



NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY
DECEMBER 2022

MEET US A DAY EARLY!

We will be meeting on Wednesday December 7 from 9:30 til 1 at the Garden Center. This is the Garden Club's meeting. As members of the Garden Center we are always invited to join them the first Wednesday of the month for their meeting.

This time, we are also involved, as we have a sales table to share our Christmas gift ideas. Vendors from other clubs, as well as outside vendors will have tables for shopping from 10 until 1. There is always a plant sale from the Garden Club members. It begins with coffee and snacks at 9:30.

Then we will have a "Finger Foods Feast" with our friends. Bring a dish of some kind: salad, deviled eggs, small sandwiches, fruit, or dessert of some kind. Herb Society will have a table where we can gather or we can spread out to visit with other friends from garden clubs all over San Antonio.

So, come join us. Wear your holiday clothes. Celebrate the year with us. Especially those of you who have not been able to attend at night, or for other reasons have not been able to come. We miss you and would love to see you once again.

**SAN ANTONIO
HERB SOCIETY**
Mark your calendar for
WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 7, 2022
3310 N. New Braunfels
San Antonio, 79209
9:30 PLANT SALE AND COFFEE
10 CHRISTMAS SALE
11 LUNCHEON

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CHRISTMAS CHEER REPORT

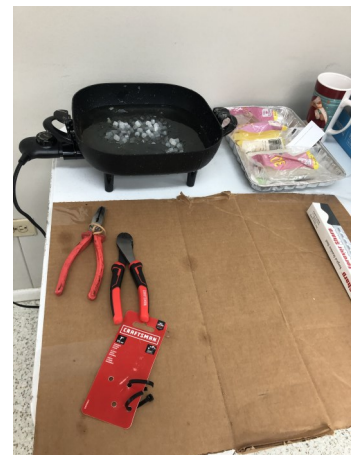
What a grand way to start the holiday season. We did not have to make a budget, go shopping for supplies, remember to bring anything, or even decide on what fancy outfit to wear. We just showed up to the Garden Center at 9:30. Everything was laid out on tables: who needed wreaths or toys or table toppers. Then in the work area, rows of tables were already prepared with hot glue guns, and decorations, wreaths, ribbons and all sorts of jars to be decorated.

The Herb Society commitment was for two hours, then lunch, then head to the Botanical Gardens to weed. Word came from Gloria that there lots of flats of herbs to plant, a lovely and unexpected surprise. So we could see that time was important.

The first task was Decopage glass jars and apply snow. Once completed, rough string was hot glued to the rim of each jar, greenery and red berries applied. The three jars were glued to a silver charger, a large serving tray, and a little more greenery added. Annette, Cindy and Patsy were directed by Colleen.

With big productions there are some clever efficiencies. Our favorite was skillet glue. Rather than small glue guns, an electric skillet is used to apply glue in larger quantities, to attach items to wreaths.

Wreaths, centerpieces, table toppers (for individual food trays), Bath salts ornaments and gifts were prepared. Our decorations and gifts went to various groups: The Strong Foundation, Pregnancy Care Center, Sarah Roberts French House, and the Visitation Home. Generous members contributed puzzles, books, twin sheets, games, gifts for Moms, Dads and children.





FROM THE PREZ

Janus was the Roman god of portals, of doors and of places where things change. That is why January was named after him. So this January begins the Herb of the Year : Ginger. Now, this is an herb we can get behind. We use it in so many dishes. In the summer when the gingers bloom in the garden, their sweet fragrance often lasts for weeks. I am hope we all can plant some ginet to enjoy year after year.

Not an orchid, ginger is in its own classification, zingiberaceae; named Zingiber officinale. It is a tender perennial that grows in shade.

It occurs to me that we should be writing a brochure to celebrate the Herb of the Year. Why not start this year? Do I see volunteers raising their hands out there? We could consult a number of books and prepare at least a draft of our brochure before our January meeting.

It would be good to find some sources for locally grown gingers. We could begin propagating more for sale, if possible.

Ginger is an annual, used for food, seasoning and for tea from the roots. I love ginger bread and ginger beer.

I am looking forward to this next year and especially ginger.

Upcoming Events

• * * * * *

Pictures with Santa December 4, 3-5:30 p.m.at the Garden Center Free admission, open to the public Bring your kids, grandkids and a camera; or purchase portraits fro our professional photographers.

December WEDNESDAY the 7th 10 a.m. “Holiday Market and Social Garden Center Luncheon, Traditional Christmas Tasting. All Garden Center Members (That is US Herb Society members) bring your favorite holiday finger food, hors d’oeuvres & desserts to share.

December 26, Monday Weed and Gloat at Botanical Gardens 10 a.m.

January 12 General Meeting :Herb of the Year: Ginger

Culinary Contributions

. SPECULAAS (Dutch Cookies)

Salad oil-to season the mold

1 cup firmly packed light or dark brown sugar

3 cups all-purpose flour (divided)

1 cup butter or margarine, softened

3 tablespoons milk

1 ½ teaspoons cinnamon

¾ teaspoon ginger

¾ teaspoon ground nutmeg

¾ teaspoon ground cloves

¼ teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon double-acting baking powder

Method:

Early in the day or up to 1 week ahead:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Brush cookie molds with salad oil. Bake ceramic cookie mold for 10 minutes to season it. Remove and let cool before use.

Into a large bowl, press brown sugar through coarse sieve or food mill to remove any lumps.

Add 1 ½ cups flour and remaining ingredients: butter, milk, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg cloves, salt and double-acting baking powder.

With mixer at low speed, beat ingredients until just mixed; increase speed to medium and beat 2 minutes, occasionally scraping bowl.

Stir in remaining flour (1 ½ cup).

Firmly press dough into mold. With hands, lightly press dough evenly. Keep dough from going over the edge of the mold; when cooked dough will pull away from edge, making it easier to release the cookie. Using the heart mold we found the thin edges were lovely and crisp. Try to make the center as thin as the edge for crispness throughout.

Bake 15 to 18 minutes until edges are lightly browned.

Cool cookie in mold on wire racks 10 minutes.

With narrow spatula (or for with sharp tines) carefully loosen cookie from mold; invert on large cookie sheet to cool or wire rack.

To store, wrap cookie tightly. If you like, use frosting in decorating bag with small writing tube to decorate the diagram.

Makes 6 heart shaped cookies (illustrated)

These enchanting gingerbread molds, called Speculaas, are traditional holiday treats in the Netherlands, where for centuries they have been baked for the feast of St. Nicholas, on December 5. The Dutch baked these cookies to commemorate his generosity. “Speculaas derives from a word used to denote a bishop. Boys and girls give them to each other, and well-wishers give them to marriageable young people, and everyone enjoys their ginger-spicy flavor.

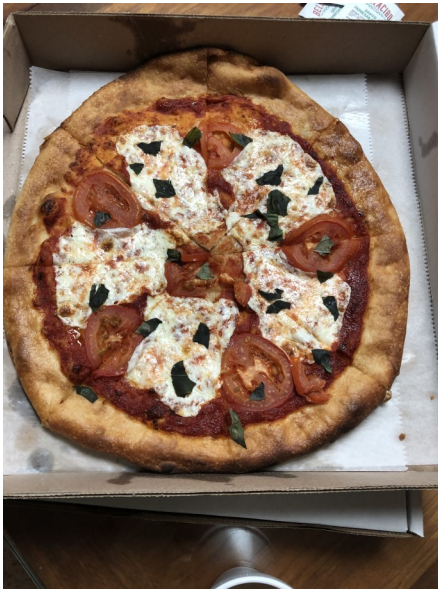


WEED AND GLOAT

We don't usually start with a meal. But it made sense to get something before we headed from the Garden Center to the Herb Garden at the Bot.

It turns out that Fratello's does an excellent pizza. Not only does it taste wonderful, it is quickly made very convenient to Mahnke Park and are a work of art. Next month I vote we head there for our after-garden coffee.

The weather was in the seventies by the time we got to the garden. What a lovely break of pure sunshine, after weeks of wet and gloom.



Eight trays of herbs greeted us. It took a while to determine the logistics. The thymes went to the south end of the bed. You are probably not supposed to plant these herbs so close together, but we made a statement with a triangle of lemon thyme (the little leaves are slightly more yellow and the fragrance differs) and a triangle of English thyme. Our hope is that they will grow together and mound up. In the colonial gardens at Williamsburg, Virginia, they make the 'Door yard herb garden' into marvelous shapes. Want to try our hands at that.

Little white alyssums, (who knew they were herbs?), were the next to go. Along the border in the front of the beds, and filling in at the end by the roses. They have a sweet pleasant fragrance. Taste? Not very sweet, but might look eye-catching in the right salad.

The pansies, orange and purple and unknown colors filled in behind alyssums.

The calendulas, which will bloom large yellow flowers were put in rings around the barrels and amid the mint to fill in gaps. So our winter color pallet will be mostly white and yellows.

Copper fennel, which will grow large and showy, were put up against the fence, between the germanders; who, by the way, are really looking good. Look for them when you visit the garden.

We knew that you are not supposed to put dill near fennel because when they cross pollinate it no longer tastes like dill. Also, some caterpillars particularly like both, and will eat even more if put together. We checked to see if fennel was a good companion plant to anything else Or maybe, not a good companion to some things. Turns out, fennel is not a friend to any plant. Recipes that include fennel always say things like "Take two fennel bulbs, peel and chop finely." Two? Do you know how long it took us to grow this very bulb? And there is just one in our garden? And you want us to sacrifice two just for this showy salad? I guess that it why we need to be growing a full bed full. Not only do they have good symmetry, they also are used in a whole lot of dishes.

Our theory on hoses: keep the rattiest hose you can find, and nobody will want to steal it. Cindy, Gloria and I took turns wrangling the hose with two leaks. We're becoming skilled. Good it was so warm as we all got wet.



With a memo to trim back the roses next month, and a promise to give the lemongrass a haircut, we headed home. It was about four p.m. A long but very gratifying day, both morning and afternoon.

To Cook Pumpkin: Wash and cut it in half crosswise. Remove seeds and strings. Place in a pan, shell side up, (may add a small amount of water so shell does not stick) and bake it in a 325 degree oven for 1 hour or more, depending on size, until it is tender and begins to fall apart. Scrape the pulp from the shell and put it through a ricer or strainer. Use in place of canned pumpkin in the following recipe. Freeze remaining pumpkin for more pies or soup.

PUMPKIN PIE

Joy of Cooking Irma S Rombauer, Marion Rombauer Becker

A 9-inch pie

Prepare **A baked Pie Shell**

Mix in the top of a double boiler and cook over, not in, hot water until thick: *till very very thick*

1 ½ cups cooked pumpkin or squash

1 ½ cups undiluted evaporated milk or rich cream

6 tablespoons brown sugar

2 tablespoons white sugar

½ teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon cinnamon

½ teaspoon ginger

1/8 teaspoon cloves

½ cup dark corn syrup or light molasses

3 slightly beaten eggs

Cool slightly and add:

(1 teaspoon vanilla or 2 tablespoons brandy or rum)

¾ cups black walnut meats)

Pour the mixture into the baked pie shell.

Serve with:

Whipped cream

Thick is a relative term. We put this pie in the refrigerator to cool. It turned into a thick soup.

So we baked it longer in a slow oven, 325 degrees for about 40 minutes. The center of the pie when jiggled looked very thick. When chilled was then beautifully firm.

The pie had turned a deep brown, was flavorful and delicious.

Meeting Minutes

MEETING MINUTES November 10, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 by President Robin Maymar

She thanked the member and guests for attending.

Cindy Moore prepared a beautiful table in a harvest theme and Sandra Woodall prepared an iced herbal tea.

The Christmas Cheer workshop on November 28 was announced. It will begin at 9:30 here at the Garden Center. Come prepared to learn how to tie bows, decopage jars, make wreaths and table toppers. See newsletter for more information about the charities that these will be going to.

The Holiday Banquet for Herb Society has changed. Because Lightscape has absconded with out parking area, we are invited to join with the Garden Clubs of San Antonio on December 7 for a Christmas Market and Salad Tasting. They have since changed it to a morning Buffet. From 9:30 there is coffee and a plant sale. At 10 the market opens for sales of Christmas goods. At 11 we are going to sit down at tables and have our get together. The sale continues until 1 p.m. All Herb Society members are invited to attend any and all of these events. If attending the lunch, bring a dish: finger sandwiches, cookies, salad, etc.



We do need members to sign up sheet to volunteer to help at Holiday Market December 7 10 am. A sign up sheet was circulate

It has been established that we split the number of volunteers bringing food for the meeting. In January, members in the first half of the alphabet are asked to provide our snack. A through Maymar

It was announced that we do have a copy of the treasurer's bank balance. If you have questions, please ask the president at the end of the meeting. (There were no inquiries)

It had been planned to demonstration why the Yerba may not show up in your mail box. Unfortunately technology got in the way. Will try for next meeting.

Minutes from the last General meeting were in the newsletter. There were no additions or corrections.

Our guest speaker was Grace Emery, speaking on Landscaping with Herbs

At the close of the meeting the president thanked everyone for coming.

Our next meeting is December 7. There will be no December 8 evening meeting.

TO DO IN THE DECEMBER GARDEN

The pace of Nature is patience.

---Ralph Waldo Emerson

2022 weather has been very dry. We have had some rain this fall. Some very hot days. Some very cold and windy ones in between. It is hard for plants to continue with such changes.

The wind draws moisture from the soil and the plants, so it is important to keep up watering after dry days.

Wet days: * inventory tools and organize for more efficient use * cull old, worn or inefficient tools. Repurpose, donate or give away. * order good tools as needed * order bulbs * check out garden catalogs to make a plan for spring garden * sort seeds and plan for their sowing * reread garden journals and notes or if you do not have one, begin a garden journal * make a yearly plan for your gardens.



Watching TV: sharpen tools * paint tool handles a bright color * Ladies: paint your tool handles pink (helps keep significant other from borrowing) * Paint lime twigs (the ones with sharp thorns) bright red, when dry place around strawberry plants. The thorns will keep critters from sitting or digging in the bed.



In the Herb Garden: First week is typical for freezes!!

Replenish winter mulch as needed

Prepare all your materials for covering tender vegetation. Thin insulate, blankets, old fashioned Christmas lights that get warm, bags of leaves to cover or use as insulation around plants.

Should a freeze warning occur, water plants thoroughly 12 to 24, but not more than 48 hours prior to, to protect roots. Cut back tender perennials that freeze and need to be trimmed before reemerging in the spring: Mexican mint marigold, chives, tarragon, lemon verbena and lovage.

Plant seeds of California poppies, nasturtiums and sweet peas

Now is the time to plant a number of spring-producing herbs including dill, garlic, cilantro, fennel and parsley. (This is a surprise to newcomers to San Antonio, and to newcomers to herb growing, since in other parts of the country these are planted in the spring)

Move hibiscus, plumeria and bougainvillea and other tropicals into freeze-protected storage.

Pansies planted now will provide color all winter (violas, also called Johnny-jump-ups are perfect border plants for pansy beds)

Mow your leaves and let them decompose on the lawn or use them for mulch or compost.

Cut back lantanas and salvia after the tops freeze.

December is spring bulb, corm, rhizome and tuber planting time in Texas to have a show of color from these plant selections next spring. Plant gingers now for Herb of the Year next year. Choose shady areas.

Spinach is available as transplants. Plant English peas, snap peas and snow peas.

Have the soil tested in your vegetable garden, rose garden, perennial garden, lawn or any other special area in your landscape this month. The results of the test will offer recommendations to help you achieve the most results from your gardening activities. Now is a good time to check the pH and add lime (or for those of us in Bexar Co., sulfur) if needed. Ground dolomite limestone (granular sulfur) is best because it acts slowly, lasts a long time, does not over alkalize the soil and adds magnesium.

Complete the new bed you meant to start in August and should have done in Sept. Oct. or Nov. Don't do like some folks who buy bushes with only a vague idea where to put them. Dig the hole first, water well, then go buy the bush.

For the Birds: prepare your backyard now for winter feeding. Most birds establish their feeding territories in the early fall.

- Clean all feeders

- Remove seed hulls from under feeders (use in compost)

- Check stability of pole' tighten screws in feeders

- Add different types of feeders

- Stock up on seed and suet

- Be prepared to empty concrete birdbaths during freezing weather, replace with a plastic dish

- Clean out nesting boxes and leave up for roosting Put up roosting boxes to attract owls, flickers and bluebird

- Add a squirrel feeding station. (They're not birds but they are fun to watch and it will keep them from eating all the bird seed)

- Leave hummingbird feeder up, even though the 'traffic' has slowed down. Native and migratory hummers are still around. Keep your feeder about ¼ full and change about once a week. You might put a little more sugar in the mixture. A red feeder is enough to attract the birds, although red flowering plants such as the shrimp plant close by will help even more. (avoid red dye in the sugar water mixture)

Roses:

Even though our bushes might not be growing vigorously above ground, their roots are growing and picking up all kinds of nourishment. So, we need to provide moisture for the roots to absorb and store this spring energy. Keep potted roses watered.

Before you lay your winter mulch down, scatter gypsum liberally through your rose beds. Use about 2 cups sprinkled around each bush. This will help loosen up your soil and also provide for better aeration. Then lay down about 2" of your favorite composting materials. Continue to cut roses as long as they are pretty.

Keep weeds pulled. If we can keep chickweed out now, there will be a lot less next spring.

Winter Pests: if we have cycles of dry warm weather spidermites will thrive. If you see some foliage at the bottom of the bush beginning to yellow, check the bottom side of the leaves for a fine white webbing with a salt & pepper looking effect. If left unchecked, the mite infestation will move up the bush gradually. Water wash the affected bush with a hard spray (bottomside of foliage) for nine days at three-day intervals.

Watch for Japanese beetles on roses and other plants, us Orthene or organic products such as Green Light's "Rose Defense". The best advice is to buy fresh liquid sprays for the new growing season. Powders pray materials will carry over well if stored properly and kept moisture free. Most of these powder sprays can have a shelf life of 3 years or more.

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, December 26
We meet at 10 A.M.



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.

DECEMBER CHALLENGE :

Show us how you store your bulky items for use in the garden. Tomato cages? Thinsulate sheets for covering tender vegetation? Stakes? Hand watering devices?

Send pictures or descriptions to robinmaymar@gmail.com

Herb Society Board

President

Robin Maymar

robinmaymar@gmail.com

1st Vice-President (Programs) *Currently supplied by membership at large.*

Treasurer Milan Maymar

Secretary Volunteer at meeting

Membership Vacant

Publicity Vicki Jamvold

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

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