, larkspur or bluebonnets in the flowerbeds of cutback perennial. Use a water-soluble, complete-and-balanced analysis fertilizer such as 20-20-20 to new annual flower transplants for quickest start. Use (same as above) 20-20-20 fertilizer monthly in diluted (at least half strength) form to houseplants during dark days of mid-winter. Be sure outdoor plants are well-watered. Cold weather can

damage plants that are too dry. It is time to replant sweet peas and English peas if the cold weather destroyed the seedlings. Order seeds for spring vegetable and flower gardens. Prepare garden beds for spring planting by working in organic matter. Side-dress leafy vegetables and onions with a slow-release fertilizer every two to four weeks.

YARD Rye seed will germinate in winter and provide some erosion control. Do not waste your time with Bermuda seed; it only germinates when soil is warmer (after mid-April).

Dandelion leaves can be very bitter. However, they are quite tasty if harvested in cool weather before they flower. Use the young, tender leaves in salads. The more mature leaves can be steamed or boiled much like spinach or other greens. Water your St. Augustine grass lawn deeply if temperatures of 24 degrees are forecast.

PESTS Watch houseplants for signs of MEALY BUGS, SPIDER MITES, SCALE and other pests. Use tender houseplant spray as needed. Use dormant ("horticultural") oil to eliminate SCALE insects on hollies, camellias, euonymus, photinias, oaks, and pecans, fruit trees during winter. Read and follow label directions as they pertain to temperature and rainfall. Throw away tag-ends of pesticides that you think may no longer be effective. They will not be any better in the spring.

HOMEWORK

1. Start making an inventory of spring rose supplies that you will need including spray materials, feeds (soluble or granular), iron supplements (*Sprint 330*, *Ironite*), organics, etc.
2. If you water your roses using the Dramm system (or any system using nozzles), now would be a good time to remove each nozzle and remove the pin from the nozzle and soak them both in a solution like *Lime Away* for a few minutes. This will remove any alkaline buildup on the emitters and pins. Wash with clean water and fasten them back into the system. Check and mend hoses.
3. Make sure your pruners have been cleaned, oiled and sharpened for the upcoming bush pruning in later February. Using a file or whetstone will provide you with a sharp, smooth cutting edge. Remember, dull pruners can damage the bark and cambium layers of rose canes leaving them open to fungi, which can cause dieback.
4. Now would be a good time to flush out your sprayer to remove the alkaline residue buildup. We use a mixture of half distilled vinegar and water and run it through the sprayer. Does a great job.
5. Since we all handle mixtures, compost, manures, etc., it would be a good time to check with your doctor to see when you had your last tetanus booster shot. It's recommended at least every ten years, but some rose people feel a shorter shot cycle of five years is safer. Get your doctor's opinion, and get it updated if it's needed.
6. Sharpen and oil shears; maybe get a new pruning saw.
7. Keep the chickweed (and other junk!) pulled out of established beds. It grows and seeds like crazy in cool weather and seeds now are future weeds multiplied to the nth power. Chickweed is edible; it is a shame it is not palatable.
8. Have soil tested for pH level in lawn and raised beds.
9. Paint tool handles a bright color so they are not easily lost. Condition wooden handles with mineral oil.

Herb of the Year: PARSLEY

HERB OF THE MONTH: PARSLEY



Parsley is native to the Mediterranean region of Southern Europe and Western Asia. According to Greek legend parsley sprang from the blood shed by the fallen hero Archemorus when he was eaten by serpents, ancient Greeks held the plant sacred, never placed it on their tables. However they used parsley to decorate tombs and made parsley wreaths to bestow on winners at the Isthmian Games. Parsley was used in the Hebrew celebration of Passover.

The most popular varieties in the United States are the curly-leaf *Petroselinum Crispum* and the flat-leaf *Petroselinum Neapolitanum* or Italian parsley (pictured). Both are in the *Apiaceae* (formerly *Umbelliferae*) family. Both are also biennial plants that bloom and go to seed during the second year.

Parsley name comes from the Greek word *petrose*, meaning rock from its habit of growing on rocky hillsides in Greece. Parsley likes good soil, moderate water a little shade and room to grow. It will grow about 8 inches wide by about 12 inches high (when going to seed, up to three feet), will make an edible addition to garden beds and borders. Parsley make a great companion for roses and tomatoes

Treat parsley as an annual as leaves are the best during the first year, second year will add seeds. Seeds are not easy to start and many people have greater success with small starter plants, it does well in containers, plant now through Spring for a supply for both you and the Monarch butterflies. [N.B. Our parsley went to seed and was abundantly prolific in germinating, seeds available to anyone who wants some]

Romans did not commonly eat parsley they grow it as borders to feed their chariot horses. The practice of parsley as a garnish can be traced to the ancient Romans. The Romans did use parsley to cure the morning after-the-banquet feeling. Romans introduced the herb to England during their rule. Early immigrants introduced it as a culinary herb to the Americas.

Cultivated for more than 2,000 years, it was used medicinally before being consumed as food; since ancient times has been used for digestive disorders, bronchitis, toothaches and more. Modern research has confirmed it is a “Chemoprotective” food rich in antioxidant nutrients.

It is uncertain when parsley began to be consumed as an edible herb, seems sometime in the Middle Ages in Europe. Some historians credit Charlemagne growing it on his estates.

During Medieval times, it was placed on tables and worn around necks of those at the feast, was thought to absorb food odors. Modern use of the herb as a garnish arises from the old belief that at the end of the meal chewing a few leaves freshens the breath; it was even thought it would make the odor of garlic disappear.

Culinary uses are almost endless, in French and Italian dishes, stews, sauces, salads, sandwiches, potatoes, grilled meats, poultry, fish, soups, herbal butters, vinegars, and more. Try the “Mixed Grill” with Parsley oil, on the next page.

MUSHROOMS AND VITAMIN D, PART 2

A question occurred to me: mushrooms are generally grown in the dark, so why are they a good source of vitamin D? Our skin naturally makes vitamin D for us if we are exposed to sunlight. We can also get vitamin D in milk and other fortified foods, or take a supplement. So, what is with mushrooms? An article in *Signs* magazine, published by Seventh Day Adventists, said “a 100-gram serving of mushrooms left in the sun for an hour will provide your daily dietary vitamin-D needs.”

I searched a little further. An August 16, 2012 Huffington Post by mycologist Paul Stamets stated “Did you know that tasty mushrooms are one source for vitamin D, and that you can naturally multiply their levels by exposing them to sunlight?” He goes on to say that you can make your own supply of Vitamin D-enriched mushrooms by exposing them to sunlight. You can sun dry shiitake, maitake, button or other species of mushroom. Vitamin D levels generated will last for more than a year. Even sliced or dried mushrooms, -including wild ones picked the year before- will soar in Vitamin D when placed outdoors under the sun.



The FDA recommended Daily Value (DV) dose is 400 IU for adults over 50 years in age. Please consult your physician before taking any large doses (40 IU is equal to 1 microgram). New recommendations from the Institute of Medicine, a branch of the National Academy of Sciences, increase the dosage to 600 IU per day for people up to age 70, and 800 IU for those over 70.

Paul’s article was very interesting. I wrote him asking how he tested for vitamin D. Will let you know in the next Yerba.

“MIXED GRILL” WITH PARSLEY OIL

Serves 4 generously

Parsley oil
¾ cup parsley (leaves and soft stalks)
1/3 cup olive oil
2 garlic cloves crushed
1 ½ tablespoons lemon juice
Salt and black pepper
1 medium zucchini
1 kohlrabi
1 small eggplant (or ½ medium)
4 1.2 oz Manouri or anari cheese
3-4 tablespoon olive oil

To make the parsley oil: Blitz the parsley in a food processor with the oil, garlic, lemon juice and some salt and pepper. You will get a bright green, runny sauce. Set aside.

Place a heavy ridged griddle pan on a high heat and leave it until very hot. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Cut the zucchini on a slight angle in to 3/8-inch-thick slices. Peel the kohlrabi with a sharp knife; cut lengthwise in half, then into 3/8-inch slices. Slice the eggplant ¼ inch thick. Slice the cheese ¼ inch thick. Keeping all the ingredients separate, toss them in a little bit of olive oil (the eggplant will need much more oil as it readily soaks it up) and sprinkle with salt.

Char-grill the vegetables and cheese, in batches, until just tender and with nice char marks on both sides- they will take between 1 minute (the zucchini) and 6 minutes (the eggplant) Use tongs and a spatula to turn them When done remove them to a mixing bowl, keeping the cheese separate. Transfer the eggplant to the hot oven to finish cooking through, 5 to 10 minutes more.

Pour the parsley oil over the hot vegetables and stir gently, then let them cool down completely or until warm.

Before serving, taste and adjust the seasoning. Spread vegetables and the cheese on a platter to serve.

From *Plenty*, by Yotam Ottolenghi

ANGELICA IS BAAACK



When we planted the two angelica plants in early spring, Tinky told us that you could candy angelica and make it a garnish on cakes. (see next page for info and recipe) We were a little dubious as it was a fairly small plant. It grew larger toward summer, the when it got really hot, it shriveled and died.... We thought. She told us to leave it alone. Sure enough, November came and up came a small plant. By Christmas it was huge.



This year, again, we did not even remember where the second angelica was, but December 28, the Botanical Gardeners had cut back the gingers and there, in place of honor was a huge angelica. It always astonishes me that it is so spectacular when most everything is sagging from cold weather.

We have news signs on some of the plants. They look very professional. Thank you to the Gardens.



We noted that the dill, growing much fuller and a beautiful green, still has parts that were damaged by the caterpillars. When you pick the leaves of most herbs, they bounce back and grow more leaves. Apparently, dill does not. The golden fennel, growing next to the dill, was not touched by the caterpillars. It looked like the dill when we planted it, and we thought they were all dill plants. Now that it has matured, it has turned a deep golden brown color and is larger than dill.

Thanks to Gloria, Cindy and Marsha for combined 10 hours of work!

We have discovered La Panadaria on Broadway. What a grand selection of pan dulce and pasteries, as well as good sandwiches.

Gloria calls it weed and Glow. I think that works, too.

**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 January We will meet early to spread out volunteers beginning at 8 a.m. Late risers and stragglers are welcome

Contact robinmaymar@gmail.com for simple safety measures we need to take . See you then. Monday January 25

ANGELICA Candied angelica, if you've ever heard of it at all, evokes thoughts of Ye Olde England or Louis the Sun King's France. Garden angelica, *Angelica archangelica*, is native to Europe and is plant most often candied. But many North American wild angelicas can also be used, although, it should be noted, not many that live in California, which can be quite bitter. Angelica's cousin lovage, *Levisticum officianale*, is equally good candied.

First, you need to know what candied angelica is. It is a very old form of candy. Flavor and structure comes from the herb stems, sweetness from cane sugar. The stems are blanched, then soaked in heavy syrup, boiled in that syrup, soaked again — several times — until they turn translucent. You then dry the stems a bit and roll them in caster sugar.

Do this and they will keep in a cool, dry place for, well... I had some two years and they were just beginning to show signs of age.

What on earth do you do with these lovely, hollow sticks? If your first thought was, "use them as a straw," you'd be right. A straw for a soda, or maybe a bloody Mary. Or to stir something that has gin in it — angelica is one of the most important herbs that make up gin. And yes, gin is more than just juniper. I like to slice the stems into little hollow coins and use them to decorate ice cream or some other dessert.

What is this flavor? Well, angelica and lovage are different, but equally excellent. Angelica has a bit of an anise thing going on, but it's no fennel (whose stems you can also candy, incidentally). Angelica is more floral, a little bitter, and a bit carrot-y. Lovage is like parsley, celery and something sweet all wrapped together. Angelica, lovage, parsley, celery and fennel are all related to carrots in the family Apiaceae.

So is, you should know, hemlock. Both common and water hemlock are in this family, as is giant hogweed, the juice of which can give you serious burns if it gets on you in the sunlight. This, combined with the fact that many of the 60+ species of angelica, not to mention the various levisticum plants, range from the delicious *A. sylvestris* to the appalling *A. breweri*, leads me to suggest that if you want to make your own candied angelica, stick with the kind you can grow in your garden.

Seeds of garden angelica, *A. archangelica*, can sometimes be found in garden stores, but I buy my angelica seeds on line. Lovage is a bit easier to find in garden stores, and I've even found it in the Sacramento Farmer's Market under the highway on Sundays. If you're looking for *A. sylvestris* to play with, you'll need to be in eastern Canada, Minnesota, Wisconsin or Maine. My friend **Alan Ber-go** has written a bit about using this species in the kitchen.

Here's how you make candied angelica. You'll need stems. As many as you think you'll use in a year or so. Stout stems are best, as you'll be peeling them. Mostly this will be on second-year plants (most members of this family are biennial), but I've harvested first-year stems, too. A pound is a good starting point.

Cut them to even lengths. Any length is fine, but you will be storing these in jars, so keep that in mind.

Boil in water, peel the outer layer off, then dunk in syrup. Leave this overnight. Next day, boil the syrup, then the stems in the syrup for a minute or so, then let it rest again. Do this at least three times total, and four isn't too much. The point is you want to thoroughly saturate the stems with syrup.

When you're ready, take them out of the boiling syrup and let them cool and dry a bit on racks.

After this, you roll the stems in granulated or caster sugar and you're done. Store your candied angelica in a Mason jar, ideally with one of those moisture-sucking silica pouches. I keep mine tucked in the back of the fridge, but you can store these in a cool room like a basement. And yes, you can put them on the shelf in the pantry, but they won't last as long.

MISTLETOE VS BALL MOSS, NOW THAT THE TREES ARE BARE

Ball moss commonly grows as an epiphyte (non-parasitic plant living on other plants), similar to many other bromeliads as well as orchids, ferns, and lichens. In our area, ball moss especially favors the shady habitat of the lower and interior limbs of live oaks. Ball moss anchors its pseudo-roots into the bark but derives no nutrients from the tree. It lives by absorbing water and nutrients from the atmosphere. If it were a parasite, ball moss would not be able to grow on the power lines at the intersection of Hildebrand at 37. It is a good plant in that it fixes nitrogen from the atmosphere and eventually adds it to the soil. For another thing, clumps of ball moss harbor little bugs which are food for several kinds of small birds. Larger clumps of ball moss can act as shelter to newly fledged birds. (from Bill Ward Native Plant Society of Texas) Wiry roots called "hold fasts" attach firmly to a host but do not leech nutrients. Ball moss does not threaten oak trees, but if the appearance bothers you, control it by treating now with Kacide fungicide (baking soda is also effective). Follow label instructions.



Mistletoe is a leathery-leaved parasitic plant which grows on apple, oak, and other broadleaf trees and bears white glutinous berries in winter. In winter, when all the trees are bare and many plants have died away, mistletoe stays green and you can still see it growing around tree branches quite happily. Unlike a fungus that is flowerless and produces spores, mistletoe bears true flowers and seeds. After birds digest the berries, they excrete the seeds, which are coated with a sticky substance that adheres them to trees. Rootlike structures called haustoria penetrate the tree bark and begin growing inside the branches. To kill mistletoe growth permanently, cut back the leaves and stems to the wood and then wrap the area with wide black polyethylene to block light and prevent it from re-sprouting. Remove, by hand, the mistletoe on mesquites and other shade trees in the landscape if you want to reduce stress on the tree and encourage long life.



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	5029 FM 2504, Poteet, Texas davidsgardenseeds@outlook.com
	Website: https://www.davids-garden-seeds-and-products.com/

David's has moved.

Make a note of the new address and e-mail.

Website is a good place to go for spring seeds.

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