



# La Yerba Buena

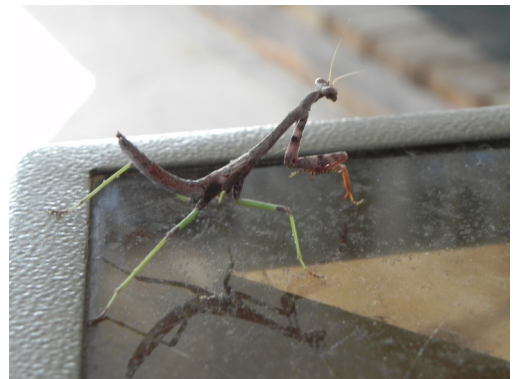
NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY  
 May 2022



Molly Keck is a dynamic speaker. This is your opportunity to really nail down all those insect pest questions we all have this time of year. Molly will speak to us about 15 bugs every vegetable gardener should know this spring. You may be surprised to know that they are not all bad bugs.

Molly is an Integrated Pest Management Program Specialist with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Bexar County, TX (San Antonio, TX). A graduate of Texas A&M University, Bachelor's and Master's degree in Entomology and Board Certified Entomologist and hobbyist bee-keeper.

Molly has been working for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service since 2005 and specializes in urban and structural entomology, providing pest management and identification programs to Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, the general public, school age students, and pest management professionals.



**SAN ANTONIO**  
**HERB SOCIETY**  
 Mark your calendar for  
 May 2022  
 Garden Center  
 6:30 Social 7p.m. Meeting  
 3310 N. New Braunfels  
 San Antonio, 79209

INSIDE THIS ISSUE	
FROM THE PREZ	7
WEED AND GLOAT	2
UPCOMING EVENTS	3
MEMBER RECIPES	4-6
IN THE MAY GARDEN	10
MEETING MINUTES	9
GARDEN HINTS	6,8,12

# WEED AND GLOAT



Weed and Gloat met on Friday April 29 due to postponement on Monday because of heavy rain. Nelle Knirshch had weeded a lot before the rain came Monday, so our task was considerably easier.

Mostly we had a huge growth of mint. We pulled it back considerably, allowing the rosemarys, garlic chives and various other plants area to grow.

Some of the poppies had gone to seed, so Marsha spent time cutting the pods off and weeding out the shriveled plants.

The bed opposite ours is Medicinal Herbs. A very large space has the corms of last year's ginger and turmeric. Today, spires that look like Dubai's Burj Khalifa building are shooting up, not from the corms but nearby. So, we peek under the Angelica, growing in the barrel, to find our own spire. We hope it is the return of the Shampoo Ginger which gives such fragrant flowers at the end of the summer.

A beautiful copper plate graces the center barrel, reminding us of Tinky Miranda, who gardened with us so many years. A visitor in a business suit asked us how one went about having a dedication made, but we did not know. Perhaps Grace could connect us to that person.

There were children and their teachers visiting all over the garden. What a thrill to hear the enthusiasm of all those young voices. We handed out pieces of mint to smell and take home.

Once we came to a stopping point and took a picture, we sat and visited. Nelle shared her tea recipe (p4), adventures in her new camping Casita. We discussed the types of lizards that inhabit out gardens: Texas fencepost swift, Texas spiny swift, Texas horned toads. Nobody had pictures... too swift. Then on to a tale of buick wren versus owl in the screened porch, and what doves are always in season for hunting, and which have very narrow seasons. There were many doves supervising our work this week, a curious robin and a pair of cardinals patrolling for bug on the top of the fence. Fridays are a good day to just come and sit on the bench and enjoy the garden.



Lenore "Tinky" Miranda  
Master Naturalist  
Wherever she goes  
humor, compassion,  
and a lust for life grows  
Remembering a genuinely  
special, funny, spirited,  
beautiful and nurturing person  
Honored by John Miranda



## **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, May 30  
We meet at 9 A.M.

Call Robin Maymar (830) 459-8415 .to let  
her know you are coming.  
See you then.



### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

**Basilfest May 21 will be held at the Pearl.**

This is in conjunction with the regular Farmers' Market which meets every Saturday. More details available during our May meeting. Herb Society will have a booth, will need volunteers. Sign up at May meeting.

### **June 4 Rainbow Gardens on Bandera "Society Weekend"**

We will have a booth. This is always a good opportunity to find new members who have not heard about us. We also can consult about herbs that Rainbow Gardens sell. They have a marvelous selec-

#### **Do Not Call Registry:**

On line [www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov)  
or call 1-888-382-1222

The registry is permanent. You can check and see when you were registered. You can add as many as three phone numbers to be registered.

There are instructions on who to call to report calls after you have registered. It takes 30 days for the registry to go into effect.

#### **RECYCLE:**

Free table at Herb Society meetings  
Batteries recycled at Garden Center

#### **KID FRIENDLY MEETINGS:**

June: compost Bingo  
July: Recycle in the Garden  
August: Herbs From Seeds and Transplants



you can help it; crumbling the dried flowers will release their flavor, so it's best if you crumble them right before you use them, rather than right before you store them!

Most herbs will last about a year in storage as long as they are in an airtight container and don't get wet.

Chamomile tea has a light, refreshing flavor, especially if you make it with homegrown chamomile! You need about 1 to 1.5 teaspoons of dried chamomile flowers per 8 oz cup of water, depending on how strong you want your tea. Chamomile is supposed to be a light flavor, so even though I normally like my tea quite strong, I err on the lesser side and use about 1 teaspoon per cup.

The secret to tea is, if you want your flavor stronger, use more dried flowers rather than leaving the flowers steeping for longer. Most herbal, green, and white teas will get bitter if you leave them steeping too long, so for a stronger flavor, add more dried tea but stick to the recommended brew time.

If you stored your flowers whole, feel free to crumble them slightly just before brewing them; it will help release more of the flavor stored in the flowers.

Measure the dried flowers into your tea strainer (*or tea bag, or tea ball, or whatever!*) Boil a full kettle of water. Once the water boils, pour the water into the teapot immediately. Green and white teas are delicate and the leaves will burn and become bitter if you steep them in water that's too hot. When making green or white tea, it's better to let the water cool for about a minute before adding it to the tea leaves. But herbal teas are quite hardy and can handle extremely hot water temperatures, so pour that boiling water in right away!

Let the tea steep for 5-7 minutes, then remove the flowers, pour the tea into a cup, and enjoy! Bonus: If you don't throw the flowers away immediately, you can brew a second pot of tea with the same flowers later! Most teas can be brewed more than once; follow the same directions, just steep the tea for half again as long when you make the second pot. I usually do 7 minutes for my first pot of chamomile tea and 10 minutes for my second. If you don't want to make a second pot right away, put the flowers in the fridge; they'll last in there for a day or two.

(Source: Practically Functional )

The San Antonio Herb Society does not advise, recommend or prescribe herbs for medicinal use; Information is provided as an educational service and the San Antonio Herb Society cannot be held liable for its content. Please consult a health care provider before pursuing any herbal treatments.

## Herb Society Board

**President**  
Robin Maymar  
robinmaymar@gmail.com

**1st Vice-President (Programs)** Position vacant

**Treasurer** Vacant

**Secretary** Volunteer at meeting

**Membership** Milan Maymar, protem

**Publicity** Vicki Jamvold

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

## SWEET POTATO CASSEROLE from Mike Belisle

2 cans (29 oz each) sugary sweet potatoes  
2 eggs  
½ cup milk  
1 ½ cup brown sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
1 teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon cinnamon  
¼ cup melted butter  
½ cup all-purpose flour  
1 cup pecans, chopped  
2 cups mini marshmallows  
½ coconut sweet cup shredded

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Grease 9 X 13 baking dish

Mash the sweet potatoes.

Add eggs, milk, brown sugar, vanilla, salt, cinnamon, flour and pecans.

Spread evenly in the baking dish.

Sprinkle the coconut and marshmallows over it.

Bake 30-35 minutes.

Let sit 10 minutes before serving.

Tasted great warm, great room temperature, and great reheated.



**. In the Garden says :** Plant zinnias, marigolds and cockscomb (celosia) seeds.

Nelle Knirsch offered some advice on seeding poppies, wildflowers and bluebonnets.

She scratches the ground up to prepare. She then uses about a quart of potting soil, maybe some sandy cactus potting soil added in. Mix in the seeds you want to sow. Then broadcast the mixture over the area. She may press the seeds into the soil with her foot, or firm them with her hands. Water very lightly, with a mister or very light water. That should do it unless it gets very dry, in which case, water a little.

Later in June she will go back and mulch around new plants, but for the time being, leave the soil to be exposed to the warmth of the day.

Poppy seeds are ripening in their characteristic cases which look like little pepper shakers. She recommends using a plain paper bag for collection and drying. Tape the inside flaps of the folds down with masking tape, because the tiny seeds can get into the folds. Shake seeds in and hang to dry. good idea to mark the bag as to contents and dates.

Marsha looked up the little tulle bags that are used at weddings for confetti. We use these for drying seeds. At the craft store they are called Favor Bags, in case you want to look on line for them.



Communication has been difficult this last month. This computer has been making bone-chilling buzzing noises, especially when interacting with pictures. The mouse has some kind of Parkinsons Disease and herky-jerkys the arrow all over the monitor screen.

I think there must be some virus going around, because last Sunday morning my faithless phone decided it would no longer deliver my email. The car caught it, too. The air conditioner made one last grinding noise and quit.

This virus probably started with our landline phone. It developed an annoying hum. The buzz gets louder when someone you love gives you a call, and even louder when it is a VERY IMPORTANT call. Yeah, that's probably where this all started. That phone has been giving me fits for months. Only calls that are crystal clear are the three times daily calls from Home Buyers, Inc. calls to try to buy my house, again. Even via India, where they call from, it is just as clear as a bell.



So, after we repair the car, and I can get to a computer store, I choose a new model. Yes, yes, they will transfer all my thirty carefully organized folders, writing, pictures, downloads. We bring in old computer to do all transfers, buy an expensive thumb drive... and wait. And wait some more. Eventually all is good, we go in and have a five second run through on how this shiny new system works.

I take it home, plug it in, add the remote mouse (now recovered from Parkinsons) and look at my documents. Low and behold, all, all, ALL of my documents are now in some new system of organization. As far as I can tell they are in alpha-numeric order by title. No Folders! No careful segregation of Herb Society from all the thousands of other things I write. NO PICTURES at all!

I am such a nerd. At the moment I have three separate computers. I love all the bells and whistles. I love it when I can sort photographs into multiple folders, putting duplicates where I can find them. The computer is probably the most organized system I use in my whole life.

It used to be when the computer crashed I would go around for days feeling like my best friend had died. It would take weeks to recover. I would mourn the loss for a great long while. Maybe it is be-

cause I have had so many crash or maybe because I am now a compulsive saver of my work or maybe it is just shell shock. I don't know. Anyway. I am sitting here looking at a completely messed up computer that I have very little clue as to how to repair and I think "Huh! How can I get the newsletter out this month?" and I go about trying other methods.

Meantime, it is Monday and we have rain and Weed and Gloat and I have a doctor's visit at 8:30. I arrive late for Weed and Gloat. Everyone is in their cars waiting for the rain to let up. Instead, it pours. We wait a while, check the WeatherBug, and decide to postpone. my brain nudges me to just go over to the garden, just one rainy picture... but I don't. We head out for coffee. Arriving at La Madeline, text message: Nelle Knirsch has been in the garden since nine, all by herself! Do I feel guilty! Text an invitation to join us, but she has already headed home.

I thumbdrive the Molly Keck information over to the Apple, make an entirely new flyer to be distributed starting with Weed and Gloat. I teach my Apple how to find my gmail account and send the flyer out. I return after a bit, to find that there is a typo AND nobody can read it. (Apples are a one-way street, they take in information, but refuse to share, reflects the personality of their left-handed inventor). By now I have old computer back, send repaired/reconstructed Flyer out. I get texts and calls: yes, people have the flyer and are now distributing!

So, I am back on the old computer. I literally wrote the first sentence of this rant and the computer froze. I had to reboot. So, I know I am writing on borrowed time, typing furiously. And backing up everything on thumbdrives.

But, as I said, communication has been tough.

### WEEDS: A Commonsense Approach - C. S. C. (Texas Gardener, May/ June 2003)

Think about it, even the lowly sandbur has a place in nature where it is useful in healing scarred and damaged land by preventing overgrazing by animals. But if you find it growing in your garden or lawn it is a nasty weed. My point is that a weed is not an inherently bad plant but simply a plant that is growing in the wrong place at the wrong time. Here are some simple rules to follow to help you keep weeds from driving you crazy:

- 1) Unwanted plants are more likely to sprout in areas where the soil has either been disturbed by plow or fire. Overworking the soil will create more opportunities for weeds to grow and more work for you.
- 2) Use organic mulches to prevent weed development in cultivated beds and gardens.
- 3) Attack weeds when they are young and small (and consequently easier to remove).
- 4) Avoid using herbicides, particularly products that contain *Atrazine*. *Atrazine* is a pre-emergent herbicide that can damage and kill trees and shrubs in the landscape. Some broadleaf herbicides can drift onto desirable plants, causing damage, even on calm days. Spend some money on a good hoe - it is the safest herbicide we know of and using it is great exercise.
- 5) Accept the fact that most gardens get a little weedy in July. Dr. Sam Cotner, former head of horticulture at Texas A&M, told me once that we ought to have a contest for the seediest garden in Texas and he was not joking. His point was that weeds get ahead of most folks towards the end of the season and we should wear them like a badge of honor, not shame.



# Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by president Robin Maymar.

Up-coming events were announced:

Basil Fest on May 21 at the Pearl. Volunteers will be needed, sign up sheet will be available at the next meeting. Make a note of the date.

June 4, Rainbow Gardens : “Society Day” . this will be both a sales and outreach for new members day. Plan to wear a hat, volunteer and do a little shopping. Rainbow Gardens on Bandera has lots of shady spots, but it will be warm.

Weed and Gloat will meet Monday May 30 at about 9:00a.m. (depends on the weather and the temperature). If you are interested in joining us in the Botanical Gardens, contact (830) 459-8415 and leave a text message.

We currently need a treasurer. We just need a second person on check signature. If anything happens to the first signer, there is nobody to carry on the business (small as it is) of the Herb Society. Tinky used to tell me that being the treasurer was easy. Now that I have handled the money for a while, it is truly very simple but maybe a little nerve wracking at times. Part of that stress is that we tend to want to do a perfect job and have a lovely spread sheet. At this point, that is probably not necessary. However, keeping track of the funds is. We still need help in this area. It was announced that we have funds in our account. There was a brief discussion about how to publicize our meetings. Volunteers agreed to distribute flyers about upcoming meetings.

Program: We had a three-part program in place of a single speaker. We did have a speaker volunteered, but because it was so last minute, we felt it was unfair for that person to have to make such hasty preparation. We have asked her to return at a better time for her in the summer. Partially because we are hoping to have youth orientated meetings in the summer, when family members could attend.

There was a brief tour of the Garden Center itself. Many people who attend our meetings do not know the history of the building or all the outreach programs that originate here.

We watched a video from Texas Parks and Wildlife about Seed Collecting. It was aimed at collecting rare and endangered plants and trees but the methods of collection demonstrated were useful to any collector.

We also distributed the A & M source sheet from Dr. Richter for science-based research. Many members have appreciated this information and have made good use of it. Copies are available at [robinmaymar@gmail.com](mailto:robinmaymar@gmail.com)

There was going to be a brief video presentation about growing bulbs twelve months of the year, but time and energy had run out.

Next Herb Society meeting will be June 9 Topic: Compost This meeting will be children friendly and have a creative component to it. Invite your children or their children, or even your neighbor’s children. High school and college age students are all welcome, too. The more people who know how to compost, the better.

After discussion and one more sweet potato casserole square we adjourned at 8:30.

## MAY IN THE GARDEN

*Failure is never fatal; success is never final*

**In Our Herb Garden:** Start harvesting herbs as many perennials bloom this month.

\*Herbs should be gathered in dry weather, first thing in the morning before their essential oils evaporate in the sun. Hang bunches of herbs upside down to dry so that the oils flow into the leaves. Once dry, store them in airtight containers away from sunlight and they should last for several months. (No, don't keep them, use them up!)

\*Plant lemon grass and continue to plant basil. \*Weed and water as necessary. \*Hot rainy spells are hard on herbs as they do not like humidity. Solutions are good drainage such as raised beds, good quality soil from a local source and mulch.

### VEGETABLE GARDEN

**First week:** Onions are ready to be harvested when the tops fall over. Place the bulbs on the ground for a day or two to harden off. Harvest onions and allow them to air dry for a couple of days before storing. Plant okra and southern peas.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Week:** Fertilize vegetables. Side dress tomatoes, carrots, beans, squash, okra, peppers and other vegetables with 1 cup of slow-release lawn fertilizer per 10 ft. of row.

Keep summer squash, peppers, tomatoes, green beans and other vegetables harvested to maximize production. For highest quality, harvest crookneck, zucchini and other summer squash when they are immature and tender. Protect vegetables such as squash, eggplant, okra and tomatoes from harsh direct sunlight to keep them from burning or wilting.

If you fertilize your tomato plants heavily with a nitrogen fertilizer at planting time, you will likely get very large plants but few tomatoes. Instead, wait until your plants have produced small tomatoes (about the size of a large marble) and then apply a handful or so of fertilizer to each plant every week during the growing season. You may not have 10-foot-tall plants but you should have buckets of vine-ripened fruit to enjoy and share with friends and neighbors.

### PESTS & DISEASE

If GRASSHOPPERS are ravaging your gardens, use a general-purpose insecticide, sweeping downward from top to bottom of plants.

Look for POWDERY MILDEW on crape myrtles, euonymus, zinnias and other plants. Use Safer Garden Fungicide, Neem oil, or Immunex, Triforine (formerly Funginex) or Fung Away to control. Read label carefully before applying.

Look for EARLY BLIGHT causing large yellow blotches on bottom sets of leaves of tomatoes, use Neem oil or a general purpose fungicide such as Triforine (formerly Funginex) or Daconil.

Watch out for NUTSEDGE or nut grass, use Image or Manage. Or dig deeply to remove whole plant.

### FLOWERS

Seed Plant zinnias, marigolds and cockscomb (celosia). Plant summer everlastings such as globe amaranth, sweet Annie (hard to grow here), cockscomb, salvias, tansy. Add color to your landscape with zinnia, lantana, firebush, sporrans and VIP petunias planted in full sun. Plant caladiums, coleus, begonias and firespike in the shade.

Fertilize container plants every week or two with liquid fertilizer. Fertilize established potted hibiscus (every 4 to 6 weeks with a granular hibiscus food) and bougainvillea (every 2 weeks with a water-soluble fertilizer) on your patio. Mallow hibiscus, firebush, lantanas and other heat-loving plants have begun to grow. Give them an application of fertilizer at a rate of 1 cup per 100 sq.ft. Do not let Amaryllis or Daylilies form fruits. Cut them off! Seed production takes away food from future flowering. \*

Harvest columbine seeds now. Place stalks in paper bag to collect seeds. PICTURE

Divide and transplant plumbago, sultana and pentas.

Remove faded petunia flowers to prevent seed set or cut back half-way to encourage a fresh crop of flowers.

If you want to encourage BUTTERFLIES in your garden, do not use insecticides, especially products with Bt (which will kill the larvae (caterpillars)).

**3<sup>rd</sup> WEEK:** Plant lantana, zinnias, vinca, gomphrena, salvia, moss rose, purslane, firebush and verbena for color in full sun. Columbine seeds are mature. Plant them in containers in potting soil now and they will be ready to transplant in fall.

**4<sup>th</sup> week** Plant esperanza and blue salvias, both are water-wise summer bloomers.

Use scissors to thin out flowers you're growing from seed. Thinning will improve the quality of the flowers and cutting scissors will not disturb roots.

If you like glow-in-the-dark orange blooms during the hottest part of summer, plant Poinciana (Pride of Barbados) now. It is a root-hardy shrub that grows in full sun.

If the weather has cooperated, we should have an abundance of LADYBUGS. Avoid use of pesticides and let the ladybugs do their work. Their larvae can eat as many as 400 aphids a day. You can buy ladybugs at nurseries and release them yourself.

**BIRDS** Goldfinches have migrated up north. Even when the American goldfinches leave, you can attract lesser goldfinches, house finches and an occasional painted or indigo bunting to the niger thistle feeder. Watch feeders, take them down if not in use. As outside temperatures increase, it is important to rinse and refill hummingbird feeders twice a week or more. Pour the old sugar water on a rock or in a bowl with a sponge for the butterflies (they like the fermented drink, that's why they fly like they do!)

## YARD

If your lawn or plants are turning yellow, apply a chelated iron supplement to the soil (results are slower, but longer lasting, using a "granular" form of iron or as a foliar spray to correct iron deficiency, which causes CHLOROSIS (the yellowing). Fertilize your lawn with a slow-release lawn fertilizer.

Trim perennials of dead wood from last year. Prune suckers from crape myrtles and citrus.

**Peach trees:** Cull the fruit when it is the size of a marble. Rule of thumb is : 1 or 2 fruit per fruiting stem, 6 inches apart. You'll get larger, better fruit. One fruit for every 24 leaves (a good project for kids to do) Keep peach trees well-watered as long as there is fruit on the tree. Pick when the green background on the fruit changes to yellow

Raise mower blades to summer mowing height (2 ½" to 3" for St. Augustine, 1" to 1 ½" for Bermuda). Leave clippings on lawn; they nourish the grass. (\* If lawn is infested with annual and perennial weeds, keep weeds from flowering but gradually raise mower height over a couple of weeks.)

## Organic Rose Program - by John Howard Garrett

Roses should only be grown organically since they are one of the best medicinal and culinary herbs in the world. When they are loaded with toxic pesticides and other chemicals, that use is gone, or at least should be. Drinking rose hip tea or using rose petals in teas or salads after spraying with synthetic poisons is a really bad idea. For best results with roses, here's the program:



**Selection:** Buy and plant adapted roses such as antiques, David Austin's and well-proven hybrids. The old roses will have the largest and most vitamin C filled hips.

**Planting:** Prepare beds (1,000 sq.ft.) by mixing the following into existing soil to form a raised bed: 6" compost,  $\frac{1}{2}$ " lava sand;  $\frac{1}{2}$ " expanded shale,  $\frac{1}{2}$ " of decomposed granite, 20lbs. of alfalfa meal, 20lbs. cottonseed meal, 30lbs. of wheat bran/cornmeal/molasses soil amendment, 20lbs. of sul-po-mag. Soak the bare roots or rootball in water with 1 tbsp. of Garrett Juice (or seaweed) per gallon. Settle soil around plants with water - no tamping.

**Mulching:** After planting, cover all the soil in the beds with 1" of compost or earthworm castings followed by 2 - 3" of shredded native cedar. Do not pile the mulch up on the stems of the roses.



**Watering:** If possible, save and use rain-water. If not, add 1 tbsp. of natural apple cider vinegar per gallon of water. If all that fails, just use tap water but don't over water. Avoid salty well water.

**Pest Control Program:** Add the following to Garrett Juice (visit his web site to get his recipe or pick it up at a local nursery) and spray as needed.

Garlic tea or mild vinegar- 1/4cup/gal. or label directions for minor insect or disease infestations.

Potassium bicarbonate - 1 rounded tbsp. / gal. for minor diseases.

Liquid biostimulants - Use per label - Medi-

na Soil Activator, or similar product. Neem or plant oil products - Use per label directions for more serious insect and disease infestations. For thrips, apply beneficial nematodes to the soil in early spring (*Spinosa* is listed as a treatment).

Fish emulsion - 2oz. /gal. for additional nutrients (may not be needed when using compost tea)

**Spray Schedule:** 1st spraying at pink bud in the spring. 1st two sprayings should include Garrett Juice and garlic tea (additional sprayings as necessary). For best results spray every two weeks, but at least once a month. When soil is healthy, nothing but Garrett Juice is needed.

## BUSINESS MEMBERS

WE THANK OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT.

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### Natures Herb Farm

7193 Old Talley Road Lot #7  
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Email: [naturesherbfarm@att.net](mailto:naturesherbfarm@att.net)

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### Rainbow Gardens

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