



NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY

MARCH 2023

SPEAKER ANDREW WARING

At our March 9 meeting, Andrew Waring, Herb Society member and Master Gardener will present a talk on soil. All gardeners want to know how to amend their soil for the very best production of lawn, garden and especially vegetables and herbs.



This sounds very basic but it has a lot of dynamics: soft soils from limestone a dolomite, vertisols from Houston Black clay, sandy soils on top of clay. If you are thinking hummus, well, you have just begun to scratch the surface. Andrew will be down to earth about this subject. Not just the lowdown on dirt. Or compost or mulch. Or even dust. But actual soil with all the minerals and various complex attributes. Andrew will want to know what kind of soil you are encountering when you garden. We should have a lively questions and answers meeting

We will also have a Zoom connection, for those joining us from home.

Come enjoy a lovely spring evening at the Herb Society. And we promise, no more puns.

**SAN ANTONIO
HERB SOCIETY**
Mark your calendar for
Thursday
March 9
3310 N. New Braunfels
San Antonio, 79209

Social at 6:30 A- Maymar bring refreshments
Meeting at 7

Meetings are free and open to the public.

sanantonioherbs.org

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

UPCOMING EVENTS	2
FROM THE PREZ	3
MEMBER RECIPES	5
WEED AND GLOAT	4
RECYCLE REPORT	5
MEETING MINUTES	6
IN THE MARCH GARDEN	7-8
GARDENING WORKOUT	10

Upcoming Events

Plan to attend a fun-filled, educational day! 33rd Annual Earthwise Living Day Event

Saturday, March 4, 2023 9:30 to 1:30

Theme “Combating Climate Change One Household at a Time ”

This is the longest-running annual environmental event in Bexar County. It is a free community celebration dedicated to: sharing knowledge and inspiration about environmental stewardship,

cultivating awareness, facilitating connections to resources about ways we can protect and preserve the environment. It features showcase exhibits and vendors dedicated to eco-friendly and healthy everyday living.

This event offers both inside and outside programming, children’s activities and entertainment.

Held Rain or Shine at the Leon Valley Community and Conference Centers, located at 6427 Evers Road in Leon Valley. Environmentally-focused non-profit groups like Herb Society no fee to participate!

There are three levels of sponsorship available: Mighty Oak, Texas Mountain Laurel, Lovely Lantana. Come support these sponsors who support our club

Leon Valley appreciates our participating in this fun-filled, educational, and free-admission community gathering!

Reduce, reuse, recycle – not just our duty, but a way of life!

Leon Valley Community and Conference Centers
6427 Evers Road in Leon Valley, 78238

* * * * *

SAWS Spring Bloom 2800 US Hwt 281 N, 78212 Take E. Mulberry exit from 281. Or E. Mulberry to N. St. Mary’s Street will take you to the parking garage. There will be security directing visitors to park for the event. Elevators to take you down to the building patio.

● * * * * *

Our next General Meeting will be the second Thursday March 9 6:30 Members whose last names begin with A to M(aymar) are tasked with bringing refreshments.

● * * * * *



We are so thrilled that Spring Bloom, put on by SAWS is coming month. “After three long years of “pandemic pause” Spring Bloom returns to SAWS March 11”

MyWaternews letter says “This free event is your prime opportunity to learn about gardening and landscape care from the pros- all while saving water. This year’s focus is “What’s your Garden Style?””

There will be WaterSaver plants that will fit your desired landscape. And Herbs for sale by The Herb Society (That’s us!)

Local gardening experts will speak throughout the day, revealing their secrets to successful landscaping and how to choose a garden style that best suits your home’s terrain and character.

There will be demonstrations on how to measure 200 square feet which you will need to know so you can give up some grass and take advantage of the WaterSaver Coupons. These save hundreds of dollars on landscape plants and supplies.

We are especially interested in the new **Connect H2O** electronic water meters SAWS has been installing across the city. You will be able to see this technology, find out how it can save water and money, and ask good questions.

Dig A Hole: The first 1,000 adult guests will receive a free drought-hardy landscape plant. That is in addition to free parking and free admission.

FEATURED SPEAKERS:

LISTEN TO YOUR LANDSCAPE! 9:30 a.m.

Are you listening? Your landscape will tell you what it needs – all you have to do is pay attention. Lee Marlowe, Sustainable Landscape Ecologist with the San Antonio River Authority, will help you learn how to listen to your landscape for long-term success.

EARTH-KIND LANDSCAPING 1:30 p.m.

Earth-Kind Landscaping uses research-proven techniques to provide for a beautiful and resilient landscape while preserving and protecting the environment. Join **Anna Vogler, Bexar County Master Gardener**, as she shares these principles and how you can implement them in your own landscape.

SAWS new **Plant by Number Plans** will help you easily eliminate problem areas in your yard and replace them with gorgeous water-saving alternatives. Plans are designed like a blueprint with numbered areas that you fill in with corresponding plants. Even better: Those plants are included in the WaterSaver Coupon approved plant list. The first batch of Plant by Number designs — including curb appeal, pollinator garden and corner bed — will be available at SAWS Spring Bloom, March 11. So don’t miss it!

WEED AND GLOAT

Feb 27 2023, 9 A.M. 68° temperature rising to 88° for a high today. What a contrast to last month at 40-something and dropping to 32 °as the day went on.

What weeds? Lady's Bedstraw here and there. Beggar ticks (*Torilis arvensis*) (which kids call stickers), a few. Henbit, one or two. Wild garlic (or is it wild onion?), some... Then lots and lots and lots of oxalis everywhere.



Our team assembled gradually. Esther was our early bird, Then Jasmine from the botanical Gardens. Monique was close by watering bed after bed, but offered to get us anything we needed. We were so pleased to welcome back Basil and Mary Jo. Then Patsy, Cindy and Marsha. Gloria rounded up our group.

The Botanical Gardeners had shorn the roses back to mere stubs. Instead of a wall of roses, when we sat on the bench the fence was like a window. The garden had vast wide vistas for us to see.

The Purple martin scouts have arrived. They fly over, then all land on the big hotel where they stay in the summer. All the doors are shut as it is not nesting time, the resident Martin expert deems. The martins put up lots of confabulation. We are sure they are discussing "When do the doors open?"

Oxalis requires special handling. Like hydras or starfish that reproduce from pieces lopped off, oxalis can reproduce from the bulb, root stem and little pieces left in the soil. Our attack mode is use a 'shooter' spade to go under the whole plant, lift gently. Then go back with large trowel to lift and carry whole plant to the compost bucket. This is where the "garden as exercise" comes in. (see p. 10) Use a kneeler and stretch to reach all the oxalis you can. We were all too busy to take a picture. The job was well done.

We headed out to dump the compost, go to lunch at W.D.Deli for sandwiches and talk of recipes, history, garden tales and anthropology.



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, March 27
We meet at 9 A.M.

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

One WEED pulled

now prevents umpteen in April

If we have too many weeds, we may not
be using enough mulch.

Culinary Contributions

PAN-ROASTED CARROTS AND ONIONS

Ingredients

1 bunch carrots
2 tablespoons coconut oil
½ red onion, thinly sliced in wedges
Sea salt to taste
Freshly ground pepper to taste

Directions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
Remove carrot tops, leaving 1 inch of stem on the carrots. Cut carrots in half vertically
Heat cast iron skillet over high heat for four minutes until very hot; add coconut oil. Place carrots and onion in pan and toss to coat in the oil. Push carrots so that the cut sides are touching the pan; they will not all fit in one layer. Season with salt and pepper
Place pan in the oven and roast uncovered for 30 minutes.
The heat of the cast iron skillet caramelizes the carrots

ALL GARDENERS: please remember your gallon size pots. The Botanical Gardens would appreciate you recycle. They will clean and sanitize the pots. Bring pots to our meeting on March 9 meeting.

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

RECYCLE MILK- WHO KNEW?

The TV news featured an article about what to do with milk. They said that pouring milk down the drain was harmful both to pipes in your house and pipes in the sewer system.

So what are we to do with milk? It seldom spoils, but if it does. What then ?

Turns out, milk composts well. Just add the milk to your compost bucket and dig it into the heap.

● *****

BALL MOSS VS MISTLETOE

BALL MOSS does not harm oak trees, but you can apply cupric hydroxide (*Kocide*) to control it. Or, if it is unsightly, have a tree person remove some of it. Trying to remove all the ball moss from a yard full of trees might be too costly.

Mistletoe does kill trees. It is a parasite. When there is frost and the trees are bare you can see the mistletoe. In this picture, it has died and is being removed. Winter is probably a good time to look for mistletoe and have a tree person remove it.

Meeting Minutes

FEBRUARY 9, 2023

Meeting called to order at 7:10 by President Robin Maymar

Announcements: Bring black pots to recycle at the Botanical Gardens- gallon sizes/

Weed and Gloat is Monday the 27th of February

Please pay your dues if you have not already.

Herb society is in need nomination committee. There are a number of vacancies. President has come to the end of her tenure, and a new one needs to be nominated.

EarthWise Living Day is March 4, Spring Bloom is March 11. A sign-up sheet is being circulated. We especially need help on the Spring Bloom herb plant sale.

We have 2 new members: Linda and Jennifer Sierra

We want to thank Cyndy Moore, Sandra Woodall for setting our table theme Valentines Day.

Minutes from the last General meeting were in the newsletter. Are there any additions or corrections?

Our guest speaker is Artist David Jimenez, Education Coordinator for Phil Hardberger Natural Area.

Notes on his presentation:

Did you know that Hardberger Park was originally a dairy farm? Many of the activities center around the dairy theme. They even have a dairy day. There are two structures left from the dairy days still on the property. Although there is a lot of wildlife in the park, there are no feral hogs; makes the park pretty safe.

David Jimenez tells us there are lots and lots of things to do in this park besides just taking a long walk. Big features like walking over the famous Land Bridge. See the Children's Vegetable Garden in Nature Play Area full swing Tuesday mornings when whole families and their Home Schoolers attend and plant.

There are two sides to this park. Blanco side has a Butterfly Garden, Grassland Area, Story time space, and a Land Management area. The Blanco side is pretty 'child heavy' he tells us.

The Military Highway side features more nature and walking trails.

As an artist, David uses all of the nature available at the park. There are some terrific programs available. No art experience is needed to join in the classes. Registration is on line for classes on one Wednesday and one Saturday a month. Topics have included air dry clay, step-by-step painting, print making, sketching all kinds of things found in nature, micro-drawing, nature collages and using all sorts of mixed media.

One of the coolest, that we all need to know more about is taking photographs with cell phones.

Up coming classes include Embroidery, origami and paper art on March 23, Fairy Gods in April, Watercolor Flowers in May. Other to be announced: Illustrated hikes, Pointillism, Bird Houses and De-stress Coloring. David encouraged us to check out all the art that is available at

PHILHARDBEGERPARK.ORG.

Members decided we need to make a field trip out to the Land Bridge this spring.

IN THE GARDEN MARCH

HERB GARDEN: Remove freeze-damaged herbs from your garden to prevent disease.

Mar. 15 is the average last frost date for our Zone 8 (b). **Update from Steve Brown The first of March is typically the last date, but we have gotten nipped as late as the first week of April

Thin annual seedlings planted in February.

Plant transplants of annual or perennial herbs and label cultivars for identification: parsley, French thyme (which does better in S.A.'s hot months than English thyme), oreganos, and Mexican mint marigold. *

Plant basil seed, which needs warm soil (day/night temps, above 60 degrees.).

Plant gingerroots shallow in area where they will receive afternoon shade. For edible ginger, purchase firm roots from the produce section of your local grocery store. (See February Yerba for detailed instructions on planting ginger)

GARDEN: Remove freeze-damaged vegetables from your garden to prevent disease.

Harvest: spinach, leaf lettuce, collards and other greens one leaf at a time as you need them for salads.

Sow: sweet corn, snap and lima beans and cucumber seed. Bush beans, polebeans, all sorts of beans, cantaloupe and watermelon seeds if the weather is looking good. Consider planting Southern peas, pumpkins, peanuts, squash and okra.

Plant: watermelons, squash, seed potatoes, carrots. Protect the plants if frost or hailstorm (hard cover of some kind) is predicted (expected).

Plant: warm-season annuals and vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers, petunias and Dahlberg daisies,

The first set of potted tomatoes can be placed in the garden now. Place Gro-web on the cages for protection from wind and cool nights.

Watch for Jewels of Opar returning.

Side dress onions with one cup of slow-release lawn fertilizer or 2 cups of organic fertilizer per 10 feet of row.

Gardening TIPS: Have you ever pre-sprouted your potatoes? This technique will give you a jump on the growing season. It is kind of like starting your vegetable seedlings inside. Just place your seed potatoes in a warm (70 degrees or so) spot with a little indirect light about two weeks before you intend to plant them. When the sprouts are about ½ -inch long, it is time to cut the potatoes into eyed pieces, dip in either wood ashes or rock phosphate, allow potatoes to callus over for a few days then plant.

Integrated Pest Control suggests Aphids are feasting on cole crops and other plants. Try to wash them off with a blast of soapy water until the predator insects get them in control. Oust aphids! Consider adding nasturtiums (aphid's favorite snack) to your flower bed. When the nasturtiums get attacked, just yank them out and destroy them, leaving your other plants in fine shape!

BIRDS: Yearling Purple Martins are arriving now and through the rest of the month, looking for nesting sites to colonize. Houses should be cleaned and ready to go. No matter what, keep the housing up through June, martins may arrive and begin nesting as late as the end of June.

Put birdbaths and bird feeders near protective cover, such as trees and shrubs.

After cleaning your birdhouses, put a few sticks in the wren houses. These birds are more likely to nest in houses they've already used.

It's time to clean and set out hummingbird feeders. Ruby-throated hummingbirds will attack creatures of any size that are a threat to their nests or food source. Spread feeders around your yard out of line-of-sight of other feeders to keep the peace.

Goldfinches are changing their breeding plumage now. Keep providing thistle and sunflower seeds for another month before they head north.

LAWN AND LANDSCAPE: It's too early to fertilize lawns. Instead aerate and top-dress with ½ inch of compost. Attend the SAWS Spring Bloom March 11 to get best advice on lawns. Wait to fertilize your lawn until you have mowed real grass twice. Fertilizing too early only benefits the weeds.

YARD: For an effective butterfly garden, select nectar flowers that bloom at different times.

Begonias can be set out in the landscape. Bronze-leafed, pink flowered begonias will do well in full sun. Pansies, stocks, calendulas and other cool-weather blooms decline quickly if they dry out. Keep them well watered. Let potting medium dry between waterings.

Consider geraniums for a splash of color on the patio or balcony. They can handle full sun until temperatures increase. Then move them to a location with less sun.

Cold sensitive plants can be placed on the patio now (check weather forecast) Be prepared to protect them if a late freeze threatens.

Add more mulch around hardy perennials, shrubs and trees if it is now less than four inches deep. Keep mulch away from base of tree trunk.

TREES: Rather than pruning trees, use spacers to spread branches at a 60 degree angle. Pruning pear trees heavily stimulates vegetation rather than fruit. Replenish the mulch of young trees. Place it in a donut shape so the mulch is over the roots but **not** against the trunk (at least three inches away) Thin peaches and buds to one fruit every 6 inches when they reach dime size.

ROSES: If established roses were not fertilized in late February they should be fed at once.

MAKE A PLAN: Peak wildflower time in the San Antonio area probably will be during the first week of April.



TOMATOES Some Issues and Solutions

Tomato Blossom End Rot : "Rot Go Tonic", mix 1 tsp. of gypsum, 1 tsp. of Epsom salts, and 1 heaping shovel-ful of compost in a bucket. Add a trowelful to each hole when you plant tomato seedlings, and say good-bye to blossom end rot!

Has anyone tried this solution? Tomato growers in our group would like to know if it has been successful.

We went further in our research to Plant Answers.com This is some of what they said.

Symptoms:

Blossom end rot is often misdiagnosed as a fruit disease. The blossom end of the fruit fails to develop normally, turning black-dark brown and eventually shriveling and becoming hard. Blossom end rot is usually due to a nutritional imbalance that is exaggerated by alternating periods of water stress.

Control:

Provide even soil moisture and follow recommended fertilization practices noting particularly the balance between nitrogen and calcium.

Tomatoes grow best in soils that have lots of organic matter. If possible, spread 2 to 3 inches of organic material such as compost, leaves, or rotted hay over the planting area. Mix this organic material into the top 4 to 6 inches of soil

If you plan to grow single plants, dig a hole 2 feet wide and 10 inches deep. Refill the hole with half soil and half organic matter. For this type of planting, mix 2 level tablespoons of fertilizer into this planting area. Fertilizing Add 2 to 3 pounds of fertilizer such as 10-10-10 for every 100 square feet of garden area. Spread the fertilizer evenly over the area, and then mix it into the top 3 to 4 inches of soil.

Watering: Water the tomato plants slowly and deeply to help them develop a strong root system. Do not let the tomatoes wilt severely, or yields and fruit quality will be low

When the first fruits are about 1 inch in diameter, scatter 1 level tablespoon of fertilizer around each plant. Scatter it about 6 inches from the stalks. Work it lightly into the soil. Water the plants after fertilizing. Fertilize the plants every 3 to 4 weeks with 1 to 2 level tablespoons of fertilizer

Another issue is EARLY BLIGHT, a fungal disease that attacks tomatoes and several related crops. In the spring, the fungal spores that cause the disease are spread by the wind. The disease is characterized by dark spots that appear on older leaves that later appear on younger leaves and stems. One way to avoid this disease is to wrap your plants with fiber row cover during the early spring when the spores are most likely to be spread. Be sure to remove the protection when the plants start to bloom because tomatoes are wind pollinated. Also, water splashed from the soil to leaves can bring disease, drip irrigate or use a wand to place water in soil without splash. (From previous In The Garden, contributor unknown)

THE GARDENING WORKOUT

(taken from the S.A. Herb Society Newsletter, March '00)

Did you know that 45 minutes of gardening burns as many calories as 30 minutes of aerobics? And, like aerobics, it will lower your blood pressure and cholesterol levels and help to prevent diabetes, heart disease and osteoporosis. Article from "The New Garden Workout" by Dan Hickey (www.house.net) Sunshine will add vitamin and melatonin to your body.

Research shows that even short bursts of moderate activity throughout the day has some health benefits, as long as each "burst" lasts at least 8 minutes, and the total for the day is 30 minutes. But, says Dr. William Haskell of Stanford University Center for Research in Disease Prevention, "These activities need to be of at least moderate intensity. A person has to do more than putter around a flower bed." His advice is to combine gardening with regular aerobic exercise. Still, gardening is a great way to lose or maintain weight. And many studies show that the more you enjoy the exercise activity, the more likely you are to stick with it. Jeff Restuccio, author of *Fitness the Dynamic Gardening Way* (Balance of Nature Pub., 1992), advises that you turn garden work into garden exercise. He recommends such techniques as bending your knees while raking, or placing a crate that requires you to step up and down as you move from one bed to another. Simply being aware of this duration and intensity of your gardening can turn the activity into a beneficial one. Here are some additional ideas offered by Hickey:

- 1) As with any exercise, take time to stretch and avoid marathon sessions.
- 2) Plan a daily gardening activity, even if it's just parking your car a mile away and walking to the nursery to buy your seeds.
- 3) Vary your activities. Break up strenuous chores with easier and more enjoyable ones.
- 4) Count the minutes Be sure your daily gardening is at least 30 minutes total. If you've been inactive for a while, build up to it.
- 5) Dig holes. Digging and shoveling are big calorie burners.
- 6) Make a compost heap. Turning compost is another good calorie burner.
- 7) Listen to your muscles. Increase range of motion or add weight or resistance to a garden activity if you feel you safely can.
- 9) Above all, don't forget why you garden!

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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