

NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY NOVEMBER 2021

Sam the Fungi (Fun Guy) will be our speaker this month. Sam knows all about the fungal layer of the biome. He has a marvelous presentation for us. Want to know how to amend your soil with fungi to improve your home herb garden? Want to know more about slime mold? Curious about those brackets on the oak? Ever heard of a Lion's Mane? He has the answers. We do know that this is not exactly herbal, but mushrooms go so well with herbs, we just could not resist.



We know you will enjoy this speaker. See you then.

SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY

2ND THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH AT THE GARDEN CENTER 3310 N. NEW BRAUNFELS 78209 SET UP 6 PM SOCIAL TIME 6:30 MEETING AT 7 MEETINGS ARE FREE AND TO THE PUBLIC

Thursday November 11, 2021

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30th Annual Herb Market Celebrating ParsleyHerb of the Year 2021

October 16 brought us the best weather for an outside event ever. The Pearl was busy, as usual. Everyone brought a dog, as usual. There were lots of small children in strollers as well.

We visited and sold our goods.

This event, for us at least, is sort of a zero sum game, as we take home as many herbs and wonderful finds as we have brought to sell. Someone should teach us how to be merchants, and not just happy neighbors!







We were intrigued with this concept: chalk board signage. The Current Herb Market T-shirt celebrates 30 years. Printed on the t-shirt were herbs of the last five years rather than just parsley. Former year t's were also available at a discounted price. Each has the picture of the Herb of the Year. Next year is Viola, which includes a lot of different violets. The Herb Markets employs an artist creates the t-shirt logo with very distinctive style; it adds charm and collectability to the project.

We wonder why they wait until October to put out ther shirts. We always get comments when we wear them. Why not advertise nine months, instead of three? Maybe the Herb Society could take a lead here. We are picturing bunches of violets and johnny-jumpups on a soft violet colored tee. Maybe a bandanna to accompany the shirt?

CAPERS A CULINARY RIVAL

There... dangling from a crook or cranny against the dry barren landscape, a green bush like a breath of fresh air emerges coyly seeking the sun's rays. This green bush and its buds is just one of Greece's many culinary wonders: ladies and gentlemen, meet the **foodie's delight**, the tiny but magnificent Greek caper: her name **kapari**. (see photo next page)

You're bound to come across this tiny treat during a walk along the ancient footpaths of the Cyclades islands but also in the low lands of the Peloponnese.

This resilient bush bears a bud that offers the sharpest burst of taste you will come across. Its fleshy leaves, once soaked in vinegar and sea salt, create one of the finest **pickled delicacies**, while its petite fruit – sweeter and a tad bigger – gives salads and sauces that **extra tang**.

Botanists know it as "**Capparis spinosa**", but for us Greeks it's simply "**kapari**". And yes, it may be small to the eye, but when added to salads and sauces, the effect is grand.

Kapari: A Resilient Bush, its Bud & Leaves

This inconspicuous plant needs little water and no care, growing almost anywhere along walls, under rocks or stones, withstanding humidity and veiled from the winds.

Every part of the caper bush is edible: the leaves, the buds and the fruit. And though there are some 250 types of caper bush in the world, including in such far off places as India, Afghanistan, and in the southwestern Mediterranean, the caper native to Greece is the **only variety that grows wild** and is **not a product of specialized culture**, contrary to capers shipped in from other Mediterranean countries (Turkey, Italy, France, Spain, Morocco), which are cultivated.

The **finest capers in Greece** come from the Cycladic islands of **Syros, Tinos, Sikinos and Folegand-ros**. As for the **leaves**, unrivaled are those from the **Peloponnese**. The round crispy buds have a sharp, tart taste that brings the Mediterranean to any dish. While the fruit, known as the **caper berry**, is larger and sweeter, much like a small olive.

The minute **green buds** are **handpicked** very early in the morning just before they blossom at the start of summer, between May and June. The leaves may be picked later, followed by the fruit once they grow.

Kapari is never consumed raw as it is bitter.

The process of making it edible however is easy. After collecting the buds, we let them dry out in the sun for several days before placing them in a jar with **sea salt, water and vinegar.** This **pickling** process releases capric acid, which transforms the caper into a **tiny, piquant powerhouse**.

The kapari from the island of **Tinos** is by far the finest I have tasted: **perfectly plump, dense, juicy and tangy**. If you visit make sure to buy some and take home with you.

BY WILLIAM VARNEY



Wild Greek capers, the Parthenon and more Greek hers, our speaker Bill Varney with some wonderful Mediterranean light.





Herb of the Month: Mexican Mint Marigold

Contributed by member Rudi Harst (Mexican tarragon, Spanish tarragon, Texas tarragon, cloud plant, coronilla) Botanical name: Tagetes lucida

I've had a healthy stand of this attractive, tasty and easy-to-care-for perennial growing in my herb garden for over ten years, so I'm a big fan of Mexican Mint Marigold (MMM). This plant has a pleasant, licorice taste, quite similar to tarragon, but it lands a little milder and sweeter on the tongue. It can be used in any recipe that calls for tarragon, but I particularly enjoy using it to make a tasty, soothing hot tea that needs no additional sweetening (following page)

This hardy, deer-resistant herb is native to Central and South America, but it thrives in most of the Southwest. It grows in clumps that freeze back in winter, but after I give them an early spring pruning to a height of about two inches, they always grow back readily in spring -even after last winter's Snowmaggedon. MMM grows

best in well-drained soil and can take full sun; the long green



stems bear attractive, golden yellow flowers which resemble marigolds (hence their name), though they are not related. Mine starts blooming in October, and keeps blooming through Thanksgiving, though the greenery remains attractive and tasty until the first hard freeze.

MMM grows in clumps that are 1-2 feet tall and approximately 18" wide; they spread freely, but not aggressively. I've maintained the size of my stand of MMM at about 2 feet by 2 feet with little trouble. I don't remember exactly where or when I bought the original plant in a 4" pot at a plant sale, but I do remember that it only required frequent watering for the first few weeks after I transplanted it to my garden; after that, once a week has been plenty, even in August. If you haven't done so yet, consider adding this beautiful, tasteful and healthful herb to your garden.



RECIPE

It is said that in pre-Columbian times, the Aztecs administered a powdered form of this plant to some of their sacrificial victims as an anesthetic or hallucinogen. I don't know anything further about that, but...I do know that it makes a delicious mug of hot tea guaranteed to soothe the senses on a cool autumn/winter day. It is particularly good for soothing an upset stomach or a scratchy throat but be aware that it is also a diuretic.

For each mug of tea you wish to make, start with one, long, freshly-picked stem full of leaves (with or without flowers) briefly rinsed and patted dry. Strip the leaves and flowers off the stem,

gently crush them in the palm of your hand to release the fragrance and essential oils and place them in the bottom of the mug. Fill the mug with hot water that's been boiled, then allowed to sit off the heat for about a minute (approx. 200 degrees F.), cover the mug and allow to steep for 5 minutes, then strain and enjoy. No sweetener needed!



Meeting Minutes



AGENDA GENERAL MEETING October 14, 2021

We met at 7 pm in the Garden Center. Robin Maymar, president, called the meeting to order.Bill Varney- Meeting Notes

What a treat we had in store when Bill Varney came to tell us about Greek herbs. Freshly back from weeks of travel, he spoke to us just a day after landing in San Antonio.

"When walking through the beautiful countryside e of Greece, it's difficult not to crush the wild carpet of herb underfoot; they grow so profusely, giving the air an aura unique to Greece." He brought word of twelve Greek herbs that grow and have grown for centuries in Greece.

Oregano (*Rigani*). Oregano is maybe the most commonly used herb in Greek Cuisine; in soups, stews, with meat and fish

and of course, no Greek "Horiatiki" salad worth its salt, is without oregano.

Marjoram (Mantsourano) Marjoram is a close relative of oregano, with a slightly more delicate flavor but with similar uses, in soups, stews meat and fish and

sprinkled on salads.

Dill (Anithos) Dill is used in fresh green salads and in spanokopita, (spinach pie), its main use in ancient times though, was medicinal. It was popular as a wound healer and for burns and was said to promote sleep if placed over the eyes before going to bed.

Fennel (*Maratho*) Fennel is similar to dill in looks but the taste is very different, with a distinct anise flavor.

Mint (Menta) A Greek myth has mint being named after Minthe, a water nymph, who drew the attention of Hades, God of the Underworld when Persephone, his wife, learnt of this, she turned Minthe into a herb.

Rosemary (*Dendrolivano*) The Latin word for rosemary, *rosmarinus*, means "Dew of the sea" as it is said the plant emerged, alongside Aphrodite (Venus) when she rose up from the sea.

Sideritis, (Greek Mountain tea) The name is derived from the word iron (Sideron) and in ancient time was used to heal wounds caused by iron weapons, such as arrows and swords.

Sage (Latin Salvia) (Faskomilo) Ancient Greeks believed Sage warded off death and brought about immortality, or, a long and healthy life. Greek physicians praised it so much, that it inspired the Romans to name it salvia, meaning; saving lives.

Chamomile In Greek, the word chamomile means apple of the ground, so called for its fresh apple scent and its low -growing nature.

Thyme Thyme, in Ancient Greece, was as a source of courage and was used as incense and infusions for bathing and to flavor liqueurs and cheese. Placed beneath a pillow, in sachets, it was said to aid sleep and ward off nightmares.

Parsley (*Maidanos*) Ancient Greeks associated parsley with death, it was supposed to have sprung from the blood of Archemorous, whose name meant, forerunner of death.



It was never used in Ancient Greek cuisine.

Basil (Bassilikos) Last but not least, basil, king of herbs. The word comes from the Greek, basileus, meaning king and is said to have first grown on the original cross of Christ. Even though it represented hatred to the ancient Greeks, they placed it in the hands of the dead to ensure them a safe journey to the afterlife and to make sure the gates of heaven opened for them. Another practice was to hang basil on a door, or by an entrance, to bring good luck and wealth. Only in the last century has basil become popular in Greek cuisine.

Culinary Contributions

LEMON CRINKLES

These are simple and so so yummy!

Yield: 2-3 dozen Prep Time: 20 min Cook Time: 10 min Total Time: 30 min

INGREDIENTS:

½ cups Butter, Softened

1 cup Granulated Sugar

½ teaspoons Vanilla Extract

1 whole Egg

1 teaspoon Lemon Zest

1 Tablespoon Fresh Lemon Juice

1/4 teaspoons Salt

1/4 teaspoons Baking Powder

1/8 teaspoons Baking Soda

1-1/2 cup All-purpose Flour

½ cups Powdered Sugar

DIRECTIONS:



It's almost time for Lemon Crinkles

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease light colored baking sheets with non stick cooking spray and set aside.

In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Whip in vanilla, egg, lemon zest and juice. Scrape sides and mix again. Stir in all dry ingredients slowly until just combined, excluding the powdered sugar. Scrape sides of bowl and mix again briefly. Pour powdered sugar onto a large plate. Roll a heaping teaspoon of dough into a ball and roll in powdered sugar. Place on baking sheet and repeat with remaining dough.

Bake for 9-11 minutes or until bottoms begin to barely brown and cookies look matte {not melty or shiny}. Remove from oven and cookies about 3 minutes before transferring to cooling rack.

*If using a non stick darker baking tray, reduce baking time by about 2 minutes.

From the internet, via my niece Karin's Facebook page: Lauren's Latest original recipe! You saw it here first, folks!!

WEED AND GLOAT:

WEED AND GLOAT: WHAT'S BLOOMING?

This month is the time we have been talking about all summer. Time to quit racing around doing garden tasks. Sit down in the sun. Kick back Relax. Enjoy the garden

These are our pictures, not those gathered off the internet. You may have wondered because sometimes the framing is not so professional looking. However, we do have some spectacularly good photographers. (memo: credit photographers in future) Let's have Laura share what's blooming:. Her yard is almost all shade, so take notice for planting for next year.



Cape honeysuckle



Bronze fennel and?



Pink bourgainvillea in a hanging basket



Texas rock rose



Catlin's Giant Aju-



Fall asters and green



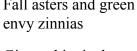
Tiny flowers on heart leaf ice plants



Jack beans



Cardinal Basil, featured last month, and still blooming with enormous purply mauve blooms



Giant white inch plants- propagated. Not blooming but sometimes the garden needs some colorful green and white



WEED AND GLOAT Come weed with us at the **Botanical Gardens!**

Feel welcome to come to join us this month in the sunshine.

Next Weed and Gloat is scheduled for Monday, November 29 We meet at 9 A.M. Contact robinmaymar@gmail.com for simple safety measures we need to take . See you then.



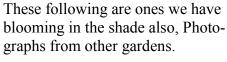
Roselle fruit to make hibiscus tea or Jamaica



Red or yellow or orange crown of thorns



Geranium





Asters at Botanical Gardens



Mexican mint marigold, brilliant yellow and fragrance to fill the room



Hardy yellow hibiscus happily growing in the shade.



Frostflower a native pollinator for fall



Toothache plant– annual in our area.



Give the lemongrass a 'haircut'. It will grow back. The grass can be used in cooking or for tea.



Four O'Clocks

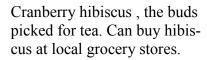


Chamomile

The rest are not our pictures, but represent plants we have growing with flowers blooming at this time.







Orange Flame Justicia (Golden Crown Jacobina, Yellow Crowned Justicia) Tropical shade, flowers throughout the year, root hardy in cooler areas,













Caladiums for contrast

Also For Fragrances and Flavors

Mints of all varieties. Keep cultivars separated so their distinctive fragrances and flavors do not get muddled together.

Blue porter weed This plant likes to show off, brilliant blue color. Reseeds itself, given the opportunity.

The band Mr. Varney could not remember is

STRAIGHT NO CHASERS

PERFORMING NOV. 20 AT THE MAJESTIC

Memo: You can go to the Majestic Box Office on 224 E. Houston Street to purchase tickets. Someone we know does not navigate well on the internet and discovered this hidden gem. Call for hours they are open: (210) 226-3333 There is a pull-in space so someone can drop you off at the door without blocking traffic.



LET'S NOT PANIC

I was all worried about the news that the Garden Center parking would be subsumed by the Botanical Garden's new events calendar. It may be, but the main targets are Saturdays when weddings are in full swing. We feel sorry for brides that have waited for the Covid-19 pandemic to settle down, and are now being told they can use the venue, but parking will be first-come-first-serve and very limited.

It all comes down to money. The Bot is in growth mode. New leadership. Sharper and sharper pencils in the hands of the accountants. Sell, sell, sell is their motto. We need to pack the Gardens every day of the week. Hurry, hurry, come one, come all. Three thousand allowed in every night until Christmas. Then next year we have a model to follow.

I can hardly blame them for merchandizing the daylights out of the Gardens. They are a gem in the crown of the city. Visitors from all over the world come to see our magnificent expanse. I just hope that this does not become a cautionary tale.

We look at Brackenridge Park which seems to be over-peopled. There is no wild space left. All underbrush has been removed. There are dirt paths instead of grass many places. People are crowded into spaces. It feels overused. We are pleased that the city has had the foresight to provide lots and lots and lots of other places to walk, run, bike, picnic and enjoy nature. We just hope that the parking between the Garden Center and the Botanical Gardens is resolved and that the Botanical Gardens are not overpeopled and beaten to dusty paths in the desire to increase revenues.

On sort of the same topic, I think we need to wait to decide on having a Holiday Banquet in December. Lets make a plan to do it but let's see how the parking lot is filling each night. Rhonda is wonderful about keeping on top of things and communicates well. Perhaps we can begin the banquet earlier and carpool as much as possible. I really enjoy the get-together when it is a time to talk and share instead of having a formal meeting. It just puts a heavy burden back on me to arrange a speaker on short notice. If you have ideas I am open to them. Would like feed-back about the situation. We also have a budget set aside for the dinner. We need a few people to volunteer to committee the Holiday Dinner.

TO DO IN THE NOVEMBER 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:

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 reinfecting the plants. Look for HORN-WORMS 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

4TH WEEK Plant spinach transplants for a nutritious, attractive vegetable that can be harvested all winter.

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

FLOWERS Divide irises and day lilies now. Replant the rhizomes and bulbs in full sun in compost-enriched soil. Do I print this every month?

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. Make sure short-day bloomers (Poinsettia, Christmas Cactus and Kalanchoe) are not exposed to artificial light at night Plant dianthus,

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 in 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.

BIRDS Now is the time to put out the bird houses for spring. Birds need time to inspect and adjust to new houses.

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.

Sunflower seeds in your bird feeder will attract chickadees, nuthatches, cardinals, blue jays, house finch and gold finches (GOLD FINCHES should be arriving from their migration; time to set out their feeder out). Use the metal, weight-sensitive feeders to exclude squirrels and white-wing doves.

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 (wornout 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. Papayas are not cold hardy. Be prepared to harvest the fruit when temperatures below 36 degrees are forecast.

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. 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





San Antonio Herb Society Membership Application/ Renewal

January- December
If you joined after October first of any year, you are a member through December of the following year Print, complete and mail form with your check to:

San Antonio Herb Society P.O. Box 6406

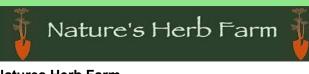
Name
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Please check one: New member Renewing member
Membership Category : ☐ Student (\$15) ☐ Single (\$35)
☐ Dual (45) ☐ Business (\$50)
How did you hear about the San Antonio Herb Society?
What programs would you like to see in the seming year? The many details the better
What programs would you like to see in the coming year? The more details the better.
 □ I would like to be a GREEN member, receive newsletter & other information vial ema
\Box I do not want my personal information to be shared on the SAHA membership list
I am interested in helping with:
☐ Banquet Committee ☐ Spring Banquet ☐ Winter Holiday Banquet
☐ Hospitality Committee (decorate refreshment table, make tea, etc.)
Greeter/ Membership (a great way to meet people and welcome everyone)
☐ Chairperson for plant sales or other events. (help keep the lights on)
The booths at □ Spring □ Summer □ Plant □ Book Sales □ Herb Market in October
☐ Being a Board Member (please list your skills)
☐ Newsletter "The Yerba Buena": write articles; help coordinate regular features, etc.
☐ Speaking at one of our meetings- your topic(s)
☐ Maintaining the herb garden at San Antonio Botanical Garden (Weed & Gloat)
☐ Maintaining a SAHS sales table at monthly meetings
☐ Leading a Special Interest Group (SIG)- your interest area(s)
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