



NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY
 FEBRUARY 2024

JUST IN TIME FOR VALENTINES DAY

Meg Ware from the San Antonio Rose Society will be our speaker. Everyone needs a refresher course on how to prune your roses. We have had the cold weather, and in a few weeks we will need to prune. Learn the proper techniques so that your roses will grow strong and healthy.

Meg is a great authority on roses. When they moved into their first house in 1970, which was newly built, the developer gave them a catalog from Jackson and Perkins Roses. They bought four for their home. Then, on a visit to an uncle and aunt in Dallas they were encouraged to join the Rose Society. Her uncle, who is British, said “You can learn so much about how to care for roses if you join a rose society. They have been members ever since. Meg will have printed information on roses, both pruning and growing. Please join us for this important meeting on one of our favorite herbs: Roses



Note: wear red, for Valentines day.

**SAN ANTONIO
 HERB SOCIETY**
 Mark your calendar for our
 next meeting
FEBRUARY 8, 2024
3310 N. New Braunfels
San Antonio, 79209

Doors open 6 Buffet 6:30

Presentation 7

All meetings are free and open to the public

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UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY MEETING Thursday the 8th. Remember to Renew dues

February 14 : Valentines Day Wednesday

YARROW BROCHURE WRITING CHALLENGE Friday February 16 at 110 W. Brandon 10 to 12. (Please sign up)



WEED AND GLOAT FOR FEBRUARY
Monday February 26

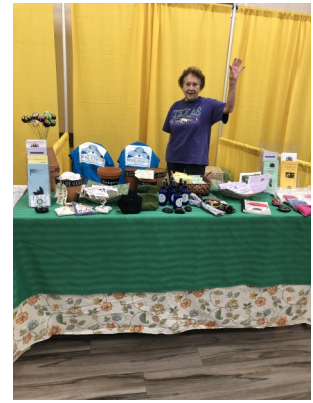
EARTHWISE LIVING DAY is on March 2

This is an easy day, because the set up is the Friday afternoon before.

Located on Evers Road in Leon Valley by the library. The facility is large and has easy access

We are invited to sell our wares and to invite new members to join us.

There are a lot of booths to visit, so we need a number of people so that someone can always be at our booth. Recently we have noticed that we always have a stream of customers because our wares are unique. (Sign up sheets)



SAWS SPRING BLOOM MARCH 9 from 9-1

Again, set up is the day before, so we may need one or two people at SAWS headquarters on E. Mulberry Ave. the afternoon of March 8 to help set up.

We have lots of customers, so lots of volunteers will be needed. This is open air, so hats and sun block and layers also necessary. Sign up sheets at the February meeting. All who sign up will be notified as to times and parking (which we hope will be easier than in past years)

Sign-up sheets will be at February meeting.

NEXT GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY MARCH 14

EARTHDAY AT WOODLAWN LAKE PARK. April 20

Earthday is more of a Public Relations event. We set up early in the morning and just visit with people, letting them know that there is an Herb Society and it is open to the public. It is a good time to tell people our "Why." We will have a seed planting event for kids, information about herbs and presentations on Ollas and how they can help conserve water. Sign up sheets at March meeting.



Culinary Contributions

GLAZED ROSE TEA CAKE

Adapted from the *San Antonio Herb Cookbook*, Vol II, p 229.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup sugar
5 tablespoons butter, softened
½ teaspoon vanilla
1½ tablespoons rose water (purchased, we recommend Cortas brand found at Central Market)
1 large egg
1 large egg white
1 ¾ cups flour (all purpose)
1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon salt
1 cup plain, fat-free yogurt
3 – 4 tablespoons fresh or dried, chopped organic rose petals
Cooking oil spray
Optional: 3 rose geranium leaves (for bottom of pan)
Garnish with sugared rose petals (recipe available upon request)

GLAZE

1/3 cup powdered sugar, sifted
1 teaspoon rose water
¼ teaspoon vanilla

METHOD

Preheat oven to 350 ° F

Beat sugar, butter, vanilla and rose water at medium speed until well-blended (about 5 minutes)

Add egg and egg white, one at a time. Beat well after each addition.

Lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cups. Level with a knife. Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Stir well.

Add flour mixture to wet ingredients, alternating with yogurt, beginning and ending with flour mixture.

Stir in rose petals. Spray 8-inch loaf pan, place rose geranium leaves in pan; then pour batter into pan.

Bake 1 hour or until wooden pick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Cool cake in the pan 20 minutes on a wire rack then remove from pan. Cool completely on wire rack.

GLAZE To glaze this cake, combine sifted powdered sugar, rose water and vanilla. Spread over cooled cake. If desired, garnish with Sugared Rose petals.

Yield 10 servings.

Tip: This cake can be frozen for 1 month without glaze by placing it in an airtight container or in a heavy-duty plastic wrap/foil. Unwrap and thaw at room temperature for 2 hours before serving. Glaze if desired. (Robin hopes to make this cake for the February meeting– so photo to follow...)

ROSE HIP TEA/ROSE HIP HERBAL TEA

Recipe by Jean Dukas

Rose hips produce a mild, fruity tea that is refreshing and pleasantly tart. Bring 1 ½ cups of water just to a boil, lower heat, and add 1 teaspoon crushed dried or 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh organic rose hips; simmer for 30 minutes. Strain and enjoy!

Rose hips can be brewed with herbal teas, or an herb choice can be added for a more distinct flavor. Use your imagination! To make rose hip herbal tea, add an herb to the rose hip tea, and steep for 10 more minutes. Strain and drink hot, or serve cold over ice. Once brewed, rose hip tea retains its flavor and vitamin c benefits for the rest of the day. The act of making tea helps the mind relax and drinking tea allows time to reflect and

Preventative Maintenance for the House and Garden: By JWS

1) Vents in foundation, soffits and eaves: Make sure screens are intact to keep out squirrels and other rodents, birds and insects. Knock off wasp and bee nests from eaves (if close to human activity, otherwise they are beneficial).

2) Gutters and downspouts: Scoop out leaves, seedpods and other debris. Flush the gutters and downspouts with a garden hose. Look for pools of water that reveal sags in the gutters. Straighten bent gutter hangers.

3) Exhaust fans: Clean the blades. Oil the motor. (* If you have a computer, it has an exhaust fan and the whole unit would need dusting / cleaning.)

4) Air Conditioner: Inside, clean or replace air filter; have furnace inspected (this should be done in late fall). Outside, prune or clear any leaves or shrubbery that is restricting the circulation of air (this should also be done in late spring). Refrigerator and freezer coils should be cleaned at least once a year (twice if you have pets) and drain pan cleaned with disinfectant.

5) Wood decks: Nail any raised boards and hammer in any popped nails. Refinish with stain or paint if raw wood is exposed. Look for signs of decay and termites in wood near or in contact with the earth.

6) Siding: Look for blistered or peeling paint. Decide if it is time to paint your house. Check for popped nails and loose or cracked clapboards. Caulk when necessary.

7) Windows: Be sure you have good storm windows and doors. If you don't, this should be a high priority for older fixtures. Also look for any cracks around glass (if glass "rattles", redo the bead), sashes and window (inspect inside and out) frames that could be leaking air.

7) Sliding doors: Clean the tracks. Check the locks and tightened the hardware.

8) Screens and screen doors: Inspect, repair and clean the screens and screen doors. It may be necessary to paint them before re-installing.

9) Fences: Hammer in popped nails (if this is a continual problem, use deck screws instead). Tighten loose posts. Paint or stain if raw wood is exposed.

10) Fireplace: Clean and empty the ash pit if the fireplace has one (use ashes in garden or compost pile).

11) Water heater: Drain the sediment from the bottom of the tank at the drain cock (remove aerators from faucets inside the house to prevent clogging when water heater is filled). Inspect for leaks (water and gas) or excessive rusting. Consider having tank insulated to reduce heat loss (read instructions and cautions).

12) Ornamental iron railings: Sandpaper rusted areas and treat with rust-inhibiting paint.

13) Electrical circuit: Identify the fuse or circuit breaker that controls each circuit; make a diagram and affix it near the box.

14) Sewer lines: Inspect the grass above the sewer lines. If it is greener than the adjacent grass, it may indicate a leak in the line. Have septic system inspected and cleaned if necessary.

15) Power lawn mower: (Read owners manual for instructions, should be done in winter when not in use) Wash or replace the air filter. Replace the oil in the crankcase with new oil. Inspect cutting blade, sharpen monthly and replace when necessary.

16) Well water: Take a water sample to a laboratory to test for purity.

Consider planting a green manure or cover crop on part of your vegetable garden this fall. If you select a legume such as vetch, clover or peas, this living layer of plants will add nutrition to the soil by fixing nitrogen as its grows and later adding organic matter to the soil when it shredded and rototilled into the soil. Cover crops also help prevent weeds and can break the cycle of pests and disease that often occur when crops are not rotated.

Meeting Minutes

MEETING MINUTES

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

She welcomed our guests, old friends Susan, Yolanda and Madeline. She thanked Sandra for providing the equipment for the tea and Patsy for providing the tea for our meeting. Then she thanked Cindy for the beautiful table decorations.

It was reported that we have money in our bank account. If anyone needs a more formal Treasurer's report, it can be provided.

She mentioned that the last meeting had been an informal tea held at 4:30 in the afternoon. She asked how people had liked coming at an earlier time. There was no strong response either for or against; however, most of those who liked the earlier hour did not come to our regular evening meeting.

Under new business, members were asked to fill out the membership forms and pay their annual dues. Many took theirs home to either mail back or bring back to the next meeting.

Members were asked to sign up to help with the Yarrow brochure. The goal is to have it by the February meeting, but if necessary, at least before Earthwise Living day, our next sales event.

Weed and Gloat is scheduled for January 29

The Herb of the Year is Yarrow. Our presentation, given by Joy, Patsy, Marsha, Robin, Cindy and Becky detailed all the aspects of growing, harvesting, drying and using yarrow.

Joy, who has yarrow growing in her garden, gave us the short version of the long history of yarrow. It has been grown and used since the time of the Neanderthals. The Greeks particularly mentioned it, as it was had a styptic effect and could stop bleeding. That is why the red yarrow we had in the garden got the name Nosebleed, not because of the color but because of the medicinal effect it had. People would make a poultice of ground yarrow to put inside the nose to stop bleeding.

It was also used for colds, insomnia, runny noses.

Yarrow propagates by seed, but if you have it already growing, it also propagates by forming runners. These grow across the ground and grow a new plant. She offered to bring some shoots when they begin to grow this spring.

Becky reported that yarrow was used to regulate body temperature due to fever. Its astringent properties are used in skin care. Other uses were for herbal tea, colds, anorexia, indigestion, diuretics, to treat cramps during menstruation and to induce sweat. Care must be taken in using yarrow as it contains thujone, also found in marigolds and ragweed. Not clear how toxic it could be as use may involve only a small amount of the toxin. The other place that yarrow is mentioned is in absinthe. This liqueur has had a bad reputation and was not sold for a while. It has now been reformulated. The leaves and stems have a ketone in its essential oils. This can be dangerous in large quantities. However, it is generally safe in small amounts in

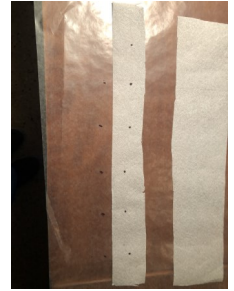


beverages. One caution was that yarrow might be dangerous to use during pregnancy. Becky also mentioned that yarrow was used in mosquito repellents as well.

Marsha suggested we rip our lawns out and plant yarrow. It grows prolifically, is happy in rocky spaces and propagates easily. She brought hand-outs which said that 171 different yarrows had been identified. She said that the four that are the best non-seed grown types that work for most of the country are: Moonshine, Coronation Gold, Red Velvet and Greek Yarrow. She also gave us a list of the 13 hardy cultivars. We have ample information to put together our brochure celebrating Yarrow, the Herb of the Year



Robin finished by describing how we volunteers carefully marked strips of toilet paper and glued the almost invisible yarrow seed on using special seed glue (Elmers) to grow a seed strip, mix potting soil with water to the consistency of a thick bran muffin batter, put it in tiny seed growing frames (one was demonstrated) place a piece of the paper with one seed in each cell, cover and keep warm. Small bags of four different yarrows were distributed. Each bag had a seed strip to plant. The seed roots will grow through the



soft tissue paper.

FIVE WAYS TO LOSE WEIGHT IN 2024

I have a friend who made an emergency move to San Antonio. She put her household goods that she wanted to keep in a small storage unit. Five or so years later when she was strapped for funds, she was thinking about closing down the storage. She reckoned how much she had paid: \$50 for 12 months for 5 years= \$3,000. She could have bought all of those items again with that much money.

Do you have some perfectly good items that you no longer use? Time to recycle!

Here are some suggestions:

Books:

Something you just read? Give it to someone who would also enjoy it

A child's book? Children's shelter, Haven for Hope, a small library in your neighborhood, or Friends of the Library (Call your local to see if they are participating.) Lastly, can sell on-line.

Luggage: Shelters only take NEW luggage, maybe because of risk of bed bugs. Goodwill Children's shelter ~~uses suitcases instead of garbage bags for children's belongings.~~

Furniture: Use Marketplace for sale, FreeCycle to give away, call Salvation Army for pick-up

Blank Christmas Cards, envelopes, writing paper: to nursing homes, or, close to Christmas, contact Bexar County jail.

Brief cases, Purses, Belts, dressy office clothes: Dress For Success

HOW TO CLEAN TERRA COTTA POTS

White vinegar

Ideally, you would use 1 cup of white vinegar (5% acidity) for every 3-4 cups of water.

How to clean terracotta pots from limestone?

Often, some water and a laundry brush are efficient enough to remove saltpeter, but sometimes you also need to add a third ingredient: buffered acid.

In this case, here are the 5 steps to learn how to clean the terracotta pots from limestone. Before starting, be sure you wear gloves to avoid acid contact with the skin and wear a mask to avoid breathing any harmful smokes:

- Empty the pot completely and help yourself with a sponge to eliminate any soil residue on the bottom and edges of the pot
- Fill a basin with buffered acid
- Dip a brush in the acid and then, pass it over the entire surface of the pot
- Brush everything away quickly before the acid is absorbed with a laundry brush

Rinse with water and let the pots dry upside down

Do these recommendations on how to clean terracotta pots from limestone always work?

Buffered acid is not always 100% efficient, so if it doesn't work, try to dilute some muriatic acid with water and repeat the above-described procedure.

I got this off the internet. My only problem is I could not find anything that explained what a buffered acid is. Just be aware that all acids are dangerous to work with.



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 February 26

We meet at 10 A.M.

Contact robinmaymar@gmail.com for

Gear we need to bring .

See you then.

HOW ARE THE YARROW SEEDS COMING ALONG?

Did you get your yarrow seeds into the ground yet? David, of David's Seeds, where we purchased the seeds tells us that the fertilization rate is 70%

We had the heating pad under the tray of cells, mixed our potting soil and put a tissue-seed in just six cells. We covered them with the clear lid provided, turned a light on above during the day and waited. The tissue paper got very soft and about five days later, the seed was on the end of a little stem about an inch long. Marsha report that her seed bed looked like a tropical rain forest. I agree, the top of the cover is full of water.

Unfortunately, a few days later, the seeds had taken a nosedive. There seemed to be less water overall, but there may have been some mold growing, too. This damping off is a hazard for growing plants from seeds. One seedling is still growing, so we shall see what happens next.

We only planted six seed, because we wanted to find a marker that was small enough to help identify the cell rows. Finally decided to cut up larger white plant tags and use pencil to mark the rows. Will put more of each seed down. More news later...



This picture looks like some horrible baking disaster. If you look very closely you can see the tiny threads of the stem in the first cell.

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

Our website: [https://
sanantonioherbs.org](https://sanantonioherbs.org)

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.

Weed and Gloat

1/29/2024

Words and pictures By: Becky Barnes

“All that is gold does not glitter. Not all those who wander are lost: the old that is strong does not wither, Deep roots are not reached by the frost.” — J.R.R Tolkien



The early risers arrived at the Botanical Gardens bright and early to begin the weeding in the Herb Society's garden section. Robin noted that around 9 AM it was a chilly 48 degrees and you could see the effects that a week of freezing temperatures had on the plants as some of the fleshier herbs had collapsed. The Thai Basil and Mexican Mint Marigolds needed trimming back; they had gone to seed and looked like black shadows of their former selves. The birds might enjoy their seeds, but there is lots of vegetation and seeds around, so all the brown and crispy dead parts were trimmed. Weeders made sure to leave four to eight inches at the base for plants to regenerate. The Mosquito Pergamums in the big barrel had also died back but we hope with trimming they will return from the root. The rosemary in the center barrel was expected to be fine, as rosemary usually comes through frost without issues but not so in this case; perhaps the root had not developed enough to protect the plant. Luckily some rosemary plants in the ground survived the cold temperatures so not all was lost.

I arrived to find Robin, Patsy, Esther, Basil, Mary Jo, Joy and Cynthia all hard at work. I began helping pull off the heads of the marigold flowers which contain the seeds to replant. Along with the parsley, the thyme, mint, Angelica, Artemesia, fennel, germander, ginger, and sage (along with a few others not mentioned) all survived the cold winter temperatures and were ready to start growing again after some love and care from the generous volunteers.



The beautiful blue sky and shimmering sun made for a gorgeous day and the temperature was warming nicely. As we shed some layers and took breaks and chats as needed, we had some welcomed visitors. We certainly get good support from Botanical Garden staff! Chris stopped by to offer anything else that we might need in the way of tools. There were so many of us, and each bringing a favorite tool so we really did not need anything. Then director Mr. Lebay came by to see our efforts. Finally, Dennis Joy came to talk about what we would need in the future. At the top of our list: Compost! And we have seeds from David's seeds, that we have glued to paper to make seed strips. We may be able to donate them to the greenhouse for propagation. We also have a running list of requested herbs, but it is too early to put them in this month. We leave it to his good judgement as to which ones to supply.



The day was just becoming more delightful as Marsha and Gloria joined our group to help make the garden beautiful again. They were just in time as some volunteers that had worked for a couple of hours had to go or were losing energy, but they happily took over to help with anything else that might need to be done. As they were working, some of us began taking stock of all that was left in the garden. The Artemisia was growing in abundance and Marsha shared that this plant can survive up to 10 below zero! Robin shared that Lawrence of Arabia talked of riding through fields of Artemisia and how the fragrance was overwhelming.

After my curiosity had been piqued I did a little research to learn that Artemisia is a large, diverse genus of plants belonging to the daisy family Asteraceae, with between 200-400 species. Common names for various species in the genus include mugwort, wormwood, and sagebrush. It is a tall perennial with lacy foliage. An excellent xeriscape plant, it is very drought tolerant.



The Golden Fennel bulbs had been hit by the frost and were a bit soft, but will hopefully come back. Along with herbs that gardeners had put in the ground in this garden are some plants mother nature decided to spread to this spot. There are Poppy's coming in on their own (pictured to the left near the border) as birds and wind can carry their seeds. Lots of wild garlic had sprouted which looks like grass but definitely smells different! The Oxalis that had sprouted naturally had all died off, but some looked like it might be coming back. Even when the weather and father time decide to end life, mother nature comes along and restores what is needed. Winter can be a dark, cold time but with patience, growth and light are right around the corner to restore life and add balance.

As I was packing up, the group was planning to go for coffee and refreshments somewhere nearby. This is a wonderful time to socialize and discuss all things gardening and just about



TO DO IN THE FEBRUARY GARDEN

*There is a psychological distinction between cutting back and pruning.
Pruning is supposed to be for the welfare of the tree or shrub;
cutting back is for the satisfaction of the cutter.*

– Christopher Lloyd, *The Well-Tempered Garden* (1973)

WEATHER

If possible, save and use rainwater.

Thunderstorms in January and February could indicate a light freeze in spring

HERB GARDEN

Prepare soil for planting so that it is friable and workable. Till or fork well, adding compost and/or coarse sand for drainage.

Shape overgrown rosemary and sage

Unless you have a large garden that takes a long time to prune, be patient and wait until mid-month (or end of month) to start cutting back

Plant seeds of cool season annuals when soil temp. reaches 45 F. These include cilantro, dill, nasturtium, parsley, chervil and onions from transplants. To have a continuing crop of popular dill and cilantro, many S.A. gardeners plant them every several weeks throughout the spring months as hot summer weather causes early maturation. Prune and clear debris from mature perennials (examples are Mexican mint marigold, sorrel, chives, or lemon verbena). Frost victims (or sections thereof) should be removed when it is warm enough to recognize evident losses. Beware of removing discouraging looking plants that are simply still dormant. Frostbitten tops can offer some protection; don't prune too soon! Watch for new growth before cutting back dead wood. Late in the month divide roots of invasive or overgrown herbs (examples are chives, mints, oregano and yarrow). Prune shrub roses after Feb. 14th. Shape overgrown rosemary and sage.

BIRDS

It is time to place (repair/replace) all of your birdhouses. Titmice, chickadees, wrens, woodpeckers, owls and martins soon will be looking for nesting boxes. Also watch out for visiting red-winged blackbirds.

Look for goldfinches starting to get color.

INDOORS: Sow marigold and periwinkle seed in flats or containers for garden planting in spring.

OUTDOOR GARDEN

Beds If you didn't do it in January, check pH in various non-native flower beds (native plants need very little, if any supplements added to soils) and add sulfur or other acidifying supplement. Till composted organic matter and shredded cereal (Elbon) rye into vegetable garden soil.

Control chickweed now before it deposits more seed.

Plant your Spring crop of broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, carrots and asparagus over the next month, the earlier the better. For the highest quality broccoli, harvest before the heads begin to bloom. Secondary heads will allow a second harvest several weeks after the large head is cut. The leaves can be harvested with the second growth of smaller heads. They are edible, cook them like cabbage.

Potatoes, English peas, onion, radishes, sweet peas and pansies can be planted now.

Plant tomatoes in containers now and into March. Varieties good for this area "Merced", "Bingo". "Celebrity" and "Tycoon". It is our understanding that there will be no Rodeo Tomatoes this year, as Master Gardeners will no longer be having a display at the Rodeo

Mulch tomatoes and peppers to conserve water and help blossoms set. Use tomato cages, wrap with "thinsulate" or other crop protector to prevent damage from wind. Have a cover in case of hail storm.

Control chickweed now before it deposits more seed.

This is an excellent time to transplant established trees or shrubs because they are dormant.

Prune fruit trees: Prune peach and plum trees to an open vase shape. Pears and apples should be pruned to a modified central leader. Prune fruit trees, crape myrtles and most shrubs now. Wait to trim early bloomers such as Texas mountain laurel, Lady Banksia roses and conifers.

Vegetables such as tomatoes and peppers and flowers such as begonias and petunias can be started now from seed. The seedlings will be ready for transplanting in the garden in 6-8 weeks

Drop mower one or two settings. Wear quality respirator, goggles.

Water and fertilize winter annual bedding plants.

Bugs Reapply SLUG and SNAIL bait to pansy, strawberry and primrose beds.

Do not spray for insects **until insects appear**, Aphids may soon appear on new growth but they are easily controlled with almost any good insecticide, sprayed just on the new growth. They may even be washed off.

Lookout for aphids (plant lice) that may develop on new growth of daylilies, photinias, roses, also on tree trunks. Hibernation for ladybugs is ending and breeding begins now, Watch (and wait) for aphid infestation in roses and other plants before applying "Ladybug Lures" or other attractants.

ROSES Check for SCALE on roses very early this month and spray if needed

3rd Week of February Spring pruning of your roses can begin (if weather is decent, if not, you can wait till first of March)

FLOWERS Use Gerbera daisies like winter geraniums. They are decorative on the patio and can tolerate cool weather. Cover them for below-freezing spells. Geraniums and gerbera daisies make great container plants in late winter. Be prepared to protect the flowering from late freezes.

Plant gladiolas now and every 2-3 weeks for an extended show of blooms.

Spring isn't far away, and this is the time to consider the cool-season annuals that will prosper and bloom in the next 2 to 3 months before summer rolls into town. Each of these annuals will tolerate light frosts and freezes, and each should be available in the South Texas nurseries now and over the next several weeks. Pansies and violas (midwinter mainstays); Pinks (related to carnations, second only to pansies in winter hardiness); Snapdragons (massed colors show up best, but commonly sold in mixes); Petunias (early planting gives best results, multiflora "Supertunias", the small-flowering forms laugh at summer heat); English daisies; Calendulas (looks like lush chrysanthemum blooms, use in masses in the back of your floral beds); Larkspur (botanically delphiniums, best and most common is the annual reseeding one. Plant it toward the backs of your beds and let it go to seed); Stocks (snapdragons on steroids, fragrant); Iceland poppies (ultimate in cheerful colors); Sweet alyssum (low border flower, fragrant); Swiss chard (yes, same plant that people eat, ornamental types looks great in the landscape); Bluebonnets (let them go to seed after flowering).

Plant nasturtium, cosmos, sweet pea, coreopsis and Mexican poppy seeds. Plant fruit trees now. They live longer if planted in an 8' x 8' raised bed. Sow marigold and periwinkle seeds in flats or containers for garden planting in spring. Fertilize blooming pansies with 1/2 lb. of ammonium sulfate per 100 sq.ft. of bed area or with dried bloodmeal. Plant dahlia tubers in late February and early March. Mow/ cut Asian Jasmine and feed it with a slow-release lawn food. Columbine and bluebonnet seedlings planted now will bloom this spring.

A WORD ON SAVING MONEY

It seems so odd to me that something old fashioned would be so controversial. My daughter said that by hanging laundry out to dry instead of using an electric dryer would save about twenty-five dollars a month. I am not so sure that is true as there are just two of us. But I thought I would give it a try.

We bought a clothes line from the local True Value Hardware store. It had to be ordered from their catalog. They had a variety of contraptions for hanging clothes both outside and in a laundry room or bath room. We chose an umbrella style one that you can spin around. This is an advantage because you can stand where the sun is not in your eyes and turn the line. It also folds up. We did not realize the advantage of that until a tree fell on our first one, mangling it to death. If we have heavy weather, we always fold it up and bring it in.

Once I had a good collection of clothespins I was in business. And I love taking the laundry out on a beautiful sunny day. I usually pull the laundry out of the washer in reverse order. The big or heavier pieces come out first, then shirts, towels, socks and lastly underwear. As I hang things on the line, the smallest pieces fit in the short lines close to the center. Heavy denim goes on the outermost lines, as it takes longer to dry and it has more sunshine and air circulation on the outside.

When dry, I fold as I return things to the basket. Sometimes I am industrious and bring hangers, laying the hung things over the top of the folded basket of laundry.

It is easy exercise to be standing a few minutes, suspending clothes from the line. I always think it is a good workout for my shoulders and upper body.

So, don't ask me why the neighborhood association got so huffy about a simple clothes line. With the money I save I can afford gas for the car, and take a needy friend to a doctor's appointment or buy coloring books for the Sunday school students. Besides a solar powered, wind driven device should be considered the height of modern technology





MY 'WHY'

Matt Paxton (of Hoarders television program) was talking about his “Why” Matt’s dad had died at 52 and his son asked if he was going to die at the same age. His son challenged him. He was worried because he would only be seventeen then. This caused some soul searching. His son asked if he knew the food he was eating was not good for him, why did he keep eating it.

Matt told his son he was looking forward to being a grandfather and expected to live longer than his dad. He then put the word “Grandpa” on the wall in his office. It helped him change his eating habits and to lose the weight he knew he needed to lose.

So, what is my “Why?” Over the last three years I have become more efficient at being president of the Herb Society. I have learned to delegate. I have had lots of really good people willing to step up and do all the work to keep the club going. “ Why?” are we promoting herbs: growing, cooking, using?

I think, like Matt Paxton, *grandma*. I want to be healthy, active and happy in my old age. Even though there is no big marketing push to do the things that will keep us healthy, active and happy, we can choose to do things that will benefit us the most. Things like:

Go outside every day. With air conditioning, and wonderfully sealed windows, we have a micro-climate inside our homes there is no true exchange of fresh air. It is only by going outside that we can replenish our lungs with cleaner air.

Exercise in small, simple ways every single day. Use the stairs. Walk to the mail box. Hang out the laundry. Rake the leaves. Prune the roses. Carry the groceries to the car. Put the trash can far away from you desk chair so that you have to get up out of the chair to throw the paper away. Get up out of the chair to answer the phone. Be mindful when sitting down- don’t drop into the chair, use upper leg muscles to lower yourself down.

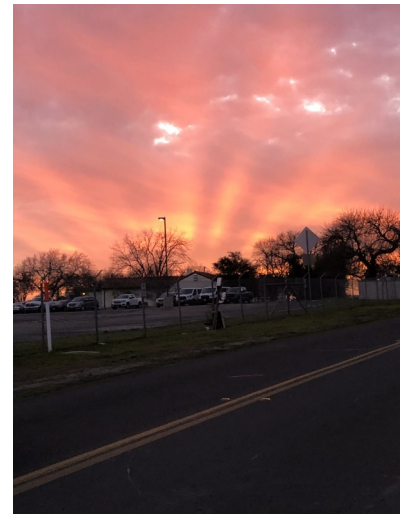
Eat something green from your garden every day. Cook more. Eat out less

Spend time with friends every day. In person, on the phone, by mail.

Challenge yourself to solve puzzles... like “Why do the pictures I download always end up sideways? And how can I use more keystrokes and less mouse? And Can I actually find the part of MailChimp that lets me add new names?”

Every one of these activities dovetails with our Herb Society.

My “Why?” is answered.



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