

The Poppy Post

Summer 2021 Issue



The Northern California Unit of
The Herb Society of America



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It’s time for all things Summer!!

Summer is the time of year when the Earth’s warming energy is at its peak – flowers are blooming like crazy, all of our trees and shrubs are filled out with beautiful leaves, the animals are active, and we fill our days with loads of things to do from morning through night. It’s a time of year where we begin reaping the benefits of our herb gardens as the plants grow and become fragrant and tasty. It’s when I start gathering plants that I will turn into herbal medicines, as some of our herbs are best used when fresh. It’s definitely a time of delightful scents and flavors!

So this issue of our newsletter is dedicated to Summer with articles and information from some of our unit members. Check out our [Herb in the Spotlight](#), which is Mint (a refreshing herb used in Summer dishes and drinks) and try some of the related [recipes](#). We have a new column titled “[Cocktail Hour](#)” where you can find some libations using Mint, and there’s information on using [herbs for Summertime health](#) too. Read on and enjoy. And feel free to share this newsletter with friends and family!

Summer blessings-

Lisa-Marie Maryott
NCAL HSA Unit Chair

CALLING ALL WRITERS!

Do you have herbal and other gardening and horticulture information that you’d like to share? Consider contributing articles, recipes, photos and more to our quarterly newsletter. Each newsletter is seasonally-themed, so if you have great Autumn or Winter information to share with us, please send it along to info@norcalifornia-herbsociety.org. We’d love to hear from you!

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

The Language of Flowers – pg 7

Bread and Budder, Recipes – pg 8

Cocktail Hour, Recipes – pg 9

The Mojito Mint Story – pg 10

Herbs for Summer Health – pg 11

The Flower of Courage – pg 12

Thyme-line, Calendar of events – pg 13

General Unit News

May Unit Meeting – Chocolate!

Our unit treasurer, Debbie Arnold, entertained and enticed us at our May monthly meeting where she shared the virtues of chocolate with us. This was our first in-person monthly meeting since the pandemic started, and everyone seemed excited about being able to finally meet together at the ranch. We had a very nice turnout and a lovely day. Everyone was masked and we tried to do some social distancing to keep everyone safe. Debbie discussed different types of chocolate and we were able to taste each type and share our thoughts about each one. Sue Kaar gave us a short presentation on ceremonial chocolate, and we were able to taste that as well. Thank you Debbie and Sue!



June Lavender Festival at Morningsun Herb Farm

This year, we opted to forgo a June monthly meeting and instead supported our business member, Morningsun Herb Farm by volunteering at the farm's Lavender U-Pick and Festival activities. Although a much smaller version than past events, the two-week event that ran June 5-June 13 was fun for all that worked at the information booth, U-Pick field, workshops, and kids' table.

Thank you to everyone who signed up and volunteered – Susie Somers, Kathy Grow, Susan Wagner, Lynda DeVol, Shelly O'Connell, Chris Holm, Deborah Marchand, Lana Rocha, Debbie Arnold, Karol Dondero, Purnima Sreenivasan, Sue Karr and her partner Chris, and Maria Velken. You are all awesome!



Mark Your Calendars – 2022 West District Gathering

Our NCAL unit will be hosting the 2022 HSA West District Gathering. Since our 2020 gathering had to be virtual, the West District Advisory team decided to hold the 2022 gathering at the [Oregon Garden in Silverton, OR](#) which was the original venue for 2020. If you've never been to this botanical garden, here is the perfect reason to go! It is such a wonderful place – you won't regret it! Check out this [aerial video](#) of the gardens.



The gathering is scheduled for June 10-11 and this is what we are currently planning: We'll have a district meeting (for members only); great speakers; an evening reception at a local nursery and lavender farm; a tour of the Oregon Garden; dinner at a local restaurant; maybe some wine tasting; and fun activities. There is a resort on property where we will have room blocks available at a discounted rate to attendees.

This gathering is open to district members and non-members. Registration fees, hotel accommodation costs, and other event information will be forthcoming in the next few months.

As our unit is hosting the Gathering, we'll be looking for unit members to help staff the two-day event. We don't expect this to be onerous though- there will be plenty of time for everyone to enjoy the event, the resort, the gardens, and the surrounding area.

Non-members interested in attending this event can be put onto our event communications list by emailing your name and contact information to info@norcalifornia-herbsociety.org.

What To Do In The Garden Now

By Shawna Anderson, ACCNP

Summer is the time to reap what you have sown... start enjoying the fruits of your labor!!



Sumer Garden Maintenance

- Mulch, Mulch, Mulch! If you have not mulched your garden as of July, do it now! Mulching up to 3 inches will save on water and keep weeds at bay. It can also help reduce the risk of some diseases on tomatoes. Straw is a great option for mulching but you could also use small redwood chips and leaves.
- Water as deeply and infrequently as possible.
- Observe tomatoes for tomato hornworms and cutworms. They can be very hard to see during the day but they glow in the dark at night with a black light flashlight.
- Apricot and cherry trees should be pruned in the dry months of July and August to help prevent diseases such as Eutypa dieback on apricots. July and August are also the time to prune your deciduous fruit trees (after harvest) to keep them the height you want.
- In September and if you aren't going to plant Fall and Winter gardens, be sure to use a cover crop such as Fava beans to add nitrogen back to your soil.



What to Harvest and Plant

- Harvest zucchini, tomatoes, beans, peppers, eggplant, cucumbers, fruits, herbs, and more. Keep plants producing by harvesting regularly and fertilizing with an organic fertilizer (follow the fertilizer label instructions).
- If you planted potatoes in late Winter, it should be nearing time to harvest. As the leaves turn brown and or flowers fade, stop watering one to two weeks prior to harvesting.
- Harvest medicinal herbs (many are harvested just as they flower) and make fresh herbal preparations (e.g. tinctures) or dry the plant material to use throughout the year.
- Mid-August is the time to start planting cool season crops such as broccoli, brussels sprouts and cauliflower for winter harvest.
- In September, plant seedlings of cabbage. Direct sow bok choy, beets, carrot, chards, leeks, lettuce, peas, spinach and turnips seeds in place for winter harvest.
- In September, plant Endive, Chicory, Kohlrabi and Radicchio seedlings for fall and winter harvest.

Garden Chatter

What's going on in our garden

It has been a busy time in the garden! We've harvested lavender and rosemary for drying. The lavender is used to make dream pillows that we have sold at past plant sales. If you have an idea for using rosemary, please let me know.



The tea herb bed has been redone by Rachel Lewis. Chris Holm donated an agastache to the bed. Debbie Arnold has planted one of the raised beds to create a five essential herbs bed. Valerie Ghirardo and Susan Wagner redid the pollinator garden. It is looking great! Thank you Rachel, Chris, Debbie, Valerie, and Susan!

Rachel donated several well-established plants to the healing garden. Thank you Rachel, your donations are so welcome! The garden looks amazing! We did lose one of the feverfew plants to gophers. Did you know that gophers help to aerate the soil? Someone recently told me that it was gophers who helped to reseed Mount St. Helens after the eruption. I found this fascinating as from the Native American perspective everything has its place in the web of life. One of the plants that Rachel brought to the last gardening day was feverfew without even knowing that we needed to replace one! Interesting that it worked out that way.

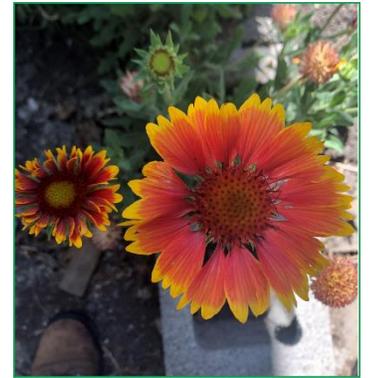
Kevin O'Connell helped Lynn Spatz from Rodgers Ranch to dig out the trench next to the house. Thank you Kevin, Lynn, and her friend who helped too. The siding on the house will be getting some work done. Once that is complete, Lynn will build up the wall of our bed next to the trench. Fill will be added and that bed will be redone.

I put loads of cardboard on the hill where the big pine was taken down because the wild grasses were taking over. The cardboard helps to kill the grass. Lisa-Marie Maryott and Lynda DeVol donated the cardboard. Thank you Lisa-Marie and Lynda!

Lynda DeVol, Debbie Arnold, and Chris Holm have been watering the garden. They do an amazing job! Thank you to all of you! If you would like to water the garden let me know. Sometimes we need people to fill in.

We've had regular gardening days about three weeks apart. Several members attend these days to work in the garden. Thank you to Susan Wagner, Deborah Marchand, Valerie

Ghirardo, Rachel Lewis, Susie Somers, Denise Koroslev, Chris Holm, Sue Kaar, Amy Farajian, Serah Blackstone-Fredricks and her daughter, Kathy Grow, Brenda Miguel, and my husband, Kevin O'Connell. And to other members who work in the garden as their schedules permit, Lisa-Marie Maryott and Debbie Arnold. You are all amazing! I could not do it without you. Thank you so much! P.S. (If I missed anyone please forgive me. There is great interest in the garden. Let me know if you were there working and I will include your name.)



That's the buzz for now,
Shelly O'Connell, Garden Coordinator & Vice-Chair

Tips & Tricks

Keep Kitty Out of Your Garden Beds



Cats love a fresh garden or raised bed to do their business. But who wants to eat anything from vegetable or herb bed where Kitty has deposited her waste? Here's a great tip for keeping your or your neighbors' kitties out of your herb garden and vegetable beds.

Create a fork garden. Buy plastic forks and place them tines up in the bed, close together. Kitty doesn't want her bum getting poked by the forks, so she'll move on and find a more friendly location. I've done this in my raised beds during the Winter and early Spring, and it works like a charm!

-- Lisa-Marie



Mint

By Deborah Marchand

Mentha spp. – Many species and hybrids
Mentha x piperita (hybrid) – Peppermint
Mentha spicata - Spearmint

Description:

Mints are aromatic herbs and are almost always perennials. They are a part of the Lamiaceae (Mint) family of plants. There are upwards of 25 different species of Mint, and many hybrids and cultivars exist. They can be found natively across Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, and North America.

Mint is easy to grow, it is pretty much indestructible given it is well watered; mint likes water. Plant mint in the Spring and it will be ready for harvest in Summer. Think iced tea, lemonade, mint julep, mojito, infused oils for some of its uses – and the list goes on.

Mint is best grown in containers as it grows and spreads rapidly via underground runners- this is an “ask me how I know” caution. If not contained, mint will take over your garden because it is extremely invasive.

Mint is easily grown - it is easily propagated from cuttings just by placing a cutting in a jar of water until there are roots that begin to form from the nodes along the stem that is submerged in the water. The cuttings can then be planted in your prepared soil. Or you can buy plant starts as well. The flavor of the Mint will change as the plant ages, in which case it is a good idea to replant to replace the older plants which can be done from one of the plant's runners.

Mints can be good companion plants because they repel unwanted insects and attracting beneficial ones. They are susceptible to whitefly and aphids.

Uses:

Once cut, mint will only last a few days before turning yellow. I usually put my harvested mint in a glass jar filled with water on my kitchen windowsill and pick the leaves as needed. This usually last 3 or 4 days, but no worries there is more mint in the garden to harvest.

There are numerous mint varieties: Peppermint, Spearmint, Chocolate Mint, Orange Mint, bergamot, and Lemon Mint to name a few. Many can be found at your local nursery or purchased online. As the list of Mint varieties are numerous, so are its uses; infused oils, infused drinks including cocktails, infused vinegars, sorbets, and of course you can't forget Mint tea!



Interested in its **medicinal uses**? Check out our [Nature's Medicine](#) column where Mint's health benefits are showcased.



*Dainty are the leaves
Flowing with the wind
Catch upon a breeze
Scent upon my nose
But the mint is a strong herb
Serrated leaves
Beguiling me*

Minty Medicine

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.



Don't you just love the smell of mint? I had some chocolate mint that escaped a container and took up residency in a part of my garden. Watering in that part of the garden during its growing season was always a treat because as I walked through that mint bed, the most glorious odor was released, immediately relaxing me as I took in deep breaths of that familiar smell.

Peppermint (*Mentha x piperita*) is a useful medicinal herb. Its cousin Spearmint (*Mentha spicata*) is also medicinal and is used similarly to Peppermint. This medicinal action is attributed to Mint's volatile oils, including menthol which is used in many different mainstream products such as toothpaste and mouthwash. Here are some of the ways that you can use Mint.

- **Digestive aid** – Mint is a carminative, meaning that it aids in digestion and quells digestive complaints such as nausea, gas, flatulence, colic, and indigestion. It is useful for many people who suffer from acid reflux/GERD but should not be used by those who have GERD due to hiatal hernias (you don't want to relax the muscles around an area that needs to be tightened).
- **Muscle relaxant** – Mint is a relaxing nervine (relaxes the nervous system) that is also anti-spasmodic, relaxing muscles and decreasing spasms.
 - This is especially useful in the digestive tract for people who get intestinal cramping, but it can be used as a general relaxant (just smelling Mint can relax the mind).
 - Using it externally has a cooling and anti-inflammatory action which can help overused muscles feel better.
 - Its analgesic/pain relieving action is useful for tension headaches, earaches, and muscle aches.
- **Bronchial congestion aid** – Adding Mint essential oil or bruised mint leaves (bruising them releases the volatile oils) to boiled water and inhaling the vapors as a steam helps to relax and open airways, which is beneficial to those suffering from bronchial congestion or mild asthma.
- **Nutritive** – Mint contains many vitamins and minerals such as magnesium, calcium, selenium, iron, and Vitamins A, B-3 and C. These are water soluble, so drinking a tea or infusion is how to reap this benefit.
- **Circulatory stimulant** – as a warm tea, Mint is a vasodilator that opens our veins and arteries and increases circulation. This also causes our bodies to warm up and perhaps to sweat, which then helps cool the body. This diaphoretic action is useful in reducing fevers.
- **Antimicrobial** – Mint is antibacterial, antiviral, and antifungal and is useful for colds, flus, and fungal infections.

Mint can be made into a tea, infusion, tincture (alcohol extract), capsule, or inhalant. Peppermint oil (usually found in capsules) is safe to ingest but the essential oil is not safe for ingestion but can be used as an inhalant. Experiment with drinking it hot and cold, and applying it your skin – you'll get to understand Mint's energetics best this way!

As with any herb it is important to understand its contraindications and make sure that it is safe for you. Do your research if you have any safety concerns or take medications. For instance, Peppermint should be avoided during pregnancy and breastfeeding (although Spearmint in smaller doses may be fine). Mint is contraindicated for people who have gallstones or bile obstruction disorders and may also affect the metabolic and absorption rates of some medications.



The Language of Flowers

From *Emblems of Emotions* by Paula Carbone; *The Herb Quarterly*, Summer, 1997

Submitted by Denise Koroslev

The phrase, "Say it with flowers" goes back centuries when the tradition of sending messages by way of flowers was used by ancient Greeks, written about by Shakespeare, and practiced by Victorian socialites. Small bouquets called *tussie mussies* or *nosegays* were given to a loved one, or one you hoped would love you. They were also given to express good wishes for a special occasion such as the birth of a child or graduation, or to express sympathy and support for a loss or sad occasion. These small, fragrant bouquets were often worn, masking offensive odors as well as providing disinfectant properties. Here are some symbols of emotions.

- Borage - courage
- Camelia – "I shall love you forever". Perfect beauty
- Carnation – *pink* – symbol of Mother's Day; *white* – pure love; *yellow* - rejection
- Chamomile – humility and energy in adversity
- Coriander – hidden worth
- Dandelion – Faithful to you
- Daisies – innocence
- Dusty Miller – hope for a ripe old age.
- Fennel – worthy of praise, longevity and strength.
- Hyssop – cleanliness
- Lavender – devotion, constancy, and loyalty
- Lemon Balm – message of sympathy
- Lily of the Valley – constancy and return to happiness
- Marjoram – comfort, kindness, and courtesy.
- Mint – wisdom. Variegated mint - purity
- Petunia – "I am furious!"
- Roses – *yellow* – infidelity; *red* – love and desire; *pink* – "Our love is perfect happiness"
- Rosemary – remembrance
- Rue – clear vision
- Sage – domestic virtue
- Sweet Peas – delicate pleasures
- Thyme - courage
- Violets – modesty





Summer Bruschetta, by Serah Blackstone-Fredericks

With summer approaching, I thought it would be nice to have something light for those days where you don't need much to munch. This is an original recipe in collaboration with my partner and Chef David Romo.

You Will Need:

- Strawberries
- 1 baguette
- Cheese such as Mount Tam Triple Cream Brie
- 1-2 sprigs of mint

To Make:

- Slice baguette thinly (1/4" slices or so).
- Lightly coat the bread with olive oil and sprinkle with salt.
- Add to a baking pan with parchment and toast the bread on 375°F until golden brown.
- Slice your brie lengthwise into thin strips. Cutting tip: If you wet your knife, you can slice your brie easier and it won't stick to the knife.
- While toasting, slice 1 cup of strawberries. Set aside in a bowl.
- In your bowl, add a bit of olive oil, a pinch of salt and a pinch of sugar and gently toss.
- Julienne the mint.
- Watch your bread so it doesn't burn.
- Remove bread and let cool.
- Layer bread, cheese, and strawberries.
Serve and enjoy!



Mango Mint Smoothie

Mint is a wonderful addition to many dishes and drinks, and smoothies are no exception. This is a quick, easy, and refreshing recipe that showcases the flavor of Spearmint.

Ingredients (quantities or ingredients can be adjusted to fit taste or dietary restrictions)

- ½ cup of fresh spinach or kale
- ½ cup of chopped mango and pineapple (frozen works great)
- ¼ cup of Greek yogurt (flavored or not-your choice)
- 1 small banana
- 7-10 Spearmint leaves
- Cold water or ice

Instructions

- Throw everything into a blender and turn onto high
- Blend until smooth (maybe about a minute)
- Pour into a glass and drink up!

Mint Marinated Chicken, by Serah Blackstone-Fredericks and Chef David Romo

You Will Need:

- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/2 cup white or red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp salt
- 3/4 tsp cumin
- 1/2 tsp paprika
- 1 cup greek yogurt
- 4 cloves of garlic
- 13 mint leaves or so (more if desired)
- 4 chicken drumsticks



To Make:

- Blend all ingredients together using a food processor until smooth.
- Marinate chicken in a bowl with ingredients.
- Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes to 1 hour.
- Cook it on 375 °F until the internal temperature reaches 165 °F (about 30 minutes).
- Let cool slightly and then serve with a green garden salad - and enjoy!

Cocktail Hour

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



What's Summer without a delightful and refreshing cocktail that has Mint in it? Here are some recipes compliments of our resident mixologist, Harris Miner.

Southside

Ingredients

- 2 ounces gin
- 3/4 ounce lime juice
- 3/4 ounce simple syrup (1:1, sugar:water)
- 6-8 mint leaves
- 1 dash orange bitters (optional)
- Garnish: mint sprig

Directions

- In a cocktail shaker, gently muddle mint leaves with simple syrup.
- Add all other ingredients, add ice and shake until chilled.
- Double strain into a chilled coupe or cocktail glass.
- Spank a mint sprig against your hand to release the oils and garnish.



Roman Holiday (from Bon Appetit magazine)

Ingredients

- 8 mint leaves, plus sprig for serving
- 1/2 oz. simple syrup (1:1, sugar:water)
- 1 oz. Averna Amaro Siciliano
- 1 oz. Italian sweet vermouth (such as Carpano Antica Formula)
- 3/4 oz. fresh lemon juice
- Lemon wedge (for serving)



Directions

- Lightly muddle mint leaves and simple syrup in a cocktail shaker.
- Add amaro, vermouth, and lemon juice; fill shaker with ice.
- Shake until outside of shaker is frosty, about 30 seconds.
- Strain into a rocks glass filled with ice and garnish with mint sprig and lemon wedge.

Mojito

No Summer cocktail list is complete until the Mojito is added to it. Here is how the Cubans make them. And where are some of the best local Mojitos? Try them at Havana's in Walnut Creek – they go down like candy!

Ingredients

- Juice of half a lime
- 2 tsp cane sugar
- Long Mojito Mint or Spearmint stem with leaves
- 1 shot of good quality white rum
- 2-4 drops of bitters
- Ice
- Mint sprig for garnish

See page 10 for the story on Mojito Mint....

Directions

- Mix the lime juice (from half a lime) with the sugar in a cocktail shaker or glass.
- Put the Mint stem into the shaker/glass, and only muddle the bottom of the stem, leaving upper leaves intact. Per Lisa at delicioustable.com, this helps keep the bitterness down and the leaves green.
- Add the rum, bitters, and ice.
- Gently shake all ingredients for about 10 seconds.
- Strain and pour into a glass, and garnish with a mint sprig.

The Mojito Mint Story

The Cuban Mojito, a frequent favorite of Ernest Hemmingway, is made with lime juice, sugar, rum, and mint. Cocktail aficionados believe that to be a true Mojito, one needs to use the *true* Mojito Mint. *Mentha x villosa* is that mint plant.

Most recipes call for any variety of Spearmint that is available. This is because until 2006, the Mojito Mint was not available in the United States due to the travel restrictions and trade embargo that the US has with Cuba. So bartenders and mixologists had to use what was available to them. And they made pretty good Mojitos with regularly ol' Spearmint.

Then in 2006, a Canadian named Catherine Nasmith visited Cuba and brought a sprig of Mojito Mint back with her. At this year's HSA EdCon event, Amy Stewart, author of *The Drunken Botanist*, tells the story of how this happened. As Amy's talk wasn't recorded nor are there any transcripts, I will do my best to recollect the story as accurately as possible.



Catherine was having a dish or beverage (maybe a Mojito?) right before she was scheduled to fly home from Cuba. As she was interested in the mint, she decided to take the sprig home with her. She was careful to keep it moist on the trip and planted it when she got home. Because she had taken vegetation from Cuba and didn't declare it, she was worried that the Agricultural department would hunt her down and arrest her for bringing it into her country illegally. Fortunately for all of us, that didn't happen and she was able to propagate the plant. I believe she gave it to a nursery owner/grower who was able to continue propagation and sell it.

So we now have this awesome mint available here in the US for our *true* Mojito cocktails and other authentic Cuban dishes. Thank you, Catherine!

Richters.com describes Mojito Mint perfectly: "It is clearly different from most other mints-- its scent and flavor are agreeably mild and warm, not pungent nor overly sweet like other mints. In a perhaps typically Cuban understated way its warm embrace lingers until you realize you want more."

Mojito Mint grows like all other mints – it loves water, is invasive if not controlled, and grows abundantly if harvested regularly.

You can find Mojito Mint at [Morningsun Herb Farm](#) in Vacaville. Morningsun is a business member of our unit.

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!

Herbs for Summer Health

By *Martha Scheer and Lisa-Marie Maryott*

Please see page 6 for our policy statement on the medicinal use of herbs.

During Summer months, people tend to spend a lot more time outdoors being very active during long, warm days. The weather and desire to be outside enjoying it pose a risk of overdoing and stretching our physical and mental boundaries. Overdoing can lead to stress (even if it is “good” stress), and stresses can cause illness. Therefore, it is important to take care of yourself during this time of high energy, and using herbs/plants, food, lifestyle pointers, and common sense can help us avoid health pitfalls.

Keep Cool and Hydrated

Our bodies have systems to dissipate heat and maintain an even constant temperature, one of which is the radiation of heat through the skin and evaporation of sweat. During summer months we experience high heat, longer sun exposure, sudden temperature changes (like going in and out of air conditioned spaces), and vigorous exertion which can overload the body’s ability to dissipate heat. To maintain these cooling systems, the body must constantly stay hydrated with water and have electrolytes replaced. Besides drinking plenty of water, there are herbs and foods that help cool the body and replace electrolytes:

- **Mints, Peppermint and Spearmint** – supports digestion without raising body heat – use in teas, fresh, in soaks
- **Lemon Balm** – calming and helps heat to escape the body – use in waters, fresh on salads, in teas and drinks
- **Rose** – internally cooling to the body, use in teas – externally use hydrosol spray to sooth and calm
- **Hibiscus** - cooling and astringent – contains vitamin C – delicious sun tea with mint, rose and a little honey
- **Chamomile** - gently cooling and calming to the body – use in sun teas – good for soaks, baths and sprays
- **Lavender** – soothing and calming to the body – use in teas and waters – use hydrosol spray to cool the body
- **Watermelon, Cucumbers, Lemons, Cantaloupes, Grapes, Berries** – all cooling foods
- **Nettle, Raspberry, and Dandelion** – all high in Calcium, Magnesium, Potassium, and other minerals which replenish electrolytes

Also, opt to eat lighter meals and snacks and avoid heavy meats, fatty foods, alcohol, caffeine, and high sugar drinks.

Skin Care

Our skin is a large organ that acts as a barrier to keep bad things out and good things in, It is permeable, a sensory organ, and an organ of elimination and temperature control. Keeping skin healthy and moisturized is key to it being able to do its job well. Generally, we want to protect our skin from and treat sunburns, repel insects, treat bug bites, and treat cuts/wounds we get from playing hard during the Summer. Herbal actions to look for are anti-inflammatory, anti-itch, antioxidant, astringent, emollient, repellent, and vulnerary (healing). Here are natural options to try:

- **Aloe vera gel** – anti-inflammatory, anti-itch, emollient, vulnerary
- **Calendula** – excellent anti-inflammatory and vulnerary herb
- **Chaparral (Larrea tridentada)** – antimicrobial/antiseptic, antioxidant, vulnerary: sunscreenish
- **Citronella, Eucalyptus, Lemongrass (essential oils)** - repellent
- **Lavender** – anti-inflammatory, anti-itch, vulnerary
- **Marshmallow root or Slippery Elm bark** – anti-inflammatory, mildly astringent, emollient, vulnerary
- **Plantain and Sage** – anti-inflammatory, anti-itch, astringent, vulnerary
- **Raspberry seed or carrot seed oils** – antioxidant, sun protection
- **Zinc oxide (non-nano)** – not an herb, but good sunscreen
- **Honey** – helpful for sunburns
- **Coconut oil** – moisturizing and sun protecting

Immunity Support

With so much activity comes a stress on the immune system. Consider supplementing your herbal regimen with: Adaptogens that help the body adapt to stresses (e.g. Eluthero, Ginsengs, Tusli/Holy Basil, Ashwaganda); digestive herbs like Artichoke Leaf and Dandelion Root (bitters), Fennel, Ginger, and Turmeric; Relaxing herbs for the nervous system like Chamomile, Scullcap, Oats, California Poppy, and Passionflower. Make time to relax and rest. And finally, if you happen to get a summer cold or flu, try immunostimulating herbs like Echinacea, Elderberry, and Garlic to reduce the severity and duration of the illness.

The Flower of Courage – Borage Officinalis

A slightly condensed version of Lana Rocha's presentation on Borage

BORAGE IN THE GARDEN

Borage is easily grown from seed sown in Spring in almost any soil, even clay, and will self-sow freely. When seedlings appear, thin them to a distance of about 2 feet. Borage occupies a lot of room once it matures. Plants form a taproot and do not transplant well when larger, though seedlings usually move successfully. Flowers may not appear on your new plant the first year -sometimes borage can be a biennial.

Given the choice, borage prefers well-drained to dry conditions in sun, but tolerates partial shade and both acid and alkaline soils. Borage is a good drought-tolerant ground cover and soil binder.

Borage is said to strengthen the resistance to insects and disease of any plants neighboring it. It is an especially good companion for strawberries and tomatoes, the plants being mutually beneficial. If you want to attract bees to your garden, plant some borage.



Borage & Calendula at Rodgers Ranch

BORAGE AS AN HERBAL REMEDY

In addition to prescribing borage to relieve depression, the early herbalists believed it to be a diuretic, demulcent, and emollient, and these same beliefs are held by herbalists today. Infusions and decoctions of borage flowers are taken to relieve fevers, bronchitis, arthritis and rheumatism, and diarrhea among other ailments. It has a decongestant and expectorant action in the respiratory system. The tea or tincture makes a good gargle or mouthwash.

The oil extracted from the seeds which, like evening primrose oil, is a rich source of gamma-linolenic acid (GLA) – an essential fatty acid (ETA) that underpins the body's hormonal systems and is often deficient in modern diets. It is good for menstrual problems, allergies, and arthritis.

Poultices made from the leaves and flowers are reported to be cooling and soothing when applied to external inflammations and swellings and will soothe sore irritated skin conditions and draw out poisons from insect bites, stings and boils.

COOKING WITH BORAGE

The flowers are decorative in salads but turn pink on contact with lemon juice or vinegar. The flowers can be frozen in ice cubes as a pretty addition to summer drinks, or crystallized for cakes, pastries and dessert tray decorations.



The young leaves are high in potassium and calcium and make a cleansing and nutritious addition to your food. They do, however, contain pyrrolizidine alkaloids that may cause liver damage in excess. The leaves can be used raw, steamed, or sauteed like spinach; stems may be eaten used like celery. It enhances cheese, fish, poultry, most vegetables, green salads, iced beverages, pickles, and salad dressings. They blend well with dill, mint, and garlic.

Heighten the flavor of iced cucumber or other chilled vegetable soups by adding 2 tablespoons of minced fresh borage to 4 cups of soup. Use the borage flowers for garnish. Add a handful (amount for 2 quarts of stock) of leaves and stems when making chicken or fish stock.

Make a strong tea by boiling leaves and stems in water. Use the tea in place of water in a recipe for lemon or strawberry fruit ice.

Borage wilts almost instantly when picked, so it is not good for arranging or selling as a cut herb.

Borage is unacceptable when dried and frozen. Borage has succulent foliage and delicate flowers that are difficult to dry. The only way to store it for the long-term is in a flavored vinegar.

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.

- **July 11, 1:30pm** – Unit meeting, Container Gardening presentation by Shawna Anderson via Zoom
- **July 18, 10:30am-12:00pm** - Wheel of the Year for Sacred Living study group meeting, via Zoom
- **August 8, 1:30pm** – monthly meeting in-person and via Zoom, unit annual business meeting
- **September 12, 10:30am-12:00pm** – Wheel of the Year for Sacred Living study group meeting, via Zoom
- **September 12, 1:30pm** – Unit meeting on harvesting, preserving, and using herbs with Denise Koroslev, in-person

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 #2**, meets 3rd Wednesdays at 3pm EDT
 - July 21 – The Perfume Collector by Kathleen Tessaro
 - August 18 - China Bayles' Book of Days by Susan Wittig Albert
- **Herbal Fiction Book Club #3**, meets 4th Wednesdays at 7:30pm EDT
 - July 28 – Mistress of Spices by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

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>

