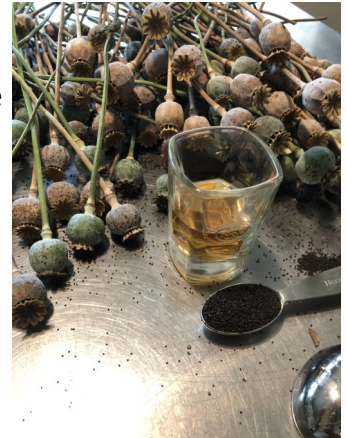




La Yerba Buena

NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN ANTONIO HERB SOCIETY
MAY 2024

Welcome Sam Rodgers naturopathic herbalist and lapidary, our speaker for this month. Sam has some unusual ideas for us about using herbs. A long-time previous member of the Herb Society, he brings us his experience and knowledge. Just a brief conversation brought new information. For example: What is the connection between the poppy seeds and the alcohol? In this picture? When should you gather the seeds? How can you preserve poppy seeds? A hint here, there will be poppy seed packets. Seeds can be sown or used for cooking. But, when do we sow them? And how can we use them in cooking?



Sam Rodgers will not just speak about poppy seeds, but a wide variety of herbs to be used for health and vitality, as well as cooking. Come Thursday night for a lively conversation about herbs.

**SAN ANTONIO
HERB SOCIETY**
Mark your calendar for our
next meeting
May 9, 2024
3310 N. New Braunfels
San Antonio, 78209

Doors open 6 Buffet 6:30

Presentation 7

All meetings are free and open to the public

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Culinary Contributions

SPINACH AND CREAM CHEESE CASSEROLE

Serves 16

Not From the California Cookbook! As we did the research for this excellent recipe, it turns out the origin was not what we thought. It may have been a family dish from the Maymar family and this is Milan's version.

1 16-ounce frozen chopped spinach, or equal amount of fresh from the garden.

Salt and pepper to taste

1 8-ounce package of real cream cheese, softened (10 seconds in microwave)

½ cup melted butter, divided

1 package garlic and onion croutons (Crush in bag to make smaller pieces)

6 ounces real Parmesan, divided and grated (Reggiano Parmegano can be substituted) (do not buy shredded as it does not melt properly)**

Method:

Cook spinach according to packaged instructions. Drain.

** Combine spinach, salt and pepper, cream cheese and ¼ cup melted butter.

Mix well

Spoon into a 2-quart greased casserole dish.

Combine ¼ cup butter and croutons, stir well.

Spread croutons over spinach mixture.

Sprinkle the remainder of the Parmesan 2 tablespoons shredded cheese on top. **

Bake 350 degrees F. for 20 minutes, until bubbly.

This is a perennial hit at our Tuesday night dinners.

** 6 ounces of Parmesan cheese is too much. Two tablespoons of Parmesan is too little. We are currently looking for the REAL original recipe. In the mean time, divide into equal parts. Add the first part in with the cream cheese, use the rest for the topping.



UPCOMING EVENTS

WEED AND GLOAT MAY 27th

This is Memorial Day, but we meet anyway; picnic later

NEXT GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY May 9

FESTIVAL OF FLOWERS– Volunteer sign-up sheet at May 9 meeting.

Saturday June 8 at Shrine Auditorium 901 N. Loop 1604

Adults \$8, Children under 10 are free.

SUMMER DATES TO REMEMBER:

June, July, August– no Herb Society meeting

September 12 Herb Society first fall meeting.

WEED AND GLOAT Last Monday of the month

June 24

July 29

August 26



FESTIVAL OF FLOWERS

Festival of Flowers: Saturday June 8 at Shrine Auditorium 901 N. Loop 1604

Adults \$8, Children under 10 are free. Open 9 am to 5 pm

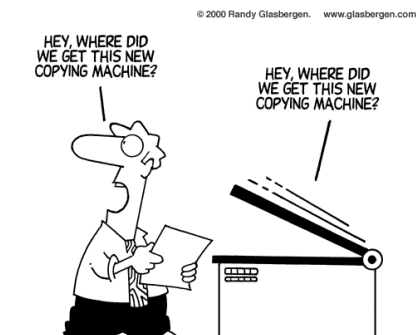
Indoors and air conditioned. Plenty of parking. Flower shows, plant exchanges, and seed exchanges. Lectures on all sorts of topics. Tons, and we literally mean TONS of vendors of all sorts of clever things for gardening, your yard and environment.

There is a place to eat. Not sure if there is a place to park the Husband to watch TV, but there might be...

WANT A COPY?

The Yerba Buena newsletter can be printed out... the WHOLE thing. If you want just a page, or a recipe or a copy of a photograph, they are available. We can send you an electronic copy.

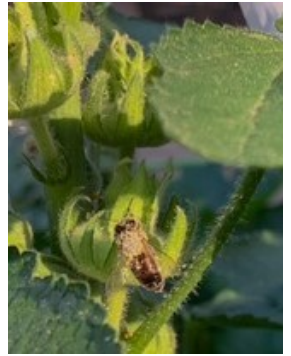
Contact Robin at robinmaymar@gmail.com



Meeting Minutes

HONEY SCIENCE April 11, 2024 Notes by Joy Salmon, Robin Maymar,
Photo Daune Smith

Dr. Ferhat Ozturk was our speaker. He is a Professor of Practice at UTSA. He began with a medical disclaimer, that his information was not medicine, and we should always consult a physician. There are over two hundred components of honey including: natural therapeutic agents, acids, vitamins, amino acids, minerals, enzymes, flavonoids, phenolic acids and antioxidants. All ancient cultures used honey for medicinal purposes. Bees collect all these chemicals from nature and they are infused in the honey.



Because the bees process the pollen they collect by chewing it up and then regurgitating it to form pellets which they place on their legs. They then deposit the pellets into a cell within the hive by carefully scraping them off using their other legs. Dr. Ozturk tells us not to leave syrup out for the bees, as that is not something they should be processing into honey.

Honey comes in seven major colors. From white to a dark amber color. The flavor varies greatly and depends on where the bees have collected the honey. The most common sort is clover honey; but, honey can come from all sorts of trees and plants: pine, fir, spruce trees, oak, as well as all sorts of flowers. The two oddest were honey dew from aphids and psychedelic honey. The psychedelic honey is documented as the first chemical warfare weapon. Harvested from rhododendron plants in Turkey, the honey affected the heart and caused the soldiers who ate it to be incapacitated. Having left the pots of honey looking as though they were retreating in haste, their enemies returned to kill them.

Honey is a very durable product. It has been known to last over 3,000 years and still be edible. And bees themselves have been around 12,000,000 years.

Doctor Ozturk told us that the use of honey is being explored in many, many areas of medicine: allergy, wound care, Parkinson's, bed sores, brain conditions and obesity. Honey has medicinal properties: anti-inflammatory, and gastro protective. It is complex, so it is absorbed slowly by the body. It is paradoxical in that it can be used to treat both diarrhea and constipation. The key is the temperature. For diarrheal complaints, use warm (not boiling) water to dilute and mix with honey. Take on an empty stomach. For constipation, use cold water with honey so the gut can absorb more water.

Most widely recognized is honey's ability to heal wounds. He presented some graphic "before" pictures with astonishing "after" pictures of deep wounds that had healed. He also demonstrated the power of honey to keep skin from scarring. He said that he put honey on any band aid that he used on himself or his children.

In order to get top notch honey, he suggested that we know the bee keeper and buy honey directly from him, rather than a commercial brand. This may prevent us from finding diluted or adulterated honeys.

This article does not do justice to all of the information that Dr. Ozturk gave us. We envy his students, and those doing research with him as he is on the cutting edge of the science. Definitely made us all want to return to the classroom.

We did make a copy of his lecture on Zoom. If you would like to listen to it, we would be glad to share. We cannot guarantee that we captured it very well, as we are new to the process. Contact robinmaymar@gmail.com.

WEED AND GLOAT APRIL 29

9 a.m. 79 degrees and humid.

Lush! Lush is the word for our April Weed Party. The herbs are mostly two feet high and mostly coming into bloom. The Bee balm, covered with buds had two or three already in bloom. Given a week it will be covered with color.

The poppies have all gone to seed pods. We carefully cut them on long stems and stowed them into plastic bags, for later de-leaving and drying. The seeds, we hope will all fall into the bags. We left the salvias as they add a lovely color and much needed pollinator food.



Half an inch of rain the past week has made the soil soft and easy to weed. We removed a huge swath of mint, as the mint in the barrel is going well. We pulled some mint up by root to give to passers-by, with our printed invitation to the next meeting. More mint we cut and bagged to also hand out. Visitors today were from Boerne High School and the Children's Vegetable Garden.

There were about twelve blades of grass on the poor beleaguered lemon grass. The gardeners did not like the way we left it higher, came through and scalped the poor thing. We wonder if it will ever recover.

On the other hand, the plants we put in last month are developing strong roots and growing well. We added four yarrow plants, most to the area where the mint had been. It is sunny there and should grow and spread.

Our early birds were Joy and Esther, then Patsy, Gloria and Mary Jo joined. Eva came for a short while, but the humidity had too much of an effect. Maybe fall weather will be better timing for her. Lastly, Laura Laura joined us. She had not visited for a long time. We were all glad to welcome her back and son Odin. She arrived for just a brief time in the garden, then went with us all to W. D. Deli for lunch and conversation. Well, attempted conversation. A very loud customer and his very loud family sat behind us. Everyone in the whole restaurant probably heard everything he had to say. We sort of huddled together to talk.

Goey lemon cake is still the best there.



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 May 27

We meet at 8 A.M.

Contact robinmaymar@gmail.com for
Gear we need to bring .

See you then.

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—All members

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



FROM THE PREZ

To Do in the May Garden– check out both the Lawn and the Flowers sections. More to do there than usual.

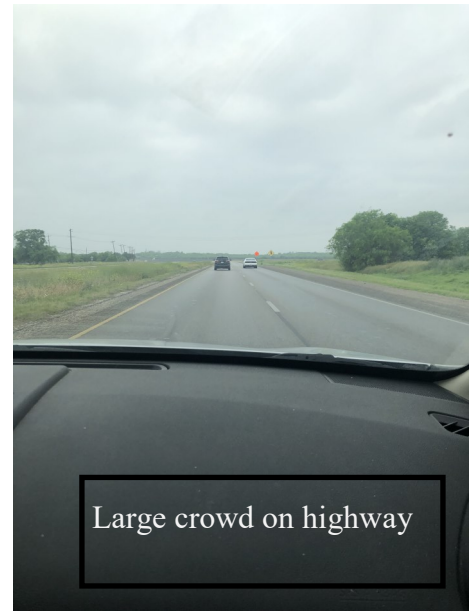
ECLIPSE!

You can learn a lot on a road trip. Our's was last minute, spontaneous, lightly planned and superb.

Cindy was willing to drive (she loves to drive, just in case you did not know) But then discovered that the lights were not working. Last minute trip to auto parts store with son-in-law worked out that wrinkle.

It looked like it would rain the day of the eclipse. We decided that even if we were under clouds, we could still experience the dark and the coolness.

Ignoring the critics who told us it would be bumper-to-bumper, no gas for miles, long lines to get food, no public restrooms, we packed lunches and set of early. We got bored early looking for long lines (there were none) and began to enjoy the road.



Passing a subdivision named La Fincas : Google says "La Finca" translates to "ranch" in English. The word "finca" is Spanish for "farm" or "house," and in English usage, it refers to a piece of rural or agricultural land. Fincas are typically located near a plantation or woodland, and may have a cottage, farmhouse, or estate building present. In Spanish-speaking countries, "finca" can also refer to a large farm or ranch, especially a plantation in tropical Spanish America



Castroville: the Texas turn-around, where you come to an underpass, but can take the u-turn to go back the other way, without having to wait for the light. This clever engineering maneuver was invented by road engineers here in Texas. Other states began to copy, and eventually even other nations. The Chinese have Texas-turn-arounds all over now. Cindy calls them Screwie-Louies.

Sabinal : for a very small town, they seem to have very efficient snack-bar gas stations. First time we have ever seen a completely hands-free bathroom. The silver bar over the ultra-modern sink has three tiny lights. Put your hands under the First and soap comes out. The Second is warm water, the Third air blows your hands dry. We got coffee there. Christine went next door for a milk shake. No lines. No waiting. Then on our way.

Rio Frio: we scouted for places to stop on the way back, garden shops, souvenir stands with coffee available. Still no lines.



Then climbing in the hill country to Leaky: Leaky is a German name, The German rule is when you have two vowels, you only pronounce the second, so Leaky is not like a boat with a hole in it, it is Lake-y.

Lewis Ranch on the right, we missed it, had to turn around at the Frio River. Back to the sign, then a wander over hills, through thickets of mesquite and into a large meadow. A pecan tree gave nice shade. Another tree further on was a good place for the tarp and the blankets and chairs. We ate: peanut butter and jelly, grapes, figs, deli sandwich, popcorn,. There were butterflies everywhere. A woodpecker hammering on a tree to the south. Hawks flying overhead. Birds calling, mockingbirds, mourning doves. The sky had high scattered clouds, then some darker ones approaching. Cindy had left her glasses on the kitchen counter, Christine had two pairs. We realized the eclipse had begun, jumped up, moved chairs, pulled the big tarp out to the center of the meadow. Cindy brought the extra seat cushions and we lay on our backs to watch.



The moon approached from the right and quietly inched across the face of the sun. The air got still. As we lay on our backs I could still feel the sun hot on my skin. We wrapped our hands around the lenses of the glasses to keep ambient light out. Perfect view!

Then my skin got cold, I took glasses off to look at the meadow. It was approaching darkness. The whole world was quiet. No bugs, no birds moving, no sounds, and darkness, darkness. The moon snapped into the center of the sun. The clouds parted, we could see the corona dazzling, seething, breathing sunshine from behind the moon. The much longed for sight! And we, in a huge meadow in Texas were witness.

Pause here to take in the magnificence of the universe...

And just as suddenly, the world rushes in. We gathered our gear and packed the van. Reluctant to hustle back to crowded highways, we dawdled, looking for wild flowers, taking photos and gathering seeds.

Just in case : Fels Naptha (if you can still find it) is a good scrub for skin, in case you have brushed up against poison ivy in the wild. Aloe Vera is good for wasp stings.

Rio Frio: rearranged the whole way-back in the van to accommodate lots and lots of plants.



Road: Cell phone maps do not give the driver and navigator any context. You see only the tiny space your car is traveling in. The map, on the other hand, tells you how far it is between the last place you passed and the upcoming town. Distances are easily estimated.

Made us think of all those things in our computers that give us no context- just little pieces of the larger picture: the terrible headline, or the click-bait that has us reading more. Or the TV reporter, standing in front of the most devastated building in town, but the camera (this never happens) if backed up, shows minor damage to the rest of the area.

Sabinal: parked at the gas station. Car beeped that we were too close. “No, I’m not. I’m perfect. Just ask me”, says Cindy. Good to know.

Castroville: make a note, Haby’s Bakery is still there (we did not see it going out). Look carefully as you go into town from San Antonio, it is on the right. Get there early for the best selection. Ok, there was a little slow traffic, but it was 5 pm on a workday and everyone was going home.

Cindy, always the thoughtful driver offered to bring Sandra and Christine to their homes so I could attend a Rose Society meeting.

Post Script:

“Do you know any place that is accepting return of eclipse glasses? I thought the public libraries were but not so. “

“No, I am putting mine in a scrapbook box. And marking down when the net total eclipse is...just in case.”

“Is the next total eclipse in 20 some years? If so I will give you my 2 glasses, I will not be here.”

“Pessimist!”

“Realist!”

Writing on calendar “August 12, 2045. Oh, good , a Saturday. Let’s see, do you think when I am 96 I’ll still be spry enough to get to Oklahoma or Colorado?”



2045 AUGUST						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2

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TO DO IN THE MAY GARDEN

If you have knowledge.

Let others light their candles in it.

-Margaret Fuller, author, 1810-1850

Week: 1. Comic Sans, 2. Calibri 3. Arial 4. Comic Sans

HERB GARDEN Start harvesting herbs as many perennials bloom this month. Plant summer everlastings (examples are globe amaranth, sweet Annie, cockscomb, salvias, tansy, etc.). Plant lemon grass and continue to plant basil. Weed and water as necessary. Hot rainy spells are hard on herbs as they do not like humidity. Solutions are good drainage (raised beds are a necessity in most of our area), a good quality soil from a local source and mulch.

Herbs should be gathered in dry weather, first thing in the morning before their essential oils evaporate in the sun. Hang bunches of herbs upside down to dry so that the oils flow into the leaves. Once dry, store them in airtight containers away from sunlight and they should last for several months.

Cut and collect fresh herbs early in the morning. The oils in the leaves are highest then. If you're drying them for use later, hang them upside-down, this will help keep the oils in the leaves.



GARDEN There is still time to plant tomatoes. Use the largest plants available. Plant okra and southern peas. Fertilize container plants every week or two with liquid fertilizer. If you fertilize your tomato plants heavily with a nitrogen fertilizer at planting time, you will likely get very large plants but few tomatoes. Instead, wait until your plants have produced small tomatoes (about the size of a large marble) and then apply a handful or so of fertilizer to each plant every week during the growing season. You may not have 10-foot-tall plants but you should have buckets of vine-ripened fruit to enjoy and share with friends and neighbors.

Fertilize vegetables. Side dress carrots, beans, squash, okra, peppers and other vegetables with 1 cup of slow-release lawn fertilizer per 10 ft. of row. For highest quality, harvest crookneck, zucchini and other summer squash when they are immature and tender. Protect vegetables such as squash, eggplant, okra and tomatoes from harsh direct sunlight to keep them from burning or wilting.

Plant peppers, southern peas and okra.

Keep summer squash, peppers, tomatoes, green beans and other vegetables harvested to maximize production. If the weather has cooperated, we should have an abundance of LADY-BUGS. Avoid use of pesticides and let the ladybugs do their work. Their larvae can eat as many as 400 aphids a day.

FLOWERS Fertilize established potted hibiscus (every 4 to 6 weeks with a granular hibiscus food) and bougainvillea (every 2 weeks with a water-soluble fertilizer) on your patio.

Plant caladiums, coleus, begonias and firespike for color in shady locations.

Harvest columbine seeds now. Place stalks in paper bag to collect seeds. Harvest poppy seeds also.

Zinnia, lantana, firebush, sporrans and VIP petunias planted in full sun will add color to your landscape.

Plant zinnias, marigolds and cockscomb (celosia) seeds. Divide and transplant plumbago, sultana and pentas.

Plant lantana, zinnias, vinca, gomphrena, salvia, moss rose, purslane, firebush and verbena for color in full sun.

Columbine seeds are mature. Plant them in containers in potting soil now and they will be ready to transplant in fall.

Cut off all spent amaryllis and day lily blooms so that they will not form fruit (affects next years blooms).

Remove faded petunia flowers to prevent seed set or cut back halfway to encourage a fresh crop of flowers. Feed container-grown plants with a balanced fertilizer such as 20-20-20. Be sure to water before fertilizing.

Perennial selections in nurseries are excellent. Choose vigorous summer and fall blooming plants. Use scissors to thin out flowers and herbs you're growing from seed. Thinning will improve the quality of the flowers and cutting scissors will not disturb roots. New plants require frequent watering to establish their roots. Prolonged dry soil can cause permanent damage.

Periwinkles (Vinca minor) planted now will bloom through the summer in full sun. Be careful, however, to water the plants at their base or with drip irrigation; they are susceptible to a blight caused by on their foliage. Plant esperanza and blue salvias, both are water-wise summer bloomers. Plant iris, spider lilies, gloriosa lilies and caladium.

LAWN/YARD If your lawn or plants are turning yellow, apply a chelated iron supplement to the soil (results are slower, but longer lasting, using a "granular" form of iron) or as a foliar spray to correct iron deficiency, which causes CHLOROSIS (the yellowing).

Fertilize your lawn with a slow-release lawn fertilizer. Choose a fertilizer that is high in nitrogen and low in phosphorous and potassium. Many soil test are showing high amounts of phosphorous and potassium. (The "right" formula depends on your soil conditions, have it tested every 3 to 4 years or just watch the weeds in your yard, they can signal deficiencies or excesses.)

Prune spiraea, quince and Indian hawthorn shrubs after blooming is complete, if needed. Trim perennials of dead wood from last year. Prune suckers from crape myrtles.

Now is a good time to seed Bermuda or Buffalo grass. Sharpen mower blades. Dull blades tear the grass, which makes plants more susceptible to disease.

Re-apply iron supplements to lawns and acid-loving shrubs and trees to avoid drought-stress chlorosis. Mulch those shrubs. Be careful with the string mower around tree trunks. Girdled trees will

die. Partially girdled trees will grow slowly and be susceptible to other stresses.

Raise mower blades to summer mowing height (2 ½" to 3" for St. Augustine, 1" to 1 ½" for Bermuda). Leave clippings on lawn; they nourish the grass. (* If lawn is infested with annual and perennial weeds, keep weeds from flowering but gradually raise mower height over a couple of weeks.)

Mulch shrubs well now to help them survive the hot, dry summer to come.

Keep peach trees well-watered as long as there is fruit on the tree. Pick when the green background on the fruit changes to yellow

Water lawns only when blades first show signs of wilting (when your footprints do not spring up as you walk across it) in the morning. Avoid watering in the evening.

ROSES Bush Grooming - Make sure all blooms have been cut (deadheading eliminates a haven for thrips to reproduce) from the first cycle. Cut to five leaflets when removing old blooms. Cut out any spindly, cluttered growth (any canes crossing or growing toward the center of the bush) which is an ideal place for spider mites and fungal problems to start. Cutting out blind shoots (short stems that are not vigorously growing), check for dieback (stems turning black & moving downward) from previous cuts and any old or dead wood. Try and open the bush as much as possible to provide good air circulation and make it possible to get better coverage with your spray materials.

Selection: Although May is a little late to be planting a new rose bush, it can still be done. Cut back top growth back to about the size of your root ball, do not leave any buds forming. Plant the rose bush according to directions and water well. Continue to water until new growth is seen. Buy and plant adapted roses such as antiques, David Austin's and well-proven hybrids. The old roses will have the largest and most vitamin C filled hips. .

Planting: Prepare beds (1,000 sq.ft.) by mixing the following into existing soil to form a raised bed: 6" compost, ½" lava sand; ½" expanded shale, ½" of decomposed granite, 20lbs. of alfalfa meal, 20 bs. cottonseed meal, 30 lbs. of wheat bran/cornmeal/molasses soil amendment, 20 lbs. of sul-po-mag. Soak the bare roots or rootball in water with 1 tbsp. of Garrett Juice (or seaweed) per gallon. Settle soil around plants with water - no tamping.

Green wood cuttings can be made now, using one of the many rooting methods available. May is the best time to bud and now is a good time to learn how. Most serious rose growers will want to learn to bud the varieties not readily available commercially.

Mulching - This is a very important key to having good late spring and summer growth on your roses. There are some good combinations to use for mulching such as: 1) Lay down 2" of compost and on top of that put 1" of chopped up leaves (oak works well). 2) Lay down 2" of aged horse manure and on top of that put 1" of chopped up leaves. 3) Lay down 2" of mushroom compost and on top of that put 1" of grass clipping (St. Augustine preferred, not Bermuda which may carry seed). Mulch does a number of things for your roses including preserving surface moisture, protecting feeder roots from the heat, retards weeds and encourages the natural soil processes.

BIRDS As outside temperatures increase, it is important to rinse and refill hummingbird feeders twice a week or more. Pour the old sugar water on a rock or in a bowl with a sponge for the butterflies

Goldfinches have migrated back up north! Watch feeder (especially if it is the “upside down” type) and take it down if not in use.

Even when the American goldfinches leave, you can attract lesser goldfinches, house finches and an occasional painted or indigo bunting to the Niger seed thistle feeder.

To attract songbirds to your yard during dry weather, place a bird bath in an “open” area that is about 6 ft. from cover. You can enjoy their songs while helping to meet their water needs

PESTS If **GRASSHOPPERS** are ravaging your gardens, use a general-purpose insecticide, sweeping downward from top to bottom of plants.

Look for **POWDERY MILDEW** on crape myrtles, euonymus, zinnias and other plants. Use *Safer Garden Fungicide*, *Neem oil*, or *Immunex*, *Triforine* to control. Read label carefully before applying.

Look for **EARLY BLIGHT** causing large yellow blotches on bottom sets of leaves of tomatoes, use *Neem oil*



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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Natures Herb Farm

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Email: naturesherbfarm@att.net

Website: naturesherbfarms.com



Rainbow Gardens

8516 Bandera Rd,
San Antonio, TX 78250

210) 680-2394

<https://www.rainbowgardens.biz/>



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