



April 2024

A Publication for Members & Friends

<http://www.azherb.org>

Greetings Herbies!

Spring has sprung, and the herbs are singing with joy! It's your Herbie-in-Chief here, bursting with excitement to welcome you all to another bloomin' April edition of our herb-tastic newsletter.

As the sun warms our beloved desert soil, it's time to roll up our sleeves and dive headfirst into the garden. Whether you've got a green thumb or you're just dipping your toes into the herbaceous world, there's something for everyone in our April lineup. There's no shortage of opportunities to get your herbal fix. Check out our upcoming events on page 2 for all the juicy details.

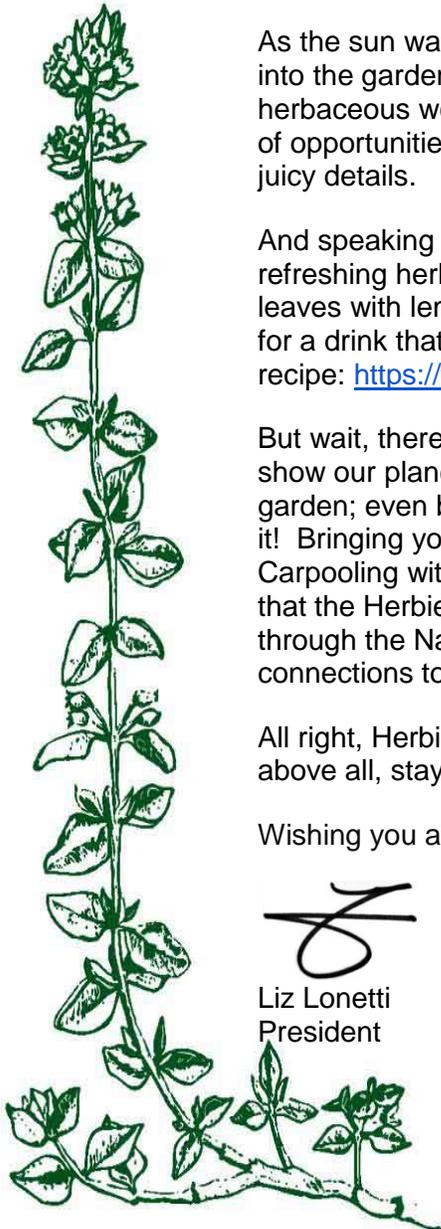
And speaking of juicy...let's talk recipes! This month, why not try your hand at whipping up a refreshing herb-infused lemonade? Simply muddle some fresh lavender, mint and/or basil leaves with lemon juice, add a splash of honey or agave, and top it off with sparkling water for a drink that screams springtime bliss. For those of you who prefer not to 'wing it,' try this recipe: <https://theherbalacademy.com/blog/herbal-lemonade/>

But wait, there's more! Did you know that April 22 is Earth Day? That's right, it's time to show our planet some extra love. Why not celebrate by planting a few extra herbs in your garden; even better, if you haven't yet volunteered at our Weed & Feed, now's the time to try it! Bringing your reusable plate and cutlery to our meetings cuts down on single-use plastic! Carpooling with your fellow Herbies is another way to show you care. And did you know that the Herbies participate in the [Penny Pines Program](#), benefitting reforestation projects through the National Forest Service? Every little bit counts when enhancing our connections to each other and our place here in the Sonoran Desert.

All right, Herbies, that's all for now. Remember to stay curious, stay adventurous, and above all, stay herbalicious! Until next time, keep blooming bright.

Wishing you all a happy and herb-filled Earth Month!

Liz Lonetti
President



Calendar

April 2024

Thursday, April 4: General Meeting
Location: MCC Extension; Time: 7:00 p.m.
Topic: *Hibiscus sabdariffa*
Speaker: Emily Heller of "Bene Vivendo"
Herb of the Month: Thyme
Presenter: Angela Smart



Sunday, April 7: Flavors of Arizona Festival
Location: Boyce Thompson Arboretum
More information:
<https://www.flavorofarizona.com/>

Saturday, April 6: Weed & Feed
Time: 7:00 a.m.

Saturday, April 13: Arizona Rare Fruit Growers
Spring Plant Sale
Location: Lehi Montessori School, Mesa
Time: 9:00 a.m. to noon
https://allevents.in/mobile/amp-event.php?event_id=200025173080542



Saturday, April 20: AHA Herbal Workshop
Topic: Medicine Making with Thyme
Presenter: Herbalist Ashley Johnston
Watch for your Evite!

Saturday, April 20: Celebrate Earth Day!
Free Compost Workshop
Location: Escalante Community Garden
2150 E. Orange St. Tempe, AZ 85281
Time: 8:00 to 9:00 a.m.

Saturday, April 20: Culinary Event
Theme: All about the Roots
Hosts: Janet and Timorie Coleman
Watch for your Evite!

May 2024

Thursday, May 2: Annual Salad Supper
Location: MCC Extension, Time: 7:00 p.m.
Come early to tour the Demo Garden
Guests welcome!
Topic: Herb of the Year – Yarrow
Speaker: Peggy Sue Sorensen

Sunday, May 4: Weed & Feed
Time: 7:00 a.m.



Saturday, May 11: Culinary Event
Mark your calendar and watch for details!

April 2024 General Meeting

Join us on Thursday, April 4, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. when Emily Heller will speak to us on *Hibiscus sabdariffa*. Emily describes herself as a 10-year Master Gardener and permanent resident of the uphill portion of the learning curve. She is a small-scale farmer with multiple growing locations in the valley and sells her produce and flowers at Uptown Farmers Market. She produces commercial yields of *Hibiscus sabdariffa* and is especially proud of developing greater interest in its use as a food ingredient. In season, she also sells hibiscus seeds saved from her own crops. Her farming adventure is called "Bene Vivendo," Latin for "the good life."



Pam Perry adds: "Herbies met Emily at December Weed & Feed as she collected branches pruned from the twisted myrtle and other greenery for the holiday decorations she crafts. She has been a speaker for the MG Speaker's Bureau and has taught classes around the valley." Herbie Angela Smart will present the Herb of the Month, Thyme.

Snacks and beverages are always welcomed for our social break. A recipe or ingredient list helps those with special dietary concerns. Remember to bring your own plates, utensils, etc. to help us reduce waste! And consider using thyme in your offering.

Date: Thursday, April 4, 2024
Meeting begins promptly at 7:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89028660279?pwd=NHN0RitrZEFHTnAwc3I2dFhHTTdGdz09>

Meeting ID: 890 2866 0279
Passcode: 965232

March Herb of the Month: Basil, *Ocimum basilicum*

By Kim Rosenlof, Master Gardener, Herbie



Basil is found in the Lamiaceae family (mint) so it features this family's characteristic square stems.

The genus is *Ocimum* with about 50-150 species; most are culinary basil plants that are cultivars of *O. basilicum* (Sweet Basil).

The name is derived from Greek *ozo* meaning "smell" for its aromatic properties. Sometimes referred to as the "King of Herbs," for its culinary uses, the name basil may be derived from the Greek word "basileus" meaning king.

Basil has historically been associated with scorpions. There is a superstition that a sprig of basil under a pot would turn into a scorpion.

Common *O. basilicum* cultivars include Genovese, Lettuce Leaf, Mammoth, Nufar, Fino Verde, Boxwood, Purple Ruffles, Magical Michael, Cuban, Thai, Cinnamon, Licorice and White.

Cultivars of *O. americanum* include Lemon which contains citrol and limonene, as well as Lime.

Other cultivars include *Ocimum sanctum* (Holy Basil), *Ocimum minimum* (Greek Basil) and *O. basilicum x americanum* (Sweet Dani Basil).

Identification: Basil is a bushy herb that grows up to three feet high and two feet wide. The green stems grow into a smooth, thin, brown/black/purple bark as the plant ages and becomes woody. Basil has shiny green leaves (a few cultivars have red or purple leaves) that are ovate to ovate-oblong. Most

are approximately 1-1/2" long. Spikes of flowers vary from white to purple, depending on the cultivar.

Cultivation: Basil is grown as an annual in most parts of the United States. In the Phoenix area it can be a perennial. It makes a good container plant and may also be grown indoors. For best results, plant in the spring or early fall in full or partial sun. Water seeds daily until they sprout (1 to 2 weeks); give moderate, deep watering after that. Fertilize once during the growing season. Prune off flower stalks to facilitate leaf production. Basils are susceptible to fusarium wilt; it is suggested that you not plant basil in the same location for four years.



Do not over water and protect basil from frost. Basil is a good companion for tomatoes. Basils easily cross pollinate so you may want to purchase new plants or seeds to keep the flavor consistent.



Photos this page by Lee Ann Aronson

Culinary traits: Basil has the ability to synthesize and convert phenylpropenes (a major subclass of plant volatiles) that act as cultivator attractants or herbivore deterrents. The most common use of basil is in soups and sauces. The best basil for pesto is Sweet or Genovese. Best for Asian food is Thai or Holy basil. Basil may be used to flavor meats as well. Basil seeds and flowers are edible.

Medicinal uses: *O. basilicum* has antibacterial and antioxidant properties. It is considered a mild sedative. It can relieve gas or indigestion. Basil has insecticidal properties (so you can rub leaves on your skin to repel insects). *O. Sanctum* (Holy basil) is anti-inflammatory and lowers blood sugar and blood pressure.

Anecdotal evidence suggests eating a leaf of basil daily from your garden may relieve headache or migraine symptoms.

Sources:

https://academics.hamilton.edu/foodforthought/our_research_files/herbs.pdf

Andrew Chevallier, Herbal remedies Handbook, page 167

<https://www.britannica.com/plant/basil>

Kim shared with us a recipe for Basil Pesto. You can find it here:

https://www.simplyrecipes.com/recipes/fresh_basil_pesto/

March General Meeting: Holy Basil-Tulsi

By Brittney Sounart, RH



Botanical Name:

Ocimum tenuiflorum,
Ocimum sanctum,
Ocimum gratissimum

Common Name:

Tulsi (Hindi),
Tulasi (Hindi),
Surasa (Sanskrit),
sacred basil

Taste: Pungent,
sweet, warm

Part Used: Herb

Location/Cultivation: Holy basil is a perennial or annual in the mint family that exhibits the square stem and volatile oils characteristic of its family. It is found in India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, southern China, Thailand and Malaysia.



Types of Holy Basil: \

- **Rama tulsi** (*Ocimum tenuiflorum*) is the most common, known for its mild flavor.
- **Krishna tulsi** (*Ocimum tenuiflorum*) has a stronger taste and smell with a peppery flavor and has dark green/purple leaves.
- **Vana Tulsi** (*Ocimum gratissimum*) can grow up to five feet tall, is a forest variety and is known for its clove-like fragrance.

History:

In the Ayurvedic medical system, Holy Basil is known as one of its rasayana, to support a person to have perfect health and live a long life. For over 3000 years, it has been considered one of India's most powerful herbs. They believe holy basil balances the chakras (the energy centers of the body), increases sattva (energy of purity), and encourages goodness and joy in people. Holy basil is a sacred plant in the Hindu religion it was used in

morning prayers to promote health, spirituality and family well-being. Its stems are used to make strings of beads which are used in meditation for clarity and protection.

Traditional Use of Holy Basil:

- 400-100 BCE – It was used it to treat people with scorpion stings and snakebites
- Indian folk medicinal uses:
 - tea of the leaves was used as an expectorant to relieve bronchial congestion or bronchitis
 - for upset stomach, vomiting, nausea
 - a snuff of powdered leaves to eliminate nasal congestion
 - fresh juice of leaves put in ears to treat earaches
 - boiled root to lower malarial fever
 - poultice from roots and leaves to treat bites and stings from mosquitoes, ants, wasps, bees and even leeches
 - seeds are moistening and slimy and were used to treat urinary tract infections or painful urination
- Thailand used holy basil as a cooking spice. They also used it to relieve digestive disturbances such as gas, ulcers or intestinal cramping and in colds and flu, headaches, coughs and sinusitis.

Modern Uses:

- **Mild adaptogen** which supports the HPA (hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal) axis to reduce stress response and supports the entire endocrine system including the regulating adrenal and hormones. Alcohol extracts of holy basil have shown anti stress activity in mice studies by preventing increased corticosterone levels when exposed to stress. Increases athletic performance in a swimming mice study.
- **Prevents radiation damage and protects the liver.** The water extract was shown to protect mice against radiation damage to the liver and chromosome damage to the cells. The action is thought to be through holy basil's anti-oxidant activity.
- **Reduces asthma symptoms.** Holy basil has been shown to inhibit symptoms of allergies by regulating the immune system. It helps to inhibit histamine release and mast cell degeneration. Use with reishi mushroom, and gotu kola for a few months before allergy season can reduce hay fever and allergic asthma.

- **Reduces blood sugar levels.** A study with subjects with Type 2 diabetes showed that it lowered their blood sugar levels by 17.6% and decreased their blood sugar and cholesterol levels after eating. (Agrawal, Rai, and Singh 1996) In another study, holy basil reduced fasting blood glucose by 60 % after 13 weeks of taking an extract. In addition, participants lost weight and lowered their total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol, while increasing their HDL (good cholesterol) when used with other hypoglycemic herbs like bitter melon, cinnamon, olive leaf, moringa, and bilberry leaf.
- **Heals Ulcers.** Holy basil has been shown to decrease the events of ulcers and heal present ulcers.
- **Anti-inflammatory & Arthritis.** Extracts of holy basil were shown to reduce swelling by up to 73% by 24 hours after treatment which are similar results to the drug diclofenac (anti-inflammatory drug to treat arthritis). A mice study also showed holy basil extract to have pain-relieving activity by working on the neurotransmitter system.
- **Anti-Aging.** Holy basil has been shown to inhibit the appearance of wrinkles and age spots by restoring the skin's collagen structure and elasticity. Holy basil contains ursolic acid (also found in rosemary). Ursolic acid is used in the cosmetic industry to quickly heal skin, increase skin elasticity and remove wrinkles. It is also good at preventing and curing skin cancer and being an antitumor agent.
- **Supports Healthy Blood Pressure.** Holy basil seems to work on supporting the peripheral vasodilatory action in the body.
- **Supports Immune System.** In a couple of studies, drinking three cups of holy basil tea has been shown to significantly increase natural killer cell activity and T-helper cells within just a couple of months.
- **Elevates mood.** A 2008 study showed that taking 500mg of the extract twice a day reduced generalized anxiety disorder and depression. It can be used in "stagnant depression" (when a person gets stuck in a traumatic event) with lavender, damiana, lemon balm, rosemary, rhodiola and rose.
- **Supports cerebral circulation and memory.** A human study showed that

taking 300mg of holy basil extract for 30 days gave significant improvement in cognitive function and cortisol levels, an increase in reaction time, less anxiety and lower error rates in tests. Holy basil can be used to help with "brain fog" associated with menopause, ADHD and recovery from head trauma. Use with bacopa, rosemary and standardized ginkgo.

Dosage:

- Tincture: 40-60 drops three times a day
- Herbal Infusion: 2-3 teaspoons of dried herb to 8 ounces of water. Steep for 20 minutes and drink 2 cups a day.
- Capsule as extracts: Take 1 capsule twice a day.
- Capsules as powdered herb: Take 4-6 capsules a day.

Safety:

- Do not use during pregnancy as there have been contradictory animal studies showing that holy basil could be toxic to embryos.
- It has been reported to have an antifertility effect. Do not use if trying to get pregnant.

Brittney's Favorite Holy Basil Products

- Blood Sugar Tea by Desert Sage Herbs - helps to lower blood sugar levels
- Deep Relaxation Tea by Desert Sage Herbs - supports sleep and deeper relaxation
- Peaceful Times by Desert Sage Herbs - reduces stress and anxiety levels
- Up Lift Me Tea by Desert Sage Herbs - supports cognitive function, uplifts the spirits and reduces "stagnant depression"
- Holy Basil Tincture by Gaia or Herb Pharm
- Holy Basil Capsules by New Chapter
- Adrenal Health by Gaia - a blend of adaptogens and nervines to reduce stress response and to support the adrenal glands.
- Metabolic Support by Herbalist and Alchemist - a blend of blood sugar lowering herbs in liquid form.

Brittney brought her Peaceful Times Tea and Blood Sugar Tea blends for us to taste. Both feature basil and are available for sale at her herb shop, Desert Sage Herbs in Chandler, (480) 785-9065.

References:

Adaptogens: herbs for Strength, Stamina, and Stress Relief by David Winston, RH; 2019
Adaptogens in Medical Herbalism by Donald R. Yance, CN, MH, RH; 2013
 Herbal Gram, Issue 98 by Gayle Engels and Josef Brinckmann; pages 1-6

March Culinary Dinner, March 23, 2024 – Meatless Mediterranean



What an incredible night for our AZ Herb Association dinner hosted by Hazel and Les Davis! The theme was Meatless Mediterranean, which sparked everyone's creativity. And the rain held off so we could dine with a view of Camelback! It was 10 years ago I took on

being the Culinary Chair, and 10 years ago tonight was also a dinner at Hazel and Les'!

For the appetizers, Mary Johnson provided Home-cured Olives, a neighborhood project in the Willow District; Donna and Keith Lorch made Goat Cheese Balls with Thyme, Walnuts and Tart Cherries; and Nancy and Jerry Greenberg made "Better than Store Bought" Humus, served with veggies and pita, and their tasty Vin d'Orange.

Vesna Boscovic recreated her favorite Magic Mushrooms with Asparagus and Potato Salad; Kathy Eastman made Golden Cauliflower, an Ottolenghi recipe from his cookbook *Plenty*; Donna and Keith Lorch brought Confetti Corn Pasta; and Chris Lueck made Sun-Dried Tomato Pasta.

Barbara Dysart replicated her Mom's Cabbage Slaw (and her 93 year-old mother was waiting to hear how we liked it!); Mary Parke made Arugula Salad with Pistachios; and Drew Templeton interpreted Ful Mudammas (Lebanese Bean Salad).

Pam Perry and Henry Harding prepared Fresh Fava Beans (all that shelling!) and Tabouli; Kristi James brought Dolmades and Tzatziki from Middle Eastern Deli and Bakery; Diane and Chris Knudsen experimented with Chickpea "Meatballs" and Pam Schuler brought Balsamic Brussels Sprouts with Hazelnuts.

Hazel and Les Davis made Spinach-Pesto Lasagna and Todd Templeton invented baked Cheesy Tomato Beans that tasted like pizza soup!



The March culinary dinner featured a view of Camelback Mountain from the Davis' patio.
Photos in this article by Drew Templeton

Beatriz Cohen created a whiskey flan; Janet Coleman and Zac made Citrus Olive Oil Cake with Orange-Ginger Curd; Pam Posten baked her favorite Apple Crisp; Mary Johnson treated us to Lemon Bars; and Hazel Davis also prepared Khushaf (Soaked Dried Fruits and Nuts).

Top favorites this time were the Magic Mushrooms, Spinach-Pesto Lasagna, and Olive Oil Cake!

Join us next on April 20 when Janet and Timorie Coleman host "It's all about the ROOTS."

Drew Templeton
Culinary Chair

Spinach-Pesto Lasagna



16 no-boil lasagna noodles
2 12 ounce bags frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
5 cups ricotta cheese (can use full- or low-fat, or a combination)
1 cup pesto
2 cloves garlic, minced

Freshly ground black pepper to taste
3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese, divided
1/3 cup toasted pine nuts
4 cups marinara sauce
8 ounces grated mozzarella cheese

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly oil a 10x14-inch baking pan.

Combine the ricotta, spinach, pesto, garlic, pepper, 1/2 cup of the Parmesan and the pine nuts. Mix well. Spread 1 cup of pasta sauce on the bottom of the pan. Place a layer of uncooked noodles over the sauce. No-boil noodles will expand as they bake, so some space between them is okay. Spread 1/3 of the spinach-ricotta filling over the noodles, and sprinkle with 1/3 of the grated mozzarella.

Repeat layers twice more. Cover with a final layer of noodles, and then the final 1 cup of pasta sauce.

Cover the pan tightly with foil. Bake for 45 minutes, uncover, sprinkle on the reserved 1/4 cup of Parmesan, and spray with a little olive oil if the top noodles seem dry. Bake uncovered another 10 to 15 minutes, until top is browned. Let rest for at least 10 minutes before cutting.
Makes 12-16 servings

Prepared by Hazel Davis
Meatless Mediterranean Culinary Dinner
Adapted from Lasagna al Pesto, by Mollie Katzen.

Olive Oil Cake with Orange-Ginger Curd and Whipped Cream



Olive Oil Cake

1-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
3 large eggs at room temperature
1-1/4 cups sugar plus 2 tablespoons for sprinkling on top of cake
1 tablespoon orange zest
3/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
3/4 cup whole milk at room temperature

Preheat oven to 350° F. and grease a 9" spring form pan. Line bottom of pan with parchment paper, and lightly grease parchment.

Add flour, baking powder, and salt to a small bowl and whisk to combine. Using a stand mixer, fitted with the whisk attachment, beat the eggs until frothy. With the mixer running, sprinkle in the 1-1/4 cups sugar and the orange zest. Continue to beat on high speed until the mixture is fluffy and pale, about 4 to 5 minutes. With the mixer running slowly (very slowly), put the olive oil into the batter in a thin, steady stream. Continue to beat until the olive oil is completely incorporated.

Turn the mixer off and add half the flour. Beat on low until just mixed; add the milk and continue to mix on low speed. Add the remaining flour and beat on low until just incorporated. Mix any remaining flour on the sides of the bowl or bottom with a rubber spatula. Pour into the greased spring form pan and sprinkle the reserved 2 tablespoons sugar on top of the cake. Bake for 40 minutes in the center of the oven, or until a toothpick comes out clean. Remove the cake from the oven and allow it to sit for 5 minutes before releasing from the pan.

Orange-Ginger Curd

Zest from 4 medium oranges and 1 large lemon
4 tablespoons grated ginger
2-1/2 cups sugar
9 large eggs
1 cup orange juice
1/2 cup lemon juice
1/2 pound butter
1/4 teaspoon salt
4 teaspoons cornstarch

Put the orange and lemon zest, ginger, and sugar into the food processor and process until finely minced about 2 minutes. In a stand mixer with a paddle attachment, cream the butter and sugar mixture together. Add the eggs, 1 at a time, and then add orange juice, lemon juice, salt, and cornstarch. Pour the mixture into a heavy bottom saucepan and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until thickened. Mixture will thicken just below a simmer. Remove from heat and strain into a bowl through a fine mesh strainer. Refrigerate; the curd will get thicker as it cools.

Whipped Cream

1 cup cold cream
1/8 cup powdered sugar
Whip the cream and sugar until soft peaks form. Serve Orange-Ginger Curd and Whipped Cream with the Olive Oil Cake

Made by Janet Coleman for the March 2024 Culinary Event

Magic Mushrooms with Asparagus and Potato Salad



Magic Mushrooms:

16 – 24 organic Button Mushrooms (about a pound)
3/4 cup good Balsamic vinegar
1/4 cup light soy sauce
1/4 red onion, finely minced
4-5 cloves garlic, finely minced
1 teaspoon sugar
1/2 teaspoon Kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/2 cup canola oil
1/2 cup olive oil
Sprigs of fresh thyme

Wash and peel the organic button mushrooms first (2 packages). Coat them in some marinade and fry in an air fryer only for 6 minutes. Remove them to a glass container to soak overnight in the marinade. I also added minced celery (2 small ribs) to the marinade. (Minced spring onion and celery would also be a good combo for the marinade.)

Mediterranean Potato Salad:

(Dalmatians call the cooking process "leso"):

4-5 medium size potatoes
Sliced red onion
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
2 tablespoons olive oil
Sea salt and pepper

Cook potatoes in boiling water (don't overcook). Then the difficult part - Peel the skin off when the potatoes are hot and slice them.

In the meantime, prepare dressing by combining vinegar, olive oil, sea salt and pepper.

The point is to cover the hot potatoes with the dressing and sliced red onion. (Hot potatoes absorb dressing much better than cold.) Mix everything gently, leave in the refrigerator and serve cold.

Asparagus was steamed and prepared the same as mushrooms (in an air fryer, coated in marinade).

Swiss chard was blanched in boiling water for 2 minutes. Add some sea salt and pepper.

Bon Appétit - or as Dalmatians say
"Priyatno i dobar tek"

Prepared by Vesna Boscovic for the March 2024
Culinary Event

Desert Marigold: The Flower of Twenty Petals

For over 2000 years, Marigolds, native to subtropical America, have been cultivated in Mexico. Marigolds represent 56 species of mostly herbaceous plants belonging to the family Asteraceae. The most common and hardy member that presents showy yellow blossoms in the harsh desert landscape is the desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*). The 12 to 18-inch mound shaped desert marigold seems to be growing individual small flowers. In fact, these "single" compact flowers can have more than 1,000 individual flower heads (inflorescences or florets). The 2-inch "flowers" wave gaily on thick, almost leafless stalks from a low cluster of lobed green leaves, sprinkled liberally with silver-white hairs.



Desert Marigolds were in bloom at the Fountain Hills Botanical Garden on March 16th during our hike to celebrate Jane Haynes. Photo by Mike Hills

Unlike some of its more pampered cultivars, the desert marigold is just as at home in poor, dry soils, and extreme heat as it is in highly pampered gardens and can embrace numerous soil types, including sandy or gravelly soil commonly found in desert regions. The wild plants can be 1 to 2 feet tall and 2 feet across as they weave a golden trail throughout southern Arizona and Nevada, southwestern Utah, south into Sonora Mexico, and through the Chihuahuan Desert to Texas from March to November.

The desert marigold has many common names such as showy desert marigold, paper daisy, Mexican marigold, wild marigold, desert Baileya or African marigold, American marigold, or Aztec marigold. Indigenous people called this plant "cempasúchil" which means "the flower of twenty petals." In the

1500s, the Europeans changed the name to “Mary’s gold” as a tribute to the Virgin Mary.

In the Southwest, desert marigold has a long history of medicinal and spiritual use among Native American tribes. Marigolds were used by the Aztecs for decorative, religious, and medicinal purposes. Antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties credited to marigolds are often used in traditional medicine for treating skin conditions and promoting wound healing. Salves from the marigold can be used topically to heal wounds, burns, and rashes. Taken internally, marigolds are useful for treating digestive problems and the plant’s diuretic properties are reported to reduce urinary tract problems.

Desert marigold flowers are not only visually attractive but also edible. Although the flowers are not commonly consumed, all varieties of marigold flowers are non-toxic. The range of flavors, dependent on the type of marigold, is nothing, citrusy, slightly bitter, or spicy. Whatever the taste, the flowers can be used to add flavor and color to salads, desserts, and herbal teas. Try making marigold tea as a cure for hiccups. Place about 1 tablespoon of flowers into 16 ounces of hot water. Steep for 10 to 15 minutes. Note, however, that only the petals of the flowers should be eaten; the rest of the plant is not suitable for human consumption. FYI marigolds may be poisonous to sheep and goats, but not to cattle or horses.

Did you say pollinator garden? Once again, the desert marigold steps up. The flowers of the desert marigold, with their open center, attract the attention of beneficial nectar loving insects and have special value for native bees. The intensely scented leaves have a fragrance comparable to a mixture of lemon and mint. The pleasantly sweet floral smell attracts the Leanira Checkerspot and Desert and Pima Orangetips butterflies.



The desert marigold, a native plant, supports native wildlife. Using native plants in your yard and landscape is the best way to support healthy ecosystems and protect biodiversity.

Sources:

<https://btarboretum.org/eight-plants-perfect-for-your-pollinator-garden/>

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/plantmaterials/azpmcpg13935.pdf>

By Kathleen McCoy, Herbie, Master Naturalist & Master Gardener

Welcome New AHA Members:

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Tammy Aragaki, Membership Committee



Tammy Aragaki has an indoor worm composter she is giving away. The only requirement is that you come to a meeting to get it! Please reach out to her with any questions. Her email is: tjaragaki@gmail.com





Jane Haynes Celebration of Life and Fountain Hills Botanical Garden Hike

By Mike Hills and Sandy Cielaszyk

On Saturday, March 16, 2024, family and friends, including Herbie friends, celebrated the life of Jane Haynes, one of the Arizona Herb Association's founding members. Held at Fountain Hills Presbyterian Church, those present joined in singing some of Jane's favorite hymns and heard a touching statement from daughter Pat Haynes. Jane survived two pandemics and lived a great life, full of adventures with her husband Fran, daughter Pat, granddaughter Catherine, and many other friends and family members. Jane was always curious, and so, always learning. You can view the Jane Haynes' memorial video here:

<https://youtu.be/jlVy2zP3rpM?feature=shared>



Photo by Mike Hills

In the church's Fellowship Center following the celebration, we shared stories and enjoyed a delicious "cookie bar." Mike Hills made Lemon Thyme Cookies to add to the bonanza that Jane's daughter Pat and others baked. In the words of Carolyn Hills "Jane never met a cookie she didn't like."

Afterwards, a group of Herbies took a hike at nearby Sonoran Desert Botanical Garden in Fountain Hills, founded with the help of Jane and her daughter. Desert plants were starting to bloom – lupines, senna, wolfberry, desert lavender and desert marigolds among others, helped by our well-spaced winter rains.



Herbies enjoyed the beautiful spring weather on the hike at the Fountain Hills Botanical Garden organized by Teri Thorpe and led by her and Mike Hills on March 16.

Hiking photo by Lee Ann Aronson

Jane was a lifelong artist and the drawings on the plant ID signs along the trail are hers.



Photo by Mike Hills

These colorful rock coatings (above) are produced by lichens, a remarkable symbiotic relationship between algae cells and fungal filaments. Neither the algae nor fungi would be able to survive on their own in this harsh desert environment. The algae are photosynthetic and provide the fungus with carbohydrate nutrients. The fungi provide a dense meshwork of fungal filaments which help the algae attach to the rock and give the embedded algae protection from the heat and aridity of the desert.

Rock lichens come in a variety of bright colors from red, orange, and yellow to brilliant shades of green. A dozen or more species may grow on a single rock. (Information on rock lichens is from Fountain Hills Botanical Garden signage.)



In Memory of
Jane E. Haynes
February 20, 1919
July 19, 2023

In appreciation for your
years of dedicated service and
outstanding accomplishments
Jane Haynes
November 7, 2009

Lemon Thyme Cookies



1 cup butter or margarine, softened
1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
2 eggs
2 1/2 cups flour
1 teaspoon cream of tartar

1/2 teaspoon salt
5 tablespoons finely chopped fresh lemon thyme (or 3 tablespoons dried)

Cream butter and sugar; add eggs and mix well. Sift together flour, cream of tartar and salt. Add flour mixture to butter, sugar and eggs and stir until well blended; then add lemon thyme.

Chill overnight or until firm enough to roll. Preheat oven to 350 ° F. Roll chilled dough into one-inch balls and bake on greased cookie sheets for 10 minutes.

Makes 4 dozen cookies.

Recipe from Herbal Sweets by Ruth Bass Brought by Jane Haynes to the October 9, 2010 Culinary Event and by Mike Hills to Jane's Celebration of Life.



Lauren Espinosa assists at our plant/seeds/books sale. Photo by Mike Hills

Weed & Feed, March 2024

Plants to plant, weeds to manage, plants, books, seeds to buy, people to greet and meet, trellises to build bigger, others to retire, plants gone missing, plants found, all part of the March madness know as Weed & Feed at the AHA Herb Demonstration Garden at MCCE this month.

After realizing how successfully the Queen's Wreath covers the original trellis each season, we decided

to make our 10+ year old trellis taller. The trellis was lifted from its moorings after a little tug-of-war with the queen's roots, and Herbie John Barkley has taken it away for improvements. We will re-install it soon, just in time for the rampant spring growth and May 1st blooms. Those few feet of extra height mean we may not have to duck so low for so many weeks when using the steps at the west end of the gardens. And to think we wondered those many years ago if perhaps we had not been too ambitious in making the trellis as large as it was. The two little black trellises at the north entrance were retired; the Bay Laurel and Pomegranate trees on either side have grown and now anchor that entry nicely. We will soon find a new use for them, I am confident.

Weeds were plentiful on the table for Mike's morning investigation into the many lives of weeds this time of year, and volunteers were able to recognize them again in the garden and remove them! A few spring additions to the garden were made, including scented geranium 'Attar of Rose' (one of the culinary favorites of bakers), a new mint variety, 'Strawberry Mint' that sounded interesting, and Sweet Violets, where (if we get it right) they may be able to naturalize under the bay tree. The bay was pruned, and many garden volunteers went home with a supply of fresh bay leaves. Trimmings of established scented geraniums and rosemaries were also available for at-home propagating.



The wet spring gave the garden's nemesis a great start and many, many volunteers were engaged in pulling the *Oenothera speciosa*, or Mexican evening primrose. A large patch of it was subjugated to the newspaper/mulch regime this month in hopes of curtailing some activity. Flea beetles have been having fun munching it, as well as the *Oenothera biennis*, but leaving most everything else alone! A few more of the mints were repotted; the fresh soil will give them a welcome fresh start. Strawberry Mint was added to the collection of demonstration pots, something new to test out for small or patio home gardeners.



Flea beetle damage on the Mexican evening primrose in our demonstration garden

March Weed and Feed volunteers worked hard on suppressing weeds in our demo garden by placing newspaper on the ground and covering with mulch and soil conditioner.

Weed & Feed
Photos by Mike Hills



The winter was mild at this garden and the basil look more alive than dead; we will wait and see how spring treats them before pruning back hard. Rosemaries and Sweet Peas were blooming madly, keeping the Extension honeybees busy. The pomegranates seemed to be leafing out rapidly, almost as we worked. Our stressed out Elderberry is breaking dormancy again and the Moringa tree is sending out lots of new suckers.

The group of young gardener visitors from nearby ReFrame, led by Ashley, helped to clear weeds in the vacant patch near employee parking, while leaving the nice selection of wildflowers growing. Keith and Donna Lorch installed irrigation where we hope to trial some of the interesting seed collection bequeathed to us by past president Kirti Matura.

A question was raised by one volunteer regarding male and female jojoba plants. In the nursery one must carefully check selections to find those with blooms starting in spring, or fruit set in early summer, to identify a female. In the valley there is such an abundance of jojobas planted in landscapes that, if one has a female, it will in all likelihood be pollinated by males in the neighborhood. It is securing a female to begin with that is the primary challenge should one want to collect its fruits!

Last but not least, hours after volunteers were home and recovering, I realized I had not seen the little New Zealand bush mint that President Liz Lonetti donated last month. A quick search the next day found the plant, lost among seedlings of ornamental carrots and black-eye Susies, and a cage now establishes its position in the garden pending signage and growth!

The diversity and number of activities that our volunteers successfully carry out each month is astounding, truly the garden is better for all of your continued interest and support in the AHA! Mike and Pam are ever so delighted to have your help

and your company! We hope you had an opportunity to peruse books, seeds and plants and perhaps find something to take home. Thank you all for your efforts and contributions! Try to make it by the demonstration garden in the next few months for the spring blooms; bring your camera.

Mike Hills and Pam Perry,
Past Presidents and Demo Garden Captains

Stinkweed Look-Alikes

By Mike Hills

Three plants often mistaken in our Low Desert this time of year for the pesky, invasive weed Stinknet are Wild Chamomile (pictured in our banner this month with comments in the banner photos description) and lesser and greater Swinecress (*Lepidium didymum* (*Coronopus didymus* and *Coronopus squamatus*) described here.

Swinecress is in the Brassicaceae or cabbage family and germinates fall to winter. A prostrate annual/biennial weed, swinecress occasionally roots along its jointed



stems if in contact with wet soil. Blooms are tiny, inconspicuous, white, and 4-petaled, appearing in clumps along a 1/2 to 2-1/2 inch long flowering stem. Lesser swinecress has finer cut, more feathery leaves and a stronger smell, like a pungent combination of old parsley, spoiled broccoli and skunk when stressed. Greater swinecress smells somewhat better and is sometimes eaten. Seedpods or "fruits" are green and set early here, often in February or March; each seedpod contains 2 seeds. Swinecress plants stay green into late summer, continuing to set seeds which are carried by birds into new gardens.

The foliage of Stinknet, even in fresh seedlings, smells like gasoline, kerosene or other pungent and unpleasant chemical odors, depending on your nose. Its yellow blooms are globe-shaped and have NO petals. Seeds are tiny and carried by wind, so this weed shows up even where no plants went to seed the prior year.

Information and photo links for swinecress:

<https://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/WEEDS/swinecress.html>
https://vegetableipmupdates.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/2022-7/210125_Swinecress.pdf

Information and photo links for stinknet:

<https://sdcwma.org/species/stinknet.php>
<https://www.phoenix.gov/parkssite/Documents/Stinknet%20Brochure.pdf>
<https://extension.arizona.edu/stinknet-invasion>

Banner Photos: April is a buzz and busy! Pictured from left to right, in the demo garden the cilantro is bolting; wild chamomile, *Matricaria discoidea*, aka pineappleweed, is a native, annual herb used for a pleasant tasting, calming tea, but often mistaken for the pesky invasive weed stinknet; desert lavender blooms along the trail at Fountain Hills Botanical Garden (story on page 10); center is *Phacelia*, or scorpionweed, a plant in the borage family; fernleaf lavender grows in a pot; Herbie Linda Overby's herbalicious Nasturtium Leaf Wraps decorated with nasturtium flowers made for our March meeting; and more bolting cilantro as the weather warms. Photos by Mike Hills

Nasturtium Leaf Rolls

8 ounces cream cheese
 Small bunch chives
 Sprig fresh mint
 Sprig fresh basil
 1 teaspoon caraway seeds
 1 tablespoon grated orange peel
 1 teaspoon sugar
 Nasturtium leaves

Place herbs in food processor to chop, then add caraway seeds, orange peel and sugar. Blend in cheese. Chill overnight. Divide cheese mixture into "fingers" and roll leaves around; secure with toothpicks.

Made by Linda Overby, AHA general meeting, March 7, 2024

The Herb Kingdom Holds Royal Court with Basil and Lavender

By Catherine Crowley, the Herb Lady, Originally printed in the Desert Home and Garden Section of the East Valley Tribune on October 12, 2002

Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme – there is more to the culinary range than these wonderful herbs. So let me introduce you to the king and queen of herbs: Basil and Lavender.

Basil gets its name from the Greek word meaning "kingly" and lavender from the Latin "to wash." Basil is used in just about every ethnic cuisine on Earth, while lavender is a common component of that wonderful mixture, Herbes de Provence.

There are over 43 varieties of basil and 200 of lavender. Both herbs are from the Lamiaceae family (part of the mint family). Both share the essential oil linalool, plus other oils giving each family and each variety within the family its distinct fragrance and

taste. These essential oils are what make basil basil and they can cross family lines, allowing for such wonderful herbs as lime and lemon basil, which, together with their basil oil components, contain limonene, an essential oil found in lemons and limes.

Basil varieties include (besides the well-loved sweet Italian), lemon, lime, cinnamon, anise, holy basil, Thai, and dark opal. Basil is a tender perennial, grown in other parts of the country as an annual. But here, if frost protected, it can last two or more years, growing in many gardens to three to four feet in diameter.



Varieties of lavender include English, French, sweet, silver sweet, fernleaf, Munstead and Spanish lavender, though these last two are not high on my best culinary list (but that is what

experimenting is all about, what I may not like, you may love). Lavender is cool-weather hardy.

Both of these herbs need well-draining, amended soil. Basil is a little forgiving of overwatering, lavender is very unforgiving of overwatering. Companion-plant your basil and lavender with any cabbage family member (ornamental kales are beautiful next to lavenders) and pair basil with asparagus, beans, peppers, and, of course, tomatoes.

Optimal planting time is October through February. These plants need four to six hours of strong light a day. There should be no need to fertilize. Harvest no more than one-third of the plant at a time.

Cooking: How do I love thee, basil? Let me count the ways. How about a BBLT (the Bs can stand for bacon and basil). Or, add basil to salads and soups.

Use lavender to flavor lemonade, honey, preserves, baked goods and sugars; add to dough for savory tarts or quiches. Try lavender instead of rosemary. Make a butter spread with lavender and insert the butter under the skin of chicken before roasting or grilling. Try it in chili (just don't tell the Texans).

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Herb of the Month: Basil by Kim
Rosenlof

Desert Marigold by Kathleen McCoy

Meatless Mediterranean Culinary with
Hazel and Les Davis

March Weed & Feed

Jane Haynes Celebration of Life & Hike
at Fountain Hills Botanical Garden

*My rule of green thumb for
mulch is to double my initial
estimate of bags needed, and
add three. Then I'll only be two
bags short.*

~Author unknown