



NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY
JANUARY 2023

Herb of the Year: Ginger

Grows in semi-shade, fragrant flowers, beautiful large green leaves, has edible roots on some plants. What is not to like about ginger?

Our first meeting of the year is dedicated to this versatile plant. Our herb of the year is a great winner in the culinary field. Join us to celebrate the new year with Ginger Punch, Ginger Slide show, and all things Ginger: growing, harvesting, cooking and appreciating.

We will also be inaugurating our new Zoom microphone. No promises, but we are testing it for the first time so that members at home can again join the meeting.



**SAN ANTONIO
HERB SOCIETY**
Mark your calendar for
Thursday
January 12
3310 N. New Braunfels
San Antonio, 79209

Social at 6:30 Meeting at 7
Meetings are free and open to the public.

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Upcoming Events

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Our next meeting will return to the Second Thursday at 6:30 format on January 12, 2023 Members whose last names begin with A through Maymar are tasked with bringing refreshments. Keep in mind that a Ginger Punch (non-alcoholic will be served)

Thursday January 12 **Renew your dues** at the General Meeting

February Earthwise Living Day in Leon Valley. 9:30 –1:30 Saturday– Date to be announced next meeting.

SPRING BLOOM IS BACK LIVE!

March 11, 2023 Herb Society mark your calendars now. Spring Bloom is held at SAWS headquarters at 37 and Mulberry street. The parking garage is open to visitors, but not to Spring Break people who are going to the zoo. Parking is free and very accessible for us.

Master Gardeners will be giving talks in the tents. There will be plant and tree give-aways as well as a variety of plants for sale. Lots of free information.

We members will have a HUGE herb sale! Nature’s Herb Farm teams up with us for our annual all-out sale. The SAWS people supply tables. We set up tents, the weather is ALWAYS wonderful, but a little breezy.

So mark your calendars, put aside funds, get ready to have a great day at Spring Bloom. This is an event you should tell all your neighbors about.

We will have flyers at the next meeting advertising . SAWS also sends out ads in the water bill, so the whole city knows about this sale.





To Market or Not To Market

It's a new year. I am enjoying the challenges of gardening, of shepherding the Herb Society, of keeping up with friends and family. This new year causes me to think about the direction our Herb Society is going. Is the Herb Society contributing to the community? Are we educating people about herbs, growing, landscaping, propagating, using? I think so.

Is that an important thing to our community? I think so also. It is important for people to take care of their health. A healthy diet and healthy exercise are fundamental issues today. Heart attack rates have gone up during the time of pandemic. I argue that it is because people were told to stay at home. Rather than go outside to walk and exercise, they stayed inside, in front of their televisions or computers and binged on viewing favorite programs.

The worst message was 'stay inside' which was a world-wide directive. It still baffles me that the cleansing power of fresh air, sunshine that disinfects surfaces is completely ignored.

We keep encouraging all our members and friends to take advantage of the outdoors. There is built-in exercise in gardening. There is free sunshine to help stimulate vitamin D. There is the added benefit of having home-grown, green vegetables and herbs to add to your diet. Joshua Becker, on YouTube, suggest making a "More or Less" resolutions list. I paraphrase: More fresh air, less television, more restful sleep. If we say "Three hours of fresh air a day, that may be too aggressive a goal. More fresh air than last year is doable.

So, we move ahead into a new year. Will we form a nominating committee and gather new officers for the Herb Society? I know we will have a big herb sale in March. I know we have good resources. We have dedicated members who want to see the Herb Society continue. I do as well. Let's pull together to make this society the best it can be in '23.

TIME TO RENEW YOUR DUES

We always renew our memberships in January. It keeps the bookkeeping simple. Copies of the membership form will be available at the January meeting. Please take time to check that the addresses and names are up to date. It is surprising how often an email, or phone number has changed. We do, on occasion, mail things out to members, so street address is also important.

It is also helpful that we have a little feedback, so feel free to send any information our way.

Culinary Contributions

LEMON SNOWFLAKES

From *Woman's Day* December 1973, modified by Robin Maymar

Cornstarch cookies with a smooth, delicate texture.

Cookie

1 cup butter or margarine, softened

½ cup confectioners' sugar

¾ cup cornstarch

1 ½ cups all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons grated lemon rind (regular lemons have more flavor than Meyer lemons)

Frosting Mix

1 cup confectioners' sugar

2 tablespoons melted butter or margarine

1 tablespoon lemon juice, may vary according to taste

Method

Cream butter; combine sugar, cornstarch flour and grated lemon, gradually beat into butter.

Chill at least 1 hour

Shape dough in balls and drop onto cookie sheet. Flatten with bottom of drinking glass dipped into flour.

Bake in pre-heated 350 F. degree oven about 15 minutes.

Cool 5 minutes before transferring to rack.

Mix ingredients for frosting.

When cooled spread with frosting

Makes about 4 dozen cookies.

Note: Because the dough so fragile, it can be rolled by batches into cylinders about 1 ½ or 2 inches in diameter. Wrap in waxed paper; chill for an hour or until needed. Slice into ¼ or ½ inch disks and bake.

This was a good time management cookie. Easy to prep ahead, easy to make at last minute.

We have no idea about how long these keep in storage. They disappeared before we could determine.

WEED AND GLOAT: SOLITUDE

It is always surprising how warm the sun can be on an icy cold day. The ice on the birdbath was fairly thin, the sky a deep blue, birds serenaded the garden with great gusto. The gardens had the feeling of one of those mansions in England where the Lord of the Manor had gone away for the season and all the furniture was shrouded in sheets. All the beds except the herbs were covered with huge white sheets.

Trim the climbing roses, after disinfecting with alcohol. Cut back the dead gingers. Leave the Thai basil, Mexican mint marigolds and all the plants with seeds. The birds will take them this time of year. Parts of the garden looked like a set from a horror movie, blackened and wet looking. We trimmed back. It remains to be seen whether anything we planted last month will survive. They are still small and green.

Cindy was taking a friend somewhere, Gloria was visiting family out of town. We did not hear from the others. They probably knew that the gardens would be shrouded in huge blankets of thin-sulate. There was not much for a visitor to look at.

And there were no visitors. No gardeners. No people at all. No weeds. Just a beautiful sky and a chorus of birds and solitude.

I swept the walk and went home.

All the Weeders were invited to a luncheon at the Botanical Gardens. Apparently the word, copied and forwarded did not get to most of our intrepid weeders. I did not push it either, as I did not know what to expect. As it turned out, the luncheon was simply elegant. Introductions of each group and many thanks for all we do for the Botanical Gardens.

We promise, next year, no matter how harried we are, we shall attend and enjoy the accolades

If you have not joined us in the garden, please consider at least one visit this coming year.



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, January 30

We meet at 10 A.M.

Contact robinmaymar@gmail.com for
simple safety measures and directions for
parking. See you then.

ALL GARDENERS: please remember your gallon size pots. The Botanical Gardens would appreciate you recycles. They will clean and sanitize the pots. Bring pots to our meeting on January 12.

The two sizes are True Gallon and Trade. Both are fine for garden purposes.



RECYCLE FOREVER

We are not sure why the big turquoise fan was so emblematic. We kept it way beyond its natural life. It put out a lot of wind, but at eye level when seated on the terrace it made so much noise we could not talk over it.

So it lived in the basement. We threatened to sell it or give it away. We considered having it sand blasted and re painting. Its guts were taken out with a thought to make it a quieter better fan, but the idea died. Could not find good replacement guts.

Empty. Taking up space. Milan turned the fan so it pointed straight up. Then he went in search of a bowl that would fit. It sat in the back yard until Herb Market in October.

Now filled with good soil and one \$2.50 dill plant, separated at purchase and spread over the whole bowl; the fan has found a whole new life of service.



Meeting Minutes

Our 'Meeting' for December occurred the day before our Thursday night regular time. We opted to attend the Garden Center Plant Sale and Craft Sale, followed by a Salad Tasting Luncheon.



Our host club, graciously reserved tables exclusively for the Herb Society. In previous years this event had been heavily attended and had a large semi-catered buffet. Covid had put a crimp in their style, and the previous year was very poorly attended.

Hence the light-weight salad tasting approach. Our members, and the Garden Club members all brought wonderful dishes.

Our group had come early to help at the table sale, which was very successful. We ate in shifts, so that a few could continue to man the sales table.

It was all very casual, and very enjoyable. We saw many friends we had not seen in years. Renewed some old acquaintances and made some new ones.

There was a raffle with prizes provided by each of the sales tables. The most popular, of course, were the orchids.

Our next meeting will return to the Second Thursday at 6:30 format on January 12, 2023. Members whose last names begin with A through Maymar are tasked with bringing refreshments.

Keep in mind that a Ginger Punch (non-alcoholic) will be served as well as tea and water.



JANUARY TO DO LIST

3rd week 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 Research a little about gingers. Attend our first meeting of the year to see some spectacular examples. Especially think of ginger as a shade dwelling plant.

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).

Get cold frames ready for vegetable seedlings and flowering transplants. Make labels for plants before you put them in the ground. * 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.



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.

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) are showing up at area bird feeders. They leave their wintering grounds up in Canada (from Nova Scotia to Alaska) and head as far as Costa Rica, Cuba and the Bahamas. They can be friend or foe, their antics are a delight to watch, but they will literally take over a feeding station and devour everything (on the positive side they are insect eaters as well).

The Ethics of Backyard Birdfeeding: I. Act in ways that do not endanger the welfare of birds or other wildlife. II. Act in ways that do not harm the natural environment. III. Always respect the rights of others. IV. Groups should assume special responsibilities. * As part of a larger group of bird aficionados who pro-actively feed birds in our yards, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to teach nonbirders by our actions that feeding the birds is an enjoyable and beneficial experience. It enhances our enjoyment of the outdoors, it connects us with nature in a positive way, and it gives us the opportunity to create in our children and in others a sense of caring and responsibility for nature and the environment that will serve us all well in the years to come.

Birds coming into the garden are more of an asset than a detriment as they eat lots of the insects that damage our plants. Always have water there to attract the birds.

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.

Be careful not to overwater bluebonnets. They are very sensitive to soggy conditions. For shady, sheltered areas or containers, consider primula and cyclamen for winter color. Bunny Bloom larkspurs should be available now in the nurseries. Plant them in full sun or in a location that receives morning sun.

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 rosarians 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 or make your own. 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



Go after "Christmas tree" mulch at the Bitters Rd. Brush Site.

Start tomatoes, peppers and warm-weather seeds now so they will be ready for 1 gal. or larger containers in early March.

Harvest brussels sprouts from the bottom of the stalk as they mature. You will have the healthful greens through late spring. Cauliflower that is not covered will turn yellow. Secure the leaves over the head with rubber bands or clothespins for pure white heads.

Onion plants are available at area nurseries. Plant them 3 in. apart and harvest every other plant for green onions. Large bulbs will be ready to harvest in May.

Finalize your vegetable garden design in preparation for planting next month. Consider adding drip or soaker irrigation for more efficient watering.

Work compost or manure into beds in preparation for spring vegetable planting.

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.

Celebrate the New Year by planting a tree, or maybe "sponsoring" one! Stop by and visit that tree to see if it is doing better than your resolutions!

Improve your landscape for this year by learning from gardening books that focus on this region.

Prune, or clean out perennials killed or damaged by frost.

Now is a great time to build walkways and retaining walls.

ALLSPICE– THE SCIENCE PART OF THE ARTICLE

Continued from November article

Most of this article is taken from a source on-line called Healthline. I am including the reference for just the first two citations. I have included a very stripped-down example with their conclusion from an exhaustive scientific test. Remember that science is based on hypothesis. The hypothesis is what the scientist, having done a lot of reading and research of other science works, posits as an explanation. There can always be room for more ideas.

What is printed here takes us away from the mythology of herbalism. You may note how specific each point is. Allspice is not a panacea for all ills known to man. Also, keep in mind that the extracts of compounds found in allspice are what is being tested. Extracts are obtained by removing the exact compound and distilling it down to its purest form for testing purposes. No cookie or carrot dish will have anywhere near that amount in it. So just cooking with allspice, or flavoring something would probably not have an effect on any of the diseases mentioned. (That is a question for mathematics that will be addressed at some other time)

“Since it’s a spice, it’s usually consumed in small amounts. However, allspice has also been used in folk medicine due to its potential health benefits (1)

Plant Compounds Due to its multiple uses in folk medicine, the compounds in allspice have been studied widely. Those behind most of allspice’s benefits include (1)

- **Eugenol** Eugenol is derived from phenylpropene. It’s lauded for its potential antibacterial, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, and cancer-fighting properties (3)
- **Quercetin.** Quercetin is a type of flavonoid, a potent antioxidant that may fight damaging molecules called free radicals. Its antioxidant capacity may have cancer-fighting properties, and it’s also known for its potential antiviral and anti-inflammatory effects (4)
- **Gallic acid.** Gallic acid is yet another powerful antioxidant. As such, it may have cancer-fighting and antiviral effects. It has also been studied for potential protective effects on brain health, especially the prevention of Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s diseases (5,6) .

Ericifolin. Ericifolin is a phenolic compound that may have antibacterial and cancer-fighting properties (7).

Menopausal treatment Menopause is the termination of the menstrual cycle in people ages 45–52. It’s characterized by hormonal changes, namely a decline in estrogen and progesterone levels, that lead to symptoms like hot flashes, night sweats, sleep disturbances, mood disorders, and unintentional weight gain (1,8,9) While hormone therapy has traditionally been the primary treatment for menopause symp-

toms, complementary therapies are becoming more popular, especially herbal remedies (9,10). Studies show that allspice extract binds to estrogen receptors. As such, it may trick your body into believing that its estrogen levels are up, thus helping manage symptoms (1,8).

Cancer-fighting properties Most of allspice's beneficial plant compounds have potential cancer-fighting properties. For instance, test-tube and animal studies show that eugenol, quercetin, gallic acid, and ericifolin may prevent the spread of tumors, decrease tumor growth, and promote apoptosis — the programmed death of cancerous cells (1,7,8,11). Allspice's anticancer effects have been studied on [breast](#), prostate, gastric, duodenal, and colon cancers, and interestingly, its effect varies depending on the type of cancer (1,7,8,11,12) For example, studies on breast cancer cell lines suggest that allspice extract leads to autophagy. Autophagy is your body's way of clearing unnecessary or damaged cells, including cancerous cells, by degrading them (12,13). Prostate cancer cells also tended to be eliminated through apoptosis, while gastric cancer cell lines were affected by allspice extracts' ability to inhibit the growth of *Helicobacter pylori* — a bacterium that's considered carcinogenic (8,13). Nevertheless, keep in mind that while research is promising, studies in humans are lacking. More research is needed.

Antimicrobial and antifungal effects The eugenol and ericifolin in allspice may also provide antimicrobial and antifungal effects (1). Research on essential oils extracted from allspice berries shows antifungal properties against *Candida albicans*, a yeast that's resistant to certain antifungal drugs (11,14). Similarly, the essential oil shows antibacterial properties against *E. coli*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, *S. aureus*, and *Salmonella*. Its effects are mainly attributed to its eugenol content, which may damage bacterial membranes (14).

Other potential benefits Allspice is a popular home treatment for multiple health conditions, including:

- **Aches and pains.** Allspice is used to combat headaches, muscle cramps, and tooth pain. Research suggests that this may be due to its eugenol content, which is an analgesic or pain relief agent commonly used in dentistry. In addition, allspice essential oil may alleviate muscle pain and strains by promoting circulation (1,11).
- **Anti-inflammatory effects.** Allspice may help reduce inflammation by inhibiting inflammatory markers (14).
- **Weight management.** Research shows that allspice extract may activate Takeda G protein-

coupled receptor 5, a protein responsible for the secretion of hunger-reducing hormones glucagon-like peptide 1 and peptide YY. These hormones help reduce your appetite by increasing feelings of fullness (3,15).

Gas and bloating. The eugenol in allspice may help treat indigestion by stimulating digestive enzymes and inhibiting *H. pylori*, the bacteria responsible for indigestion. It's also associated with stomach ulcers (1,8).

Blood sugar management. The eugenol in allspice may protect pancreatic islets — the cells responsible for insulin production — and improve their function, thus helping manage blood sugar levels and early stages of type 2 diabetes (16,17).

Downsides and Dosages When used as a spice in small amounts, allspice is considered safe. Nevertheless, older research suggests that people with hand dermatitis may develop allergic reactions when cooking with it (18). While anecdotal evidence suggests that larger quantities of allspice may trigger potential gastrointestinal issues, such as nausea or vomiting, no evidence backs these claims. Similarly, drug interactions are not well documented. However, anecdotal evidence indicates a potentially negative effect when large amounts of allspice are consumed while taking blood clotting medication. Given the lack of human studies on allspice's health benefits, an appropriate dosage has yet to be determined. You may find allspice berries — both whole and ground — in your supermarket's spice aisle. Allspice essential oil is also available at stores and online. Regardless of its presentation, allspice should be stored in a cool, dry place, such as a kitchen pantry.”

See next page for citations notes.



Below are the citations for (1) and (2) in the article above. They are greatly abbreviated, because in science, unlike FaceBook, they get very, very specific about who said what and where and when and how it was tested. I apologize for the wonky spacing. I have neither the time nor the patience for invading their spacing protocols to change it all to normal print. I just wanted you to know there was a real and bonafide source and that you can access the whole article on Healthline.

#1 Medicinal Properties of the Jamaican Pepper Plant *Pimenta dioica* and Allspice
Curr Drug Targets. 2012 Dec; 13(14): 1900–1906.
doi: 10.2174/138945012804545641

“New characterization of novel compounds such as Ericifolin from the aqueous extract of Allspice berries show potent anti-prostate cancer and anti-breast cancer properties that can be verified *in vitro* as well as *in vivo*. Considering its purity, mostly available as “organically grown” berries, availability at low cost, wide acceptance in culinary delights of many cultures world-wide, Allspice may have an additional space in most households, in their medicine cabinets.”

2ND REFERENCE Front Pharmacol. 2017; 8: 468. Published online 2017 Jul 17. doi: 10.3389/fphar.2017.00468 PMID: 28769799 PMCID: PMC5511840

Allspice and Clove As Source of Triterpene Acids Activating the G Protein-Coupled Bile Acid Receptor TGR5

“In conclusion, extracts of clove, allspice, and aromatic ginger activate TGR5, which might play a pivotal role in their therapeutic use for the treatment of metabolic diseases. Moreover, the TGR5 activation of SaroE and PdioE could be pinpointed solely to TTAs.”

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.

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