



NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY  
 NOVEMBER 2022

SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY  
 PRESENTS MARK PETERSON

Mark Peterson is an authority on trees, landscape, xeriscape and water. Recently, the Conservation Project Coordinator for the San Antonio Water System he published a study Rain & Reclaim Water Harvesting: Factors For Success... or Failure. He will address our group about the issue of most concern to us, the lack of rain in our area. Are we in trouble? What can we do to make things better? What is in our future?



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And how does the WaterSaver program really work?

Come join us for a clear presentation and a lively question and answers session on Thursday November 9

**SAN ANTONIO  
 HERB SOCIETY**  
 Mark your calendar for our  
 next meeting  
 NOVEMBER 9, 2023  
 3310 N. New Braunfels  
 San Antonio, 79209

Table theme: Water Conservation  
 Social at 6:30 Meeting at 7  
 All meetings are free and open to the public

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## TIME TO CLEAR OUT THE SPICE CABINET

In my opinion, someone should make a set of canisters that are different sizes but belong to a set. Like those old-fashioned aluminum canisters your Granny had. Flour was the largest, then sugar, coffee and tea. The theory went back to pioneer times when settlers went to town once a year. They had to know how much of each commodity they would need, because when you ran out you were OUT. The canisters were sized so you would run out of each at the same time, approximately. Why not make an herb rack with canisters the size of the quantity you use in a year? For me, onion powder and garlic salt would be large. Cayenne pepper would be the tiniest container.



Seriously, though, this is the time to take a hard-eyed look at your spice cabinet and your garden. Is the parsley in huge abundance? Harvest, wash, pat dry and put into the dehydrator. A huge crop will shrink down to a nice, useable size to put into your spice jar. The fresh green parsley has an intense flavor that perks up any dish. Be sure to use it as soon as you can, as it loses that beautiful color and its strong flavor over time. Harvest quarterly over the year and replace.

Other herbs and spices have different shelf lives. A lot depends on how much you cook and how often you open the jars. Onion powder always clumps up and is not usable for me, so I buy the smallest quantity I can so I can renew it often. Did you know you can make onion powder out of your onion harvest? I am not that ambitious, but it might have occurred to me if I had a huge harvest all at once.



Nutmeg, on the other hand, as long as it is whole, retains its punch, the essential oils that give it the flavor. I have a rasp that I use to grate it up, so a jar of eight nutmegs lasts many years.

The other half of the harvest idea is that you need to get rid of the old spices that have had flavor evaporate over time. Cinnamon comes to mind. And baking powder? That definitely needs to go. It is such a small quantity, and fresh makes such a difference. You know which ones you use all the time and which ones you bought for one recipe and have never used again. McCormick offers some suggestions for the length of time most are aromatic and delicious for cooking: Indefinite: Vanilla extract, salt, and that's about it.

Other extracts will fade in 2-3 years.

Whole spices: unground, such as peppercorns, whole allspice, caraway seeds, and more: 3-4 years

Ground spices: such as cumin, ginger, paprika and chili powder 2-4 years

Ground and whole leafy herbs such as basil, oregano, rosemary and most seasoning blends: 1-3 years

If you have large quantities of herbs that are dried, consider sharing with friends. Also remember that when you put them in jars, be sure to put the date on the label, so you know its age.

All of us have a few jars that have been sitting in the pantry for over a decade. It's okay to let these spices go.

## MORE FROM MCCORMICKS A NEW LIFE FOR OLD SPICE

You deserve to cook delicious food, and that starts with great ingredients! If you found pleasure cooking with your old spices, you'll find even more when they are replaced with new jars, full of fresher flavor and vibrancy. But what about those old spices? Are they truly a lost cause? Not necessarily.

There are 3 ways to bring back a little life to spices that are fading but not ancient, two involving heat:

1. A gentle toast in a skillet can revive a curry powder or five spice blend. Dump the full contents of the jar into a dry pan. Heat to medium-low and stir constantly until it gets noticeably more fragrant. Ground spices will burn easily, so don't walk away from this one. Allow it to cool before putting it back in the jar.
2. "Fry" the spices in hot oil immediately before cooking with them as an alternative. This method is especially useful for aromatic blends like curry powder or single spices like coriander or cumin. Heat oil in a pan and add spices, stirring as they begin to warm and release their long-hidden aroma. Then, continue with your cooking as planned.
3. Repurpose older spices by making a Spice Potpourri and add fragrance to your home without cooking. You can even make these as gifts if your old spices selection is enormous.

## LOVING YOUR SPICES (AND HERBS) EVERY DAY

Honestly, the best way to honor the spices and herbs in your life (and avoid having to ever throw them out) is to *use* them. Enjoy some spice love! Don't be shy when reaching for the curry powder or the allspice.

Many online recipes specify a moderate amount of dried seasonings, but if you like a recipe but feel it could be bolder, increase the seasonings a bit next time and see what happens. You may end up loving the extra boost of flavor. If you're cooking for someone with a sensitive palate, you might not want to be as generous with the more fiery spices like cayenne.

If we give our spices the same attention we give to all the other ingredients our favorite recipes call for, the quality of our cooking will surely be elevated to exciting new heights.

Photos by Becky Barnes, Marsha Wilson and Robin Maymar



It had only been fall for one month but it felt like winter on Monday, October 30th. A strong cold front had ushered in bitter cold winter winds and some welcome rain. The gray clouds were providing a chilly mist at the SA Botanical Gardens as a small group of volunteers arrived. There were five ladies braving the elements in hopes of making the SA Herb Society's section a bit more attractive: Robin, Patsy, Esther, Marsha and myself (Becky). As we surveyed the tasks ahead, Robin and Patsy started using pitch forks/garden spades to loosen the moist ground so the weeds could be pulled up from the roots. This will keep them from coming back and taking over. With the help of the recent rain and humidity in SA, the soil was very forgiving which made it easy to pull the weeds up, roots and all. Right near the gate leading to the rose garden, which is next to the Herb garden's section, the purple aster was exploding with purple flowers. Marsha even stated that she had never seen aster bloom like that before; it was definitely a pretty sight. Next to this bush there was a wooden barrel that Robin was excited to report having spotted a couple of new sprouts that she said hopefully could be the ginger coming back. All around this barrel the mint had become overgrown, looking wild and crazy, and we all agreed it didn't look happy. As a couple of us went to work trying to cheer up the mint, the rest were busy pulling all the new sprouts of grass and weeds that had spread throughout.

The Botanical Garden's generously planted several mum's that were blooming radiantly in pretty fall colors: yellow, orange, red, and magenta. These chrysanthemum's scattered around the gardens, while not herbs, are one of the most popular fall garden flowers in the family Asteraceae. The flowering plants gets its name from the Greek words for "gold" and "flower". Chrysanthemums contain Pyrethrin, a natural insecticide that repels mosquitoes, ticks and other pests like: ants, Japanese beetles, roaches, bed bugs, spider mites, and ticks. They also attract various pollinators, including bees and butterflies, making them beneficial for supporting local ecosystems. Chrysanthemums are also a host plant for aphids. Sometimes it is an issue in a garden if they are too close to plants susceptible to aphid infestation.

Behind the mums there are some sprouting herbs that we had to smell to identify between fennel and dill. After a sniff, it was identified as fennel and Robin said we should keep it there since it is going to seed. We left them for the birds. The lemon grass next to the fennel looked tall and hardy so we left it alone to continue to thrive. A small basil had sprouted from seed. It looked like the spicy or Thai basil. Robin suggested we leave it to grow.

Although our hands and feet were wet and cold we powered through to give the garden area a much needed makeover. This was made easier by three types of hot coffee provided by Cindy, which definitely gave us the pick-me-up we needed. On the other end of the plot there are some more beautiful mums along with a citron-



ella plant that the Botanical Garden's staff planted. This is a welcome herb that will help repel mosquitoes. This plant, which Robin called pergamum has many medicinal uses along with its pest deterrent properties. The essential oil obtained from citronella is a biopesticide that has a non-toxic mechanism of action, and has been registered by the United States Environmental Protection Agency as an insect and animal repellent. It also has many medicinal properties like wound healing, antimicrobial, anti-convulsant, and anti-inflammatory. All around this beneficial plant are some beautiful yellow flowers called Mexican mint marigolds which have taken off in their space. One of the last tasks before cleaning was cutting those flowers back.

After quickly cleaning and gathering our mess, we swept up and made plans to warm up with hot soup and beverages at WD Deli. We bundled up, scraped mud away and washed off to enjoy some refreshments and conversation. We enjoyed discussing current events, food, holidays, and of course gardening. Robin informed us of the next meeting's speaker, Mark Peterson, which turned our conversation to landscapes, xeriscapes, and front lawns around San Antonio. We discussed how this past brutally hot



and dry summer was so devastating to so many gardens and yard. This seems to have led to several SA residents getting rid of the grass in their front yard and moving to xeriscape designs with drought hardy plants. This is a much easier way to maintain a nice looking front yard in our climate. We are all looking forward to this upcoming meeting to learn more about this new trend. After all, this would help one to be able to enjoy the changing seasons all year and not wish for spring.



Let's enjoy what we have and what is in front of us; better than constantly wishing for something far away or unseen. You never know the beauty the season you are in may bring.

## **WEED AND GLOAT**

**Come weed with us at the**

**Botanical Gardens!**

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

**Next Weed and Gloat is scheduled  
for Monday, NOVEMBER 27**

**We meet at 9 A.M.**

**Contact [robinmaymar@gmail.com](mailto:robinmaymar@gmail.com) for  
simple safety measures we need to take .**

**See you then.**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

November 9 General Meeting with Mark Peterson Topic: Water Conservation and how to keep your garden going.

At our general meeting we will have some early Christmas decorations on our Sale Table. Lots of items both new and gently used/

Nov. 11 Fall Rose Show at the Garden Center 1-3 p.m. Come see a hundred varieties of the finest roses grown in San Antonio. Free seminar at 2 "How to Grow Roses" Come speak with certified rosarians on how to grow and care for roses.



November 26,27,28 Operation Christmas Cheer at the Garden Center Put this on your calendar right away. We have had so much fun all day creating wreaths, decorating cups, tying ribbons on things. This is a wonderful way to share the season with the whole city. Their ad says :”Nov. 27, 28, & 29 (possibly) 9 AM Come for an hour or stay all day! We come together to put together gifts of cheer for non-profit organizations in need. From babies to teens to adults. We also decorate wreaths and small arrangements as requested by the organizations. Learn to make wreaths,

table pieces, bows and children’s gift baskets/bags. Donations are welcome for this event. Chairman: Jamie Whitfield 864-933- 1589 “

December 3 Pictures with Santa at the Garden Center– Great for kids, grand kids, dogs and yourself. Cookies and milk usually served. There is a professional photographer, or you can take your own picture with your camera or phone.



December 6 Holiday Market and Social at the Garden Center We will have a sale table with both Christmas ornaments and objects but also our sachets, and many more herbal treats, just in time for Christmas shopping. Tell your friends to come shop here. There will be other booths with jewelry, plants, orchids, succulents, scarves, etc.

December 14 Herb Society Christmas Instead of a formal meeting, no Zoom, just us and a lovely get-together. Invite your friends. 3:30 doors open, Tea from 4:30 to 6: 30 (Sunset 5:37) More details at our November 9 meeting.



Plastic Supply is moving. Make a note of the new address 4314 Director Drive (210) 222-8091 We put this notice in the newsletter because we have used their tiny, food grade, plastic zip lock bag for all sorts of herb mixtures. They are inexpensive and come in a huge variety of sizes. If you have not been to this store, you should make the effort to visit. They manufacture all sorts of plastic related items. I am truly inspired every time I go by. The new address puts them over off of WW White road but they are worth the trip.

## REPORTS

### PANSY SALES

Since I mentioned preparing for pansies and setting up the beds in the TO DO I thought I would explore sources. November is a good time to plant your pansies.

**MASTER GARDENERS ORDER AHEAD SALE** The ad I saw from Master Gardeners says Poinsettia and Pansy Sale October 1 to November 30.

Order on line at [BEXARMG.ORG](http://BEXARMG.ORG) Ad says Pick-up December 7 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday December 8 8:15 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the BCMG Office, 3355 Cherry Ridge Drive Suite 208 78230

### HERB MARKET REPORT

Another Herb Market has passed. The customers at the Pearl were very friendly, but few were in a shopping mood. We set up our tent and tables, then moved them over, of course. We were located facing the grassy area where the water pads are. There were lots of other tents and vendors.



We sold four ollas, which we count as a victory, and numerous herbal products. Not selling: our cork creations. They do inspire the customers. "I have so many corks at home," they say, "I could make this easily." Sigh.

This was, however, the first time for us to use Venmo, which helped sales. Turns out the PayPal gizmo was obsolete, we will have to order a chip reader for our next sale.

Many thanks to all the Society members who braved the early dark, and the heat of the day to make our sale a success: Marsha Wilson, Cindy Moore, Joy Salmon, and Esther Sutton.

### SOLAR FEST REPORT

The week before our October meeting we had a small sale at Solar Fest. It was located on the south side on Green Line park. This was part of Brooks Air Base; the green line was one of the runways, we think.

Anyway, it was a breezy day with lots of sun. Unfortunately, there were very few customers. There were people passing by and looking but they all seemed to be out for walking exercise, and were surprised that there were exhibits and things for sale. Some wanted to buy, but had only credit cards. We were not able to use the PayPal gizmo, which turns out was obsolete.

Many thanks to Rudi Harst, Zet Baer, Cindy Moore and Annette Hoffman for helping with the sale.



# Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order by president, Robin Maymar, at 7:05

She thanked everyone for attending and welcomed new comer Roxanne Ramsey. She welcomed two guests, Tammy Zesemann and Ellen Berkey. Cindy Moore and Sandra Woodall set the table with a theme of Roses.

She introduced the crew that helped create the refreshments for the Garden Center meeting September 6 Marsh, Cindy, Sandra Gloria; and those who helped serve Patsy, Annette and Esther. All were applauded.

She reported on the sale at the Solar Fest and reminded everyone of the upcoming Herb Market at the Pearl on October 21 from 9 to 1. Maps were to be given to volunteers who would be helping at the Herb Market, but they were hidden away. Maps were emailed instead.

Finally, the president presented a prize to Joy Salmon, who won the Readers Contest. In the Yerba Buena, published October 1, there was a offer of a prize to anyone who read the Yerba and called the Editor. Joy was the only caller. She was awarded a lovely fall mum plant.

Weed and Gloat will be October 30 at 9 a.m.

She introduced our speaker, Fr. Gregory Ross who spoke on roses. Fr. Ross started his talk by encouraging us to plant roses now, in the fall is a good time to plant. After such a long hot and unforgiving summer it seemed to be too optimistic to think of planting a rose bush. The end of October proved him right, though. The rains came.

What is good soil for roses? High organic and good drainage. Make a mix of your own: 1/3 native top soil, 1/3 peat moss or compost 1/3 red Poteet sand (buy at local building supply), this is sand from Poteet. Or use Miracle Rose Soil or find good rose soil at Rainbow Gardens called Nature's Own.

Best advice, don't plant a \$30 rose in a 50 cent hole.

He uses Milberger all purpose 19-5-9 lawn fertilizer for his roses. Any general purpose lawn fertilizer will do well. Organics to add : alfalfa meal 1-2 cups around the rose

The Rose Society always has meetings the second Monday of the month. On February 2 of 2024 they always have How to Prune your rose, a live demonstration. This is well worth attending.

If a plant is diseased, and you remove and discard it, it would be wise to replace the soil where it was planted. Use Neem oil to protect against mites. Mulch in winter.

We were going to attach a list of all the roses with comments,. However, there was a disagreement between the original margins and the Publisher margins. Rather than waste time, I will just send attendees a copy by e-mail.

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.

**BUSINESS MEMBERS**

**WE THANK OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT.**

**MENTION YOUR S.A.H.S. MEMBERSHIP WHEN YOU PATRONIZE THEM!**



**Nature's Herb Farm**

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**David's Garden Seeds**  
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Poteet, TX 78065

**Website:** <https://davidsgardenseeds.com/>

**Did You know SAHS Members get a 10% off discount at these local businesses?**



Rainbow Gardens : 8516 Bandera Road  
Rainbow Gardens 2585 Thousand Oaks Drive  
Fanicks Garden Center:  
1025 Holmgreen Rd 78220  
San Antonio Gourmet Olive Oil  
1913 S. Hackberry, 78210