The Poppy Post

Autumn 2021 Issue





Autumn is Here!

My favorite season is Autumn and it holds some wonderful memories for me. I grew up in Southern California and as a child, I'd walk home from school and pick up leaves of varying Fall colors and interesting patterns – red, orange, yellow, and brown – and I'd sandwich them and shaved crayons between two pieces of wax paper and have my grandmother iron the sheets together so that all of the colors and leaves melted into one beautiful piece of Autumn art for the wall. I remember brisk evening walks where the wind would blow leaves from the trees and how they would swirl along the sidewalks. We'd pick pomegranates from our neighbor's tree and buy pumpkins from the local fruit and vegetable store. And who can forget the hours of football being watched!

I still love to do these Autumn activities. I'm a cold-weather lover, so I'm thrilled that the nights are getting longer and the weather is cooling. Some mornings now have a decidedly nippy feel to them, and the evenings are cooler despite some pretty warm days here in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Weather Channel has promised a mild Autumn for California – I hope that this happens! Now if we could just get some rain....

I see changes in the garden too – the leaves on some of my fruit trees are starting to wilt and yellow, the last of the pears are ready to come off the tree, and the basil doesn't look as robust as it once did. I'm harvesting what remains and in about 45 days and in the quiet of the season, I'll be harvesting the roots of my Elecampane, Valerian, Marshmallow, and Mullein medicinal plants. I may plant a Winter garden this year, so there will be prep work required for that.

This is a great time to acknowledge and thank Mother Earth for her bounty. Spend some time outside feeling the season and connecting with her!

Lisa-Marie Maryott NCAL HSA Unit Chair

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In This Issue

General Unit News – pg 2

What To Do in The Garden Now – pg 3

Our Garden Update – pg 4

Herb in the Spotlight – pg 5

Nature's Medicine – pg 6

Bread and Budder, Recipes – pg 7

Cocktail Hour, Recipes – pg 8

Thyme Niew-Place Spell – pg 9

Herbs and Horses – What??? – pg 10

Thyme-line, Calendar of events – pg 11

General Unit News

July Unit Meeting - Container Gardening



Member Shawna Anderson was our July unit meeting presenter on *Thrillers, Fillers, and Spillers Container Gardening*. Shawna taught us about the importance of having three types of plant elements in each container – plants that are taller, larger, and stately ("thrillers"), plants that grow over the sides of the container ("spillers"), and medium sized plants to fill in between ("fillers"). She showed us many examples of planted containers so that we could understand this concept and to see which plants work

SUN

Thriller 'Pennisetum
'Fireworks'

Fillers - Salvia
'Cranberry Red',
Viola 'Purple' &
Gaillardia 'Arizona
Sun'

Spiller - Lotus
'Amazon Sunset"

well with each other. Shawna educated us on insects and pests and the types of tools needed to tend to our container gardens, and then she demonstrated putting together a container with these three

plant elements. This was a Zoom meeting and was recorded. It is available in our Members Only section of our website, www.norcalifornia-herbsociety.org.

August Unit Meeting - Annual Business Meeting

We had our annual business meeting and election of officers at our August meeting. This meeting was via Zoom and was recorded. The recording is available on our Members Only page of our unit website, www.norcalifornia-herbsociety.org.

September Unit Meeting - Harvesting, Using, and Preserving Herbs

Member Denise Koroslev was the speaker at our September unit meeting at Rodgers Ranch. The topic was *Harvesting, Using, and Preserving Herbs* which was perfect to kick off the Autumn season. Denise took us out to our Herb Society gardens and showed us various herbs that are useful both culinarily and medicinally and how to harvest them. It was a very warm day, so we didn't spend a lot of time in the direct sun! She then led us back to the shaded area where she shared ways to use the herbs and how to preserve them for future use. Member Lana Rocha who is also a member of the unit's *Wheel of the Year for Sacred Living* study group laid out a beautiful Autumn altar in the garden, all made from natural materials like nuts, flowers, and feathers.



Interested in Western Natives? Our unit is looking for two facilitators for a new West District study group that will focus on native herbs and plants found in our Western states. Meetings will be held monthly and each meeting will be led by the facilitators or HSA members from the region being discussed. Contact Lisa-Marie Maryott at lisamarie@norcalifornia-herbsociety.org if you are interested in being a facilitator.

What To Do In The Garden Now

By Shawna Anderson, ACCNP

We continue to harvest the fruits of our labors as we move into Autumn, and prepare our gardens for Winter slumber....



October Garden Maintenance

- If you aren't going to plant Fall and Winter gardens, be sure to use a cover crop such as fava beans or crimson clover to add nitrogen and fertility back to your soil.
- Plant cool season vegetables from transplants such as kale, collard greens, mustard greens, Swiss Chard, Spinach, lettuce, arugula, cabbage, peas, Bok Choi, from seed Turnips, beets and carrots.
- Keep seedlings moist, and don't forget to irrigate if we continue to be rain-free.
- Good herbs to plant: Rosemary, Sage, Parsley, Thyme, Oregano, Mint, Chives, Lavender, Winter Savory, Marjoram, Hyssop.
- For color in the garden, plant mums, violas, pansies, snapdragons, stock, primroses, cyclamen and Iceland poppies.
- Harvest Roselle buds.

November/Early December Garden Maintenance

- Plant sweet peas for a long spring show, as well as bulbs, tulips (put in fridge away from fruit 2 weeks before planting), daffodils, hyacinth, crocus, Sparaxis and Ixia.
- It's time to plant onions and garlic.
- If you grow plants in order to use their roots (e.g. for medicinal purposes), now is the time to harvest them (e.g. Ashwagandha, Elecampane, Valerian, or Marshmallow).
- Put your hardy perennials "to bed" by cutting them down about 4" from the base, and cut the herbaceous perennials all the way down.
- Continue to water as needed until the rains (hopefully) come.
- Cut back hardy perennials such as rudbeckias, salvias (hardy ones only), and penstemons. This puts them "to bed" for robust growth in the Spring.
- Clean your garden beds, removing any remaining weeds or annuals past their prime.
- Prepare for your Winter Rest!



FALL PLANT SALE! 35% OFF All Plants!

Shop at the nursery in Vacaville, CA, and online at our website!

Sale runs thru October 17th

www.morningsunherbfarm.com

<u>Garden Chatter</u>

What's going on in our garden

Work has continued through the Summer in the Rodgers Ranch herb garden. We've had some great harvests of plants like lavender, rosemary, and bay. Members were able to take these cuttings home.

The pollinator bed has done really well this year, despite the gopher problems we are having all around the ranch property.

Here's a picture of one a Bright Lights Cosmo with a friendly visitor.

This time last year, we were planting our Healing Garden. Unfortunately, the gophers went after quite a few of the plants there, even those in cages. But the plants that remain are a testament to the power of herbs in the garden! We'll look to plant more in that bed once we have a game plan around how to better protect the plants.

This Fall, we plan to rehabilitate the spiral bed, which has served us well for ten years. We'll be adding some Sonoma mix to this bed as well as others.

Despite the long hot summer, the dwarf winter savory (Satureja montana), French tarragon, and red-veined sorrel are all thriving.

Our intrepid members Debbie Arnold, Lynda DeVol, and Shelly O'Connell kept our garden watered all summer. We appreciate you!



The Salvia bed was trimmed a couple of months ago, and the plants are back in their full glory!

Many thanks to Kevin O'Connell and Boy ScoutTroop 405 members Chris Huynh, Patrick George, and parent Victoria George, who braved the heat on

our last garden work day. Their combined efforts resulted in the completion of our ongoing sheet mulching project. What was once a weedy expanse is now a blank canvas.

And many thanks to everyone who has volunteered in the gardens – the gardens wouldn't look as great as they do without your support!



Geraniaceae Nursery is Still Open!



There's been rumors that the Geraniaceae Nursery in Richmond is closing... but that is not true! I recently heard from owner Robin Parer and she is still very much in business and has no plans to close. If you've never been to Geraniaceae, and if you love scented geraniums, you must visit the nursery. They carry 150 different scented leaf pelargoniums as well as Angels, Martha Washingtons, Fancy Leaf and Stellers. Call for an appointment to visit (415-269-4168) or you can order online at http://www.geraniaceae.com.



A Thyme for All Seasons

By Denise Koroslev

Supporting the immune system should be a year-round concern, not just during the winter cold and flu season. Thyme (Thymus vulgaris) steps up to do the job. Thyme is the best herb for stimulating the thymus, a major gland of the immune system. It is a great pick-me-up when you have low energy and an excellent remedy for colds, sore throats and congestion. It is also a wonderful culinary herb, adding flavor to many dishes.

Description: Thyme is a hardy perennial herb with a woody, fibrous root and numerous hard-branched stems reaching from 4-10 inches high. Tiny elliptical green to gray-tinted leaves are set in pairs along the stems, topped with small blossoms of white or lilac color.

History and uses: Thymus vulgaris, is known as the garden herb, and Thymus serpyllum is the wild herb growing on hillsides in Southern Europe. A member of Lamiaceae, the mint family, some believed that wild Thyme was better for medicinal purposes, leaving the garden Thyme for the dinner table. Today, the garden Thyme has proved itself beneficial in culinary and medicinal applications, especially the hot and spicy varieties. When used for specific medicinal purposes a stronger dose may be needed, but daily use, especially in a tea, can prove to be beneficial.

Thyme has been used for a variety of cold and flu symptoms for thousands of years. The first-century physician Dioscorides wrote, "Everyone knows Thyme." He recommended a beverage of Thyme with salt and vinegar for driving out phlegmy matter through the bowels. (Thyme was also used as a vermifuge to help rid the body of parasites.)

Thyme's antispasmodic properties and hot and drying energetics help to release stagnant conditions such as mucus in the lungs, and can calm coughing spasms. Recent studies are beginning to confirm the long-time use of Thyme for bronchitis. Double-blind studies are showing applications of Thyme producing faster healing times of acute bronchitis in patients over those given a placebo.

Traditionally, Thyme was used for many types of bacterial infections. As a tea or tincture in mouthwashes, it can be used to treat mouth sores or inflamed gums. A gargle made with Thyme tea or Thyme infused honey can soothe a sore throat.

Thyme essential oil is a natural antiseptic rich with Thymol. From the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, when waves of plague swept across Europe, Thyme was used as a germicide and during WWI, thymol was used to treat the soldier's wounds and to purify the air of hospitals and sickrooms. There is even evidence of Greeks burning it in their temples to purify and cleanse them.

As a culinary herb, it shines in slow-cooked casseroles, soups, and dishes containing meat, poultry or game. It is a strongtasting herb and can dominate other milder flavors so smaller amounts should be added initially and increased if needed. It is also a favorite in salad dressings, marinades, tomato, and eggplant dishes, and often used in the Creole and Cajun dishes, jambalaya and gumbo. Teas from the numerous scented varieties can be enjoyed daily. Morningsun Herb Farm in Vacaville offer several varieties including Lemon Thyme, Lavender Thyme and Spicy Orange Thyme.

Magic of Thyme: A Seventeenth century manuscript in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, England included a recipe for a magical oil using wild Thyme "garnered near the side of a hill where fairies used to be." allegedly enabling one to see fairies. Placed beneath the pillow, Thyme ensures restful sleep and thankfully a lack of nightmares. Wearing Thyme in your hair or carried in an herb bag was said to give courage, energy, and good health.

Around the House: Thyme essential oil makes a great addition to cleaning products and disinfectant sprays. Add several drops of the essential oil to baking soda for scrubbing sinks and tubs. Fill a spray bottle with half distilled water and half witch hazel, adding several drops of Thyme and lemon essential oils for a wonderful room spray.

Growing and Harvesting: Thyme can be grown from seed, but growing from cuttings is much easier and more successful. Take a three-inch cutting from the very tip of a plant, apply rooting hormone, and plant in either sterilized sand or vermiculite. After roots emerge in about six weeks, transfer to a small container until a root ball forms, then plant directly into the garden (after last freeze and soil is 70 degrees) or a larger container. Thyme appreciates a neutral soil, well drained, and in direct sun. Growth will be determined by the variety with some spreading while others remaining compact.

The leaves can be harvested throughout the season, but to harvest the whole plant, cut it back to two inches before it flowers in midsummer. The plant will bush out again giving it strength to get through the winter. Planting several Thyme plants will allow you and the bees to enjoy the beautiful flowers on plants not harvested.

The tiny leaves can tediously be plucked from the stems before drying or the entire stem can be dried and the leaves removed after drying.

Mullein - Useful Plant, Herb, or Weed?

By Lisa-Marie Maryott, Clinical Herbalist

It is the policy of The Herb Society of America not to advise or recommend herbs for medicinal or health use. This information is intended for educational purposes only and should not be considered as a recommendation or an endorsement of any particular medical or health treatment.



For those of us who live in the West, Autumn is the time of year when we begin planning for cold/flu **and** wildfire seasons where with the latter, smokey conditions are prevalent. Both colds/flu and wildfire smoke can wreak havoc on the respiratory system, but there are plants that have been traditionally used for hundreds of years to help.

Mullein (Verbascum thapsus) is one of these plants. Many people think of this as a wild weed that grows everywhere (which it

is), and some consider it an herb (which it is). Others just think of it as a plant (which it is). But anyone who has used Mullein knows that regardless of what category of living thing we consider it, we all agree that it is useful. Mullein is a biannual plant – it creates its rosette of leaves in the first year, and then sends its flower and leaf stalk up in the second year. It dies at the end of its second year.

- Plant Energetics Mullein is considered a cooling and moisturizing plant. It also has an
 affinity for the respiratory system. Therefore, it is considered a specific for hot and dry
 sinuses and lungs, as well as other areas of the body where there is a lot of heat and
 dryness.
- Parts used: Leaf, flower, root. Leaves can be harvested and used anytime; flowers are harvested in the second year; the root should be harvested at the end of the first year. Note: when using the leaf, strain preparations well as the leaves have little hairs on them that can irritate the mouth, throat, or skin.
- Bronchial Expectorant Mullein leaf is used as a mild expectorant, gently moving stuck
 mucus up and out of the lungs- but it doesn't dry you out like other popular expectorant herbs -Thyme, Rosemary, or
 Yerba Santa. It works well in conjunction with Elecampane (Inula helenium), which is also an expectorant and has a
 balancing quality.
- Reduces coughing Mullein's moisturizing quality can help soothe dry hacking coughs form colds/flu or smoke inhalation. It combines well with Marshmallow (Althea officinalis) for this purpose. Drink it as a tea.



- Anti-Inflammatory
 – Mullein's cooling and soothing characteristic is great at
 reducing inflammation in the respiratory tract. It has also been used topically to cool
 irritations of the skin (generally with the leaves or flowers used to make a strong tea)
 and is used to help soothe urinary tract irritation (root is best, but leaves and flowers
 work too).
- **Improving bladder tone** the root is used to strengthen the bladder sphincter and therefore has been used in cases of incontinence.
- Natural bandage if you are familiar with Mullein, you know that it has big, soft leaves. These have been used as bandages when regular bandage material was unavailable.
- Soothes ear infections— Traditionally, flowers are infused in an oil along with garlic (antibacterial) to make an old-time remedy for ear or skin infections.

I intentionally grow Mullein in my garden. It self-sows readily in the second year so every year I end up with a carpet of Mullein all around the area where a flowering Mullein used to be. Normally I remove or transplant these little guys, but this year I will be harvesting the roots to see what kind of yield they produce. Wish me luck!



Hearty Golden Soup

With the help of a crisp salad and fragrant homemade bread, this soup, hearty with mushrooms and rice, becomes a satisfying meal.

Ingredients

- ½ cup chopped onion
- ½ cup chopped celery
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 2 cups sliced mushrooms
- ½ cup rice, uncooked
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon fresh Thyme
- 1 can (16oz.) LIBBY's Solid Pack Pumpkin
- 2 cups half and half
- ½ cup dry sherry

Instructions

- In medium saucepan, sauté onion and celery in butter.
- Add broth, mushrooms, rice and seasonings. Bring to boil. Cover, simmer 20 minutes or until rice is cooked.
- Stir in pumpkin; continue cooking 5 minutes.
- Stir in remaining ingredients; heat thoroughly.
 Yields 6 cups; 4-6 servings

Roasted Potatoes with Thyme and Rosemary from Lisa-Marie Maryott

Autumn just feels like roasted tubers, doesn't it? Add this potato side dish to entrees featuring chicken, beef, or pork.

Ingredients

- 2 lbs Baby red or fingerling potatoes, sliced in half
- 3-4 TBS olive oil
- 2 cloves fresh garlic, minced
- 2 TBS chopped fresh Thyme (Lemon Thyme tastes really good here)
- 1 TBS Rosemary leaves
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/3 cup grated parmesan cheese (optional)

Note: you can use dried herbs as well – just reduce the quantity by half. Feel free to increase the quantities of herbs to your liking.

Directions:

- Preheat your oven to 425 degrees.
- Wash and cut potatoes in half.
- Mix potatoes, oil, garlic, salt, and pepper in a large bowl, ensuring that the potatoes are coated in the oil and spices.
- Place potatoes flat-side down on a baking sheet (you can use parchment paper to line the baking sheet if you'd like). Put them into the oven.
- Roast for 20 minutes; return them to the mixing bowl, add the herbs, and mix.
- Return the potatoes to the oven and roast another 10 minutes or until they are crispy brown.
- Remove from the oven and place in a serving bowl.
 Sprinkle with grated parmesan cheese and serve.

Thyme on Focaccia Bread

Thyme is a perfectly suited herb for focaccia bread. And focaccia is a simple bread to make and a wonderful food for Autumn! Here are some links to recipes that are easy and incorporate Thyme or other herbs into the recipes. Just substitute Thyme for the other herbs listed.

https://www.inspiredtaste.net/19313/easy-focaccia-bread-recipe-with-herbs/#itr-recipe-19313

https://www.gimmesomeoven.com/rosemary-focaccia-bread/

https://www.carolinescooking.com/lemon-and-thyme-focaccia/

Cocktail Hour

It's 5 o'clock somewhere in the world....



Since Thyme is in the spotlight of this issue, we thought some Thyme-inspired cocktails might be in order. Here are some recipes compliments of our resident mixologist, Harris Miner.

The Ruffian

Ingredients

- 1 ounce rye whiskey
- 3/4 ounce Applejack or Calvados
- 1/2 ounce lemon juice
- 3/4 ounce thyme syrup (see below)
- 1 dash absinthe or pastis
- Garnish: sprig of thyme

Directions

- Add a dash of absinthe to a rocks glass, and roll around to coat. Discard and set aside.
- Add remaining ingredients to a cocktail shaker.
- Add ice and shake until chilled.
- Strain over ice into a rocks glass.
- Garnish with a sprig of thyme.



To Make the Thyme Syrup:

Add 1 cup of sugar, 1 cup of water and 4 to 5 thyme sprigs to a saucepan. Simmer until sugar dissolves and discard thyme sprigs. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator, up to one month.

No Thyme Like the Present (alcohol optional-serves

Ingredients

- 12 oz. fresh apple cider
- · 2 oz. fresh lemon juice
- 2 oz. thyme syrup
- 6 oz. gold rum or Irish whiskey (optional)
- 1 bottle (9.3 oz.) tonic water (like Fentimans, Q or Fever-Tree)
- Tools: pitcher, wooden spoon
- Glass: rocks or punch
- · Garnish: thyme sprigs and lemon wheels

Directions

- Combine all ingredients, except the tonic water, in a pitcher and stir.
- If using liquor, add 1 1/2 oz to each of four ice-filled glasses, then divide the cider mixture evenly among them
- Top with tonic water, stir gently and garnish.

Do you have any fun herbally-inspired recipes you'd like to share? Email them to info@norcalifornia-herbsociety.org. Please send pictures of your dishes too!

Thyme New-Place Spell

By Lana Rocha

This is for those of you interested in using herbs for spiritual purposes.

The addition of Thyme in this spell helps to make the wearer of the oil more attractive to others, but it also gives the wearer courage and a boost in energy. This support can help when settling into a new job, a new place of study or even undertaking a new pastime, hobby or sport. Only a very small amount needs to be used, but still, make sure that you use a carrier oil that suits your skin. Empty roller bottles can be sourced online. You can use a small dropper bottle as well.

Timing - when to do this: Waxing Moon, Sunday, Sunrise

Find and Gather

- 11 fresh Thyme leaves (Thymus vulgaris)
- Sweet Almond Oil or other skin-safe pure oil
- a glass/crystal bowl
- a gold cloth
- · a picture of the place of your new beginning
- a small glass roller bottler or dropper bottle



Photo by Alejandro Piñero Amerio, unsplash.com

The Spell

Set this spell up in a sunny place—one you feel safe and happy in because you want this energy to blend with the oil. Lay down the gold cloth and set the bowl upon it. Pour the oil into the bowl. Place the 11 Thyme leaves into the bowl and say:

Starting now,

With things all anew.

Thyme guide me there

With the things that you do.

Leave the bowl in the sun for a good hour to absorb the positive energies of your chosen place as well as the power of the Sun. After an hour, stir the Thyme-infused oil in a clockwise direction and then pour into your bottle and seal.

To use, roll or drop a tiny amount on your inner wrist or your inner arm and rub in. Use before you go to your new place and any time you feel uneasy and can no longer detect the scent of Thyme. There are no alternative herbs for this spell.



Herb and Horses- Whaaat???? By Debbie Arnold

So, I have a passion for herbs and horses. How does this dual love play out???

With the advanced timing of the heat (should we mention "global warming"), it's time to nourish those herbs. Since I am a regular at the Concord Feed Store, I can let you know that there are items that will help your herb beds.

- Alfalfa bales or flakes are great for nitrogen and mulching to retain water. I often bring a flake or two home and spread
 out over the soil. The smaller dried leaves are wonderful as a source of nitrogen and get those herbs (and vegs) looking
 refreshed.
- Alfalfa pellets are sold in 5 to 50-pound bags and are also great in the soil. Some of our members use them as a "sure start" when planting their new plants to aid in giving a nitrogen source and helping through planting shock.
- For great drainage in those Mediterranean herbs, I plant in a 80/20mixture of organic cactus mix with a product called Dry Stall which is a form of pumice.

At the barn....

...our friends at Urban Farm on the Rodgers Ranch property have hard working "manure worms" on the hill making that liquid gold, worm castings for their beds. I know a horse at the barn that isn't treated with supplemental wormers and I collected his manure to deliver to them! Hopefully, the worms are enjoying a great meal!



Upcoming Unit Meetings & Events

Unit members meet most months on the second Sunday at 1:30pm at Rodgers Ranch in Pleasant Hill. Due to the pandemic, many meetings have been held online rather than in person. Venue is listed for clarification.

- Oct 10, 1:30pm Unit meeting, Herbs for Digestive Health, at Rodgers Ranch
- Oct 24, 10:30am-12:00pm Wheel of the Year for Sacred Living study group meeting, via Zoom
- Nov 14, 1:30pm Unit meeting, Herbal Gift Making workshop led by Patty Liu, Free Flow Botanicals
- December 12, 10:30am-12:00pm Wheel of the Year for Sacred Living study group meeting
- December 12, 1:30pm Unit meeting, Holiday Tea

West District Meetings & Events

For members only. Contact Lisa-Marie Maryott for meeting information.

- Monthly Herb Study, first Monday of the month,
 9:30am Pacific time; Hosted by the Rocky
 Mountain unit
- Monthly Book Club, fourth Friday of the month, 10:00am Pacific time

National Webinars

To register for an upcoming webinar or to view past webinars, go to https://www.herbsociety.org/hsa-learn/hsa-webinars/ and click on the *Member login* link in the upper right-hand corner. Most are free to members.



National Meetings & Events

Information about all of these meetings and events can be found on National's website, www.herbsociety.org.

Meetings/Events

- Herbal Fiction Book Club #1, meets 2nd Wednesdays at 11:00am Pacific Time
 - October 13 The Indigo Girl by Natasha Boyd
 - November 10 A Memory of Violets: A Novel of London's Flower Sellers by Hazel Gaynor, Nicola Barber, et al
- Herbal Fiction Book Club #2, meets 3rd Wednesdays at 12:00pm Pacific Time
 - October The Lost Apothecary by Sarah Penner
 - November The Mystery of Herbs and Spices by James Moseley
- Herbal Fiction Book Club #3, meets 4th Wednesdays at 4:30pm Pacific Time

Our Mission

The Herb Society of America is dedicated to promoting the knowledge, use and delight of herbs through educational programs, research, and sharing the experience of its members with the community.

Consider becoming a member of the Herb Society of America! https://www.norcalifornia-herbsociety.org/membership.html or https://www.herbsociety.org/join.html