



Arizona Herb Association

February 2024

A Publication for Members & Friends

<http://www.azherb.org>

My Dear Herbie Friends,

As we step into the month of February, a season of transition and renewal, I first would like to express my gratitude for the dedication and passion each of you brings to our Herb Association. Your enthusiasm makes our club a thriving community for herb enthusiasts, and I am continually inspired by the collective knowledge and love for growing things that we share.

As we embrace the brisk days of February, these are busy days in our garden! Let's turn our attention to some seasonally appropriate garden tips to keep our herb gardens flourishing:

1. **Pruning Wisdom:** if you have plants damaged by recent frosts, hold off on pruning until spring. Once new growth emerges, you will then know to cut back to where the new leaves are growing.
2. **Cold-Weather Plants:** Mid February is the season to plant citrus and bare root plants. Consider how a well-placed tree could improve your garden. Other herbs to plant now include: Catnip, Chamomile, Chives, Fennel, Mexican Tarragon, Lavender, Lemon Balm, Lemon Grass, Lemon Verbena, Marjoram, Oregano, Parsley, Sage, Savory(s), and Thyme.

I've included a couple of seasonally delightful recipes (one below and one on page 11). I hope they add a dash of herbal joy to your February days. Feel free to share your own favorite seasonal tips or recipes in our upcoming gatherings. Let's continue to cultivate, not just our gardens, but also the bonds that make our club so special.

Wishing you a delightful February filled with the magic of herbs and the promise of spring.

Happy gardening!
Warm regards,

Liz Lonetti
President

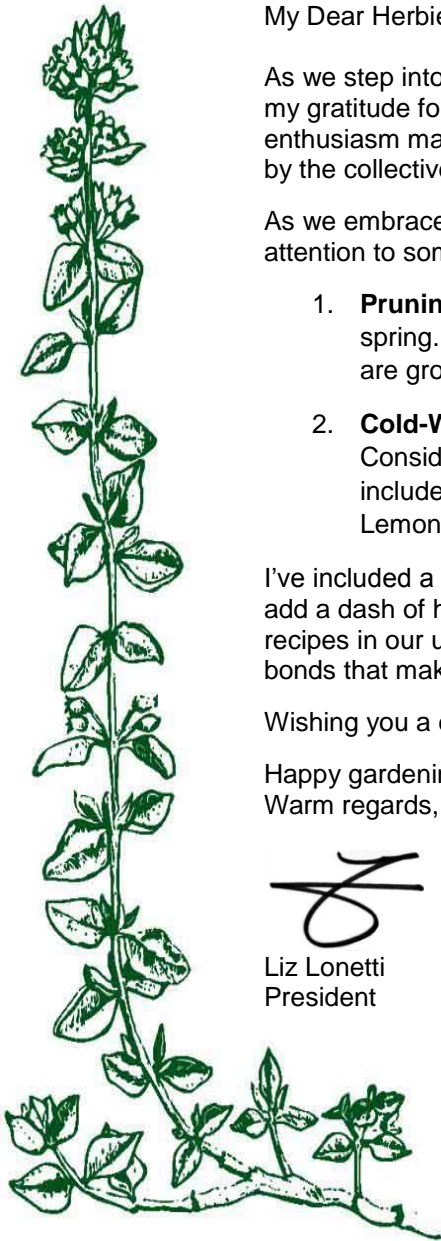
Winter Herb Infusion

Ingredients:

- A handful of fresh rosemary
- 1 tablespoon of dried lavender (optional)
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1 orange peel

Instructions:

1. Combine the herbs and spices in a pot.
2. Add hot water and let it steep for 15 minutes.
3. Strain and enjoy this fragrant herbal infusion, perfect for cozy winter evenings.



Calendar

February 2024

Thursday, February 1: General Meeting
Location: MCC Extension; Time: 7:00 p.m.
Topic: Herbal Remedies using Garlic
Speaker: Herbalist Ashley Johnston
Herb of the Month: Garlic
Presenter: Shay Emmers

Saturday, February 3: Weed & Feed
Time: 8:00 a.m.
Bring your old newspapers and/or seeds to share
See write-ups with Weed & Feed article

Saturday, February 3: Spring Seed Swap
Location: Sunset Library, 4930 W Ray Rd, Chandler
Time: 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
<https://chandler.bibliocommons.com/events/655281dd73e2c83000a2f720>

Saturday, February 17: AHA Herbal Workshop
Presenter: Herbalist Ashley Johnston
Topic: Medicinal Garlic
Location: Liz Lonetti's home
Please respond to your Evite!

Saturday, February 24: Culinary Event
Hosts: Melissa & Mark Esbanshade
Theme: Spring in the Desert
Watch for your Evite!

March 2024

Saturday, March 4: Weed & Feed
Time: 8:00 a.m.

Thursday, March 7: General Meeting
Location: MCC Extension; Time: 7:00 p.m.
Topic: Holy Basil
Speaker: Brittany Sounart
Herb of the Month: Basil
Presenter: Kim Rosenlof

Desert Botanical Garden Spring Plant Sale
Thursday, March 14: Member's Day
Friday, March 15– Sunday, March 17 open
to the public from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Reservations required

Saturday, March 23: AHA Herbal Workshop
Presenter: Herbalist Ashley Johnston
Topic: Basil Infusions
Watch for your Evite!

February 2024 General Meeting

Join us on Thursday, February 1, at 7:00 p.m. for our next general meeting. The second topic in our "Back to Basics" series features garlic. Herbalist Ashley Johnston will present on the topic "Using Garlic in Herbal Remedies." Shay Emmers will present the Herb of the Month – garlic!



Ashley Johnston, herbalist, pictured above and Shay Emmers, Herb of the Month Chair, pictured left.



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, bowls, beverage holders and utensils to help us reduce waste! And consider using garlic in your offering.



The meeting presentation will also be available on Zoom.

Topic: February AHA General Meeting

Date: Thursday, February 1, 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

Be sure to join the event at least 10 minutes before 7:00 p.m., giving yourself time to sign on and download the app if you don't already have it.



Welcome New and Returning AHA Members

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Tammy Aragaki, Membership Committee



The word rosemary comes from the Latin “ros” meaning dew and “marinus” meaning sea; the plant thrives in coastal areas, growing on rocky hillsides and cliffs along the ocean. It prefers less than 10 inches of rainfall yearly. Rosemary is native to the countries of Portugal and Spain and the southwest Mediterranean country of Morocco. Rosemary is in the mint family, Lamiaceae, having square stems and opposite leaves.

Rosemary enjoys a worldwide love affair and is known by different names in different countries, including Romarin in French, Romarino in Italian, Romero in Spanish, Rosmarin in German and Swedish, Mi-Tieh-Hsiang in Chinese, Iklil Al-Ajbal in Arabic and Rasmari in India.

History: Rosemary gets its first mention on Cuneiform Tablets in North Africa about 5000BCE. Ancient Egyptian tombs reveal that rosemary was being used for embalming about 3500BCE. The ancient Greeks and Romans, including Pliny the Elder and Discorides, wrote of using rosemary; the Greeks called the plant “Anthos” from their word meaning flower. Rosemary was considered a “brain herb” that could increase both memory and alertness.

Romans introduced rosemary throughout Europe, including into southern Britain. The Spanish first introduced rosemary to the Americas with settlers into the Caribbean and with the Spanish missions in Texas, Arizona, Florida, New Mexico and California. The plant grows so well in Cuba it is considered invasive.

Historical Uses: The Greeks associated rosemary with memory and wore wreaths of its branches on their heads. The Romans associated it with cleaning. During the Middle Ages in Europe, rosemary was used in churches as incense and burned in hospitals to purify air from evil spirits. In 1235, Queen Izabella of Hungary treated her paralysis with “Hungary Water” – she bathed in wine infused with rosemary. Napoleon Bonaparte used rosemary oil as a base for his own eau de cologne. In fact, some modern researchers think excessive use of colognes may have contributed to his

February’s AHA Herbal Workshop

Garlic’s virtue goes far beyond its taste alone. It is a unique plant in that it is not only a food and a spice, but also a powerful medicine. Garlic is a traditional herb and ancient medicine for nearly all of the body’s organ systems and the infections that can plague them.

This month’s workshop (February 17) is medicine making and we are focusing on Garlic’s medicinal qualities. We’ll be learning the different medicinal preparation methods for Garlic and when and why we would use that medicine. There will be a demonstration on the processing of a couple methods and you will leave with a sample to take home. See the workshop notice on page 11.

Ashley Johnston
Herbal Educator

Rosemary, January Herb of the Month

Herbie Emeritus and Past President Mike Hills presented the Herb of the Month for January, Rosemary, formerly named *Rosmarinus officinalis*, and now known as *Salvia rosmarinus*. Mike cut 13 varieties from our demonstration garden to show us, but noted that we have signs for 19 different rosemaries we have grown through the years.



shortened life due to cancer. The herb was the subject of many poems and was mentioned in five of Shakespeare's plays.

Folklore: Many legends are told in connection with the herb rosemary. One relates that the original color of rosemary's blooms was white. When Mary, Joseph and the infant Jesus were fleeing to Egypt, they took refuge near a rosemary bush over which Mary placed her blue cloak. The white flowers turned to blue and the plant became known as the Rose of Mary. Another story tells of rosemary (out of respect) not growing taller than Jesus or living longer than the 33 years that he lived.

In the 1970s, folk singers Simon and Garfunkel made the plant famous anew in their album "Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme," using the English folk song "Scarborough Fair" to express anti-war sentiments.

Rosemary continues to be an important plant today. It is beneficial to pollinators and humans alike. It is considered to be "grazer resistant" from deer and javelina and it provides cover for quail and rabbits.

March Meeting Review: Rosemary!

Mike and Liz went on to share tips on cultivating and using rosemary.



Rosemary, commonly known as *Rosmarinus officinalis*, was the main focus of our January general meeting. Mike Hills shared facts about growing and propagating rosemary plants, followed

by Liz Lonetti who gave us ways to use the rosemary we propagate and grow.

In 2017, the genus Rosemary was merged into the genus *Salvia*, with the new plant name being *Salvia rosmarinus*. There are hundreds of varieties or rosemary; our own Demonstration Garden contains many of them! A caution is warranted: many times the same genetic cultivar will have several names in the nursery trade and among gardeners. When deciding which varieties to grow, consider the plant's taste (varieties of rosemary have vastly different taste—all edible but not all so palatable), its growth habit, its space requirement and flower color.

Rosemary is native to the old world but now makes its home worldwide.

Varieties Mike talked about included:

Jane Haynes variety #1: This variety, found in our Demo Garden, was planted from a cutting that AHA founder Jane Haynes brought with her to Fountain Hills from her garden in Ohio in the 1960s. It is a prostrate grower, getting to two feet tall and three feet wide. It is an excellent pollinator plant.

ARP variety: The Arp variety of rosemary originated in Arp, Texas, collected on an old homestead. It is prized for its excellent taste and winter hardiness. It can survive the winters of Prescott, Sedona, Payson and maybe even Flagstaff if it gets a little winter protection. It grows to three to five feet tall and wide and is said to be one of the most fragrant varieties.

Madeline Hill variety: Named after renowned herbalist and gardener Madeline Hill, this variety of rosemary has delicate leaves and a long bloom season with pale lavender flowers. Madeline is credited with introducing this species to the Texas and American markets. Growing from three to four feet tall and four to five feet wide, it is superior for culinary uses. In 2006, Madeline Hill and her daughter Gwen Barclay gave a special presentation for AHA members and the public in the Extension's Palo Verde room.

Blue Boy Dwarf variety: Here is where the wisdom of tasting different varieties of rosemary pays off – this one tastes like pine tree! It has a dwarf growth habit, reaching 12 to 18 inches tall and wide. It makes a good container plant and is long blooming – great for pollinators.



Gorizia variety: You may have read about this variety in the Weed

& Feed articles in recent newsletters. AHA has a large specimen of this plant in the Demonstration Garden. It was recently re-potted to give it fresh, well-draining soil and fewer irrigation emitters. Planted in the ground, it grows three to four feet tall and wide. The plant has a long bloom season, with scattered flowers of pale blue, and an excellent flavor.

Huntington Carpet variety: Good for hanging walls, pots and bonsai, the Huntington Carpet variety of rosemary is a prostrate grower. It has a strong taste and is good for cooking meats. Growing two to three feet tall and wide, it has a long bloom season.

Pink flowering variety: This smaller rosemary has an upright growth habit, reaching 16 to 24 inches tall and wide. It produces its pale pink blooms from spring into fall and has a good taste for culinary uses.

The Sonoran Desert and North and West Mediterranean are similar in many ways.

SONORAN DESERT

- Rainfall 2 – 10 inches annual
- Soil - dry, often gravelly soils
- Soil - low organic content
- PH - Alkaline

N & W MEDITERRANEAN

- Rainfall – low, depends on country
- Soil – dry, rocky
- Soil – low organic
- PH – Alkaline

Tips given for successfully growing rosemary in the Low Desert included choosing a variety suited to the growing space that you have, giving the plant full sun if possible, providing extra drainage by adding pumice to the growing mix and not overwatering. Additionally, do not fertilize, don't add extra organic matter; and do protect the plant from too much cold.

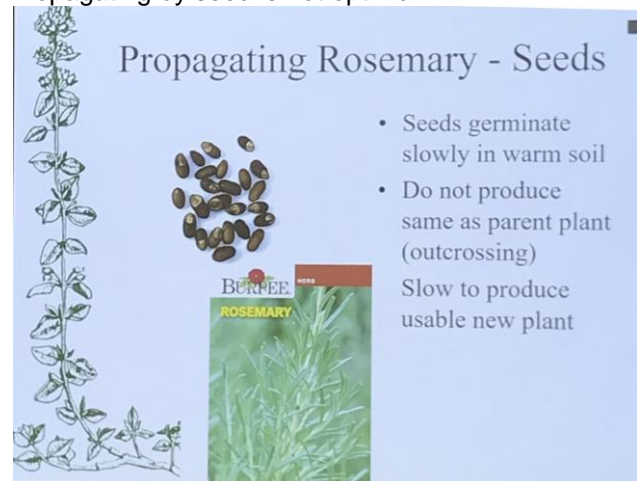
Rosemary Pests include Texas Root Rot (*Phymatotrichopsis omnivora*) caused by a soil borne disease often due to overwatering and poor drainage, spider mites, spittle bugs (seasonal), and occasionally caterpillars. Texas root rot can kill rosemary quickly.

To help with drainage, Mike and Liz suggested combining 1/3 your native soil with 1/3 compost or mulch and 1/3 perlite or pumice. This also makes a great mix for container gardening.

To propagate, take 3" to 5" cuttings of soft tips (not hard stems). Dip in rooting hormone and then tap off excess to leave a light dusting of the powder. Place in a rooting medium with much perlite, under a

tent of clear plastic. Best to propagate in the spring. If you are rooting cuttings in water, use dark colored glass containers. Take heart; it can be very difficult to propagate cuttings—many will probably die.

Propagating by seed is not optimum:



Suggestions for using rosemary:

Infused rosemary salt – Use chunky sea salt with fresh rosemary leaves stripped from the stems. Grind in the food processor.

Rosemary sugars – Use blooms and a few leaves ground with coarse sugar.

Herb blend – Mix one part dried rosemary with 2 to 3 parts other dried herbs to your liking, such as thyme or savory.

Rosemary Vinegar – Be sure to use dried leaves to infuse in your favorite vinegar, refrigerate and use up promptly.

Frozen – Combine oil, water or a savory broth with rosemary and freeze in ice cube trays to use in flavoring soups, stews, or vegetables.

Rosemary Kabobs – Use straight BBQ variety of rosemary stems to thread meat before placing on the BBQ to roast and impart flavor.

Mike Hills' Rosemary Infused Syrup

Mike Hills brought a delicious Rosemary, Apple and Peach Pie to our 2023 Holiday Party that featured Rosemary Infused Syrup as one of the ingredients. He brought the leftover syrup to our January general meeting for sampling and shares the recipe below.

This syrup was made with the BBQ variety of rosemary, but other varieties (Spice Islands, Arp, Huntington, and Madeline Hill) would also work, and be tasty without being overpowering. Avoid using the Blue Boy variety which is "too piney."

In a small saucepan, combine rosemary sprigs and equal parts water and sugar. Stir while cooking until sugar melts and rosemary loses color, about 5

minutes. Turn heat to low and let the rosemary steep into the syrup for up to 30 minutes, more or less depending on your taste preference. Remove from heat and set aside. Remove rosemary sprigs when cool to the touch and let any syrup drain back into the pot.

Store the syrup in a sterilized jar in the refrigerator and add when making baked goods, use in mocktails or lemonade, or drizzle on fruit salad. Freeze as ice cubes for longer storage.



Some of the lovely products Mike Hills and Liz Lonetti shared with us at our January 2024 meeting included dried rosemary, essential oil for mental clarity and a rosemary revitalizing spray.

As our presentation ran late, Liz Lonetti suggested she may be presenting more of what was not covered at a later date.

“Blue Rose” Botanical Mocktail



Chris George with her winning mocktail at our December 2023 AHA Holiday Party
Photo by Sandy Cielaszky

The vibrant blue flowers of the butterfly pea plant (*Clitoria ternatea*) have been used for centuries therapeutically and they contain pigments that allow them to naturally color foods and beverages. Native to equatorial Asia, they are full of health promoting compounds and rich in antioxidants (such as the

anthocyanin ‘ternatin,’ a potent antioxidant that gives the flower its vibrant hue).

The plant is known as the ‘Blue Healer’ In Ayurveda, a holistic system of medicine that has been practiced in India for thousands of years. The flower is said to be ruled by the planet Venus and connected to the element of water, which gives it the attributes of love, emotion, serenity and protection. It is used in devotional ceremonies. In India this flower is named after the Hindu goddess Aparajita, whose name means ‘the undefeated one.’ It is considered a ‘Medhya Rasayana’ (brain tonic) that supports memory and cognitive function. Modern research has classified butterfly pea flower as a nootropic, a substance that supports ‘cognition and memory and facilitates learning’.



Some researchers classify butterfly pea as an adaptogen, an herb that increases resilience to stress. Others classify it as a nervine that relaxes the nervous system. In any case, it has long been used to soothe stressed and frazzled nerves, ease feelings of anxiousness and lift mood. It encourages restful sleep. Butterfly pea flower is also used for beauty purposes, contributing to healthy looking skin and hair. It supports collagen formation.

Butterfly pea flower tea or “Anchan tea” is naturally caffeine free. It doesn’t have much flavor on its own, so it is often paired with stronger flavors such as lemon, lime, lemongrass, ginger or mint.

In Thailand, butterfly pea flower is enjoyed as an after dinner drink called nam doc anchan, which is a hot version of my ‘Blue Rose’ mocktail. When combined with water plus an acidic ingredient, such as lemon juice, the pH of the water is changed and the tea changes color from blue to violet.

Powdered butterfly pea flowers are sometimes referred to as blue matcha and can be used to create colorful blue lattes, blue rice or purple or blue desserts. The possibilities are endless.

References:
<https://momypotamus.com/butterfly-pea-flower-benefits/>
<https://draxe.com/nutrition/butterfly-pea-flower-benefits/>
<https://journal.sgu.ac.id/jfn/index.php/jfn/article/view/30>
<https://the-qi.com/blogs/journal/11-benefits-of-drinking-butterfly-pea-tea>

“Blue Rose” Botanical Mocktail Recipe by Chris George

Ingredients:

Butterfly pea flowers, organic, dried
Water

Lemonade (I used Uncle Matt’s unsweetened, which is sweetened with stevia)

Lime juice (to wet the rim of the glass)

Limes (for garnish)

Rose infused sugar (1/2 cup sparkling large crystal sugar mixed with 1/4 cup crushed pink rose petals, organic medicinal grade) to coat the rim of the glass.

For the tea, use 2 to 3 flowers per cup of water. For one quart, use 8 to 12 flowers. Using water just off the boil, steep for 15 to 20 minutes.

Assemble the drink:

Wet the edge of the glass with lime juice and dip in the rose sugar. Carefully add tea to the glass (a martini glass works great).

Add lemonade at 1/3 volume (or more to taste). For 1 cup of tea add 1/3 cup of lemonade. It is best to wait and add the lemonade (which is the acidic component that changes the pH and turns the vibrant blue tea to a pleasing violet color) when the process can be viewed by your guests or grandchildren who will delight in the amazing color change!!

For additional sweetness, lavender infused simple syrup can be added (rose infused simple syrup would also taste great). For the syrup take 50% water and 50% sugar and stir well to dissolve sugar; bring mixture to a boil, lower heat and simmer for a few minutes. Flavor the syrup as it cools with dried lavender, then strain out the plant material. Simple syrups keep for months in the refrigerator, DO NOT store at room temperature. In the summertime, adding hibiscus tea as a third ingredient makes a wonderfully refreshing drink that is a beautiful color!

The Awesome Blue Agave

What image initially comes to mind with the words “Agave Tequila?” Celebrations, fiestas, or Jimmy Buffet? Thank you, blue agave! Mexican tequila has been made for centuries in central Mexico. The fermented and distilled juice from the agave heart (called “piña”) contains a high concentration of sugar needed for the popular beverage. Stripped of its leaves, the piña, which means pineapple, is aptly named. FYI, agave piñas average 110 pounds and one piña can produce 11 bottles of tequila. Luckily for our partying amigos, the blue agave takes only five to seven years to harvest and has a hearty resistance to disease.

Although the blue agave is best known for its use as the main ingredient of tequila, our incredible succulent provides a large abundance of edible foods, as well as possible medicinal applications. The way the agave is processed determines uses.

As with most vegetables, roasting an agave enhances its flavor and sweetness. Baked in underground pits, similar to those used when roasting a whole pig, the piña produces a much-desired sugary sweetness. When pounded into cakes, this process produces food that can be dried for storage.



<https://thecactusking.com/plants/all-plants/agave-tequilana>

The blue agave, typically converted into a syrup, can be used for everything from sweetening beverages to making marinades. Gluten free with a low glycemic index, agave syrup is often used as a substitute for sugar. This vegan sugar alternative is reportedly healthier than refined white sugars and artificial sugar options. However, blue agave syrup has more fructose than high fructose corn syrup, and this higher glycemic load can cause cell damage. For a more detailed comparison of agave and granulated sugar, go to

https://www.diffen.com/difference/Agave_vs_Sugar.

Medicinal uses of the agave are many, but not all information has been subjected to scientific scrutiny. In Mexican traditional medicine, *Agave tequilana*, and two others (*Agave angustifolia* and *Agave americana*) have been used to treat inflammation-associated conditions. For individuals with diabetes, caution should be taken when substituting agave syrup for refined sugars. Agave syrup is a sugar, and too much sugar, whatever the source, should be avoided by individuals with insulin issues.

What is perfectly safe is to enjoy the majesty of the beautiful blue agave (*Agave tequilana*), a native succulent of the Americas. As a member of the *Asparagales* order, the rosette-forming blue agaves have the end goal of producing one tall bloom stalk of yellow lily-type flowers as their final gift to nature. Emanating from the center of stout spear-like leaves, the bloom stalk can reach upwards of 25 to 35 feet depending on variety. Over 250 species of agave exist. The flowers, regarded with utmost esteem by bees, hummingbirds, bats, and many high-flying pollinators, are filled with nectar. Desert dwellers such as squirrels, javelina, and other creatures look forward to consuming the moisture in the stalks.

While the blooming period usually extends to about three to four months, individual flowers only last for about 30 days. All the energy of the mother plant is directed toward reproduction. Reproduction may involve tiny clones called “pups” growing on their own around the base of the mother or “bulbils,” baby plants, that replace the flowers on the stalk, also clones. The stalk will often fall to the ground, placing the bulbils a safe distance from the mother to begin their life’s journey.

Kathleen McCoy
Herbie, Master Gardener, Master Naturalist

Rosemary Workshop with Ashley Johnston

On Saturday, January 20th, 18 herbies joined herbal educator Ashley Johnston at President Liz Lonetti’s home to explore the topic of rosemary and to experience making Rosemary Shampoo and bottling Rosemary Massage Oil. With our new workshop hours from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., many herbies got in the spirit and brought intriguing rosemary snacks. Felicity made egg salad from her chickens’ eggs with two kinds of rosemary, served with two kinds of crackers. Liz had almonds seasoned with rosemary, Lee Ann made warm rosemary tea, and Tami brought fresh baked French fries with rosemary and Liz added her scrumptious rosemary salt for dipping.

Ashley spoke on the herbal actions of rosemary, including that it brings circulatory stimulation and is a nervine that relieves tense muscles. In addition, it is diaphoretic, carminative, nootropic, antimicrobial, anti-fungal, and antibacterial. She explained that all

rosemary varieties have these same benefits. Rosemary originated in the Mediterranean but has made its home throughout the world, and, as we know, it grows very well here. It helps preserve healthy flora in the body. By stimulating circulation in the brain and head, rosemary helps with cognition and memory, including memory loss. Rosemary also helps the heart and circulatory system. This circulatory action helps eyes with glaucoma or degenerative eye disease as well. If using for headache only, use rosemary for dull aches, not red, hot type headaches. NOTE: While culinary use is fine, medicinal use is contraindicated for those who are pregnant.



Ashley Johnston making Rosemary Shampoo

We made shampoo and bottled the rosemary oil (recipes below) to take home. Ashley also said rosemary essential oil may help regrow eyelashes and eyebrows. She recommended placing one or two drops of rosemary essential oil in a clear mascara primer (ELF brand recommended), and putting the primer on overnight. Remember essential oils must be diluted for use.

Be sure to join us for the next workshop on garlic medicine making to be held on Saturday, February 17th. Please RSVP by Evite so we can have enough supplies on hand.

Rosemary Herbal Shampoo

- 3 tablespoons rosemary
- 3 tablespoons chamomile
- 3 tablespoons calendula
- 1 8 ounce cup distilled water
- 1/2 cup pure Castile soap
- 1/4 teaspoon jojoba oil
- 10 drops peppermint essential oil
- 10 drops rosemary essential oil

Place the herbs in a heat safe glass jar. Pour the distilled water (heated to boiling) over the herbs, cover and let steep until it reaches room temperature. Strain the tea and compost the herbs.



Add Castile soap and mix gently. Dilute essential oils in the jojoba oil and add to the mixture. Transfer to a flip-top bottle and store in the refrigerator between uses for up to one week.



Workshop participants Kristi James and Tami Phillips look on as Felicity Goodrich holds the funnel to fill the shampoo bottles. Photo by Lee Ann Aronson

Rosemary Infused Massage Oil

2 ounces organic sunflower seed oil
1 tablespoon rosemary leaves, dried

Intermediate method: Blend plant material to a powder. Add Everclear alcohol lightly to moisten the herbs for 12 to 24 hours. Put in a blender, blend all materials, and then strain through fine mesh. This method preserves the oil for 1 year or longer. Organic sunflower oil may be sourced from Arizona Soap Co.

To use: take 1 dropper and dispense it into the palm of your hand. With your fingertips, remove the oil and spread to the other hand and fingers. Massage the scalp, adding more oil as needed.

Happy New Year, New Starts in the Garden January 2024 Weed & Feed

Cool weather supported our volunteers' industry this month. The big pot project was finished! For support and ease of leveling, pavers were installed over a sand base north of the veggie garden shed, on the east side of the garden. The very heavy cast concrete pot was moved and settled into a new home. Fresh soil to fill the pot was mixed with ample pumice, native soil and cactus mix to improve drainage for the recovering rosemary. Large pieces of Styrofoam were settled into the bottom third of the pot to reduce the volume of soil needed to fill the pot and to reduce the weight. This will not inhibit drainage, hold heat, or decompose quickly as other fillers might.

After the new soil was transferred to the large concrete pot, our mature 'Gorizia' Rosemary was replanted and watered in well, with team consensus on planting depth. The new location will receive more direct sunlight, as it is away from the shed by several feet and not so directly under the twisted myrtle. We will watch as our woody old plant begins a new lease on life this spring – new buds were already breaking after her month long vacation.



Mike Hills, left, and Ron Brennan, right, with the newly repotted 'Gorizia' Rosemary Photo by Mindy Riddle

Sure, this all sounds easy enough, but there were at least a dozen Herbie and Master Gardener volunteers leveling sand, placing blocks, mixing soil, and moving that enormous pot into position, transplanting the plant, backfilling and finally settling her in with a good slow soak. Many hands, lots of input and help; the job is done and looks great!!!! Subsequently, Keith has brought in new irrigation lines and the plant is back on the irrigation system! Thank you one and all. It would not have been done without you. Take a bow, pat yourselves on the back and know that much is carried out with helping hands. And the bonus for the day was the discovery of a long lost underground quick-coupler hose connection that had become buried under the sunken pot.

Our ever too successful Mexican evening primrose (*Oenothera speciosa*) was again weeded from the places it has become established. The next few garden work days we will use newspaper to help control this aggressive grower. Liz brought us an Ashwagandha plant; this one has been planted into soil rather than a pot. We have also added *Prostanthera ovalifolia*, or Australian Mint Bush that

she found. This is a culinary and medicinal specimen from down under, and is now settling in under the Chaste tree on the southeast corner. We will have fun watching this one grow and sampling it this summer!

After planting one Yerba Mansa into a pot on the southwest corner of the garden, volunteers removed additional wandering plants. In that same corner Yarrows are growing again, and we are glad to see their success as they are the International Herb of the Year for 2024. A traditional medicinal, yarrow also supports pollinators and beneficial insects, a bonus for our GreenBridges Garden. Spring blooms make good cut flowers, with a nice scent, fresh or dried. Yarrows are a great addition on many levels to any herb garden!

Herbaceous perennials, including our artemisias, salvias and madder were cut back close to the ground. New growth will appear as days get longer. We have begun to trim our rosemary plants to help them share space. The sign in front of each large plant will be found again, and we will not allow the plants to cascade too far down the wall as they provide excellent cover for too many critters that eat plants - bunnies, ground squirrels, quail and other pesky garden visitors. Currently 13 to 15 different varieties of rosemary thrive in the demonstration garden, showing diversity in flavor, flower color and growth habits.

Our reliable annual sweet peas are beginning to bloom; the coreopsis has recovered from last summer's heat and will start blooming again this spring; garlic chives are in full bloom and we will save the seeds from this round. Kathy Eastman coached a crew as they lifted and divided the madder, settling it back into its space with fresh soil. The *Iris pseudacorus* will get the same treatment next month!

Liz and son Quin held a weed finding contest. Quin won and his reward was shaved ice! By noon a few remaining folks stayed to chat over banana chocolate chip brownies from Chris Lueck, grapes and other tasty things as we caught up with each other.



Unusually, work was also happening in the vegetable demonstration

garden as boards were cut to size for the new raised bed, the tomato plant got wrapped in frost cloth in anticipation of frosty temperatures, and a new class of Master Gardener interns were on property to pick up books and materials. They were most interested in the activity in the garden and are reportedly wondering how soon they too can participate! We look forward to welcoming them as volunteers to help maintain our garden.

We hope to see you in the demonstration garden this spring, even if only for a visit to admire the blooms and pollinators. Or maybe to drop off some newspaper for our ongoing weed control program – details follow.

Save your newspapers!

Please save your newspapers, Wednesday sales fliers, and any similar newsprint items. Pam and I have plans this spring in the Herb Demo Garden to control the overgrown Mexican Evening Primrose...and newspapers will help us to cover the areas, block sunlight & smother the excessive growth.

This is a great plant for landscape use as a pollinator plant, but in watered gardens it spreads very rapidly by seeds, stolons & rhizomes.

Bag or box and bring your stash to the February meeting or to the Feb. Weed & Feed. Or you can drop off at the Extension gardens Tuesday mornings when Pam has her Master Gardener helpers.

Calling all native pollinator seeds

Herbie Friends - Please collect and dry ripe seeds from any native blooms in your garden. Any extra seeds that you don't need for your own garden can help the Arizona Herb Association. There is a great demand for native pollinator seeds from all of our booth visitors, plus from our own members. You can bring your bulk native seeds to any meeting or a garden work day, and we can get them cleaned and packaged by other volunteers.

Examples of seeds we can use: Brittlebush, Chocolate Flower, Globe Mallow, Desert Bluebells, Blanketflower, Creosote, Common Sunflowers, Scarlet Flax, Desert Sunflowers, Coulter's and Arroyo Lupine, Mexican Gold and California Poppies, and others you are lucky enough to grow in your gardens.

Contact Mike or Pam with any questions you have on how to save seeds. Contact Lauren or Katherine with any other questions.

Saving Seeds for AHA to Sell by Katherine Tarr

Seeds we like to always have on hand with your help:

Cilantro (slow bolt), Parsley, Breadseed, California and Mexican Gold Poppies, Dill, Calendula, Cowpea, Painted, Tahoka and Spreading Daisies, Parry's, Firecracker, and Desert Penstemons, Hollyhocks (note color, if possible), Globemallow, Superstition Mallow and Rosemallow, Desert Senna, Brittlebush, Hopi Red Amaranth, Sunflowers, Garlic Chives and native Poinsettia.



The recipe for Chris Lueck's banana chocolate brownies can be found at

<https://www.melskitchencafe.com/whole-grain-banana-chocolate-chip-snack-cake/>

The second recipe referenced in Liz Lonetti's President's Letter

Roasted Garlic and Thyme Potatoes

Ingredients:

- Baby potatoes
- Olive oil
- Fresh thyme leaves
- Garlic cloves (peeled)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C).
2. Toss the baby potatoes and garlic cloves with olive oil, thyme, garlic, salt, and pepper.
3. Roast until golden brown and crisp, then savor the aromatic goodness.

Thank you Donna Lorch for a correction to our December/January 2024 issue for the link 'Making Seedballs: An Ancient Method of No-Till Agriculture' <https://www.permaculturenews.org/2014/06/18/making-seedballs-ancient-method-till-agriculture/>

Additionally, here is the UArizona link for pub AZ1937-2021: <https://extension.arizona.edu/pubs/seedball-design-optimize-germination>

Banner Photos: This month's banner photos are from the cold, frosty Weed & Feed held on Saturday, January 6. From left to right, comfrey is getting ready for its spring bloom; the sage was iced by frost in the early morning; borage bore bright blue blooms; our garlic chives' white star-shaped blooms attract a bee, and ashwagandha is settling into our demonstration garden. We appreciate the many hardy volunteers who turned out despite the cold; they warmed our hearts with their dedication and considerable efforts. Photos by Mike Hills

Savory Rosemary-Cheddar Cheese Wafers

2 cups grated sharp cheddar cheese
1/2 cup butter (no substitutes)
1 cup flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon dry mustard
Dash Worcestershire sauce
Pinch or two of cayenne pepper
2 tablespoons fresh rosemary



Preheat oven to 375° F Blend cheese and butter, then add remaining ingredients. Roll into marble-sized balls, put on parchment paper and press slightly. Bake 10 to 12 minutes.

Adapted from herbalist Sharon Lovejoy's booklet "Rosemary, Sweet Rosemary" and served at our January 2024 meeting by Lee Ann Aronson



Check your Evite now to RSVP for our upcoming garlic workshop on February 17

First Culinary 2024 – Blue Zones

Thirty-six Herbies and their guests gathered on Saturday, January 27, to celebrate the new year of culinary dinners with hosts Liz and Dan Lonetti! Our theme was “Recipes from Blue Zones,” (communities around the world with exceptional life spans and good health): including Nuoro Province, Sardinia, Italy; Okinawa Prefecture, Japan; Nicoya Peninsula, Costa Rica; Icaria, Greece and Loma Linda, California. The food was delicious and the conversation non-stop for 3 hours. 2024 is off to a great start!



Our hosts for “Blue Zones” culinary, Liz and Dan Lonetti.

What a great turn out for the first culinary event for 2024!

Photos on this page by Drew Templeton

Culinary dishes included:

Chris George, Icaria's Mountain Tea
Liz & Dan Lonetti, Hibiscus Tea with Mint
Jerry Greenberg, Vin d'Orange
Janice Beckerleg, Blackened Salmon
Beatriz Cohen, Salmon with Garlic and Rosemary
Tammy & Taul Aragaki, Chicken Yakitori and a Sunmonu Salad
Lori Cochran, Pineapple Cashew Fried Rice and Eggrolls
Janet & Zac Coleman, Calabacitas and Maiz Enchiladas* and Cuban Black Beans*
Hazel & Les Davis, Balsamic Lentil Salad
Kathy Eastman, Indian Lemon Rice
Melissa & Mark Esbanshade, Sardinian Herb Soup
Nancy Greenberg, Home-made Sourdough Bread
Kristi James, Mujadara
Diane & Chris Knudsen, Kale and Quinoa Salad
Chris Lueck, Red Lentil, Squash and Coconut Curry
Pam Perry & Henry Harding, Roasted Beets with Tahini Sauce
Pam Posten, Spicy Garlic Eggplant and Ikarian Tea
Pam Schuler, Roasted Beets with Balsamic and Honey
Pauline Staples, Vegetable Slaw
Tami & Tim Phillips, Winter Potato Salad

Drew Templeton, Senegal Millet and Cabbage Salad with Mango Dressing*
Todd Templeton, Greek-inspired Tomato Dip with Pita Chips and Naan
Guests Randi and George Ricciaardi, Roasted Butternut Squash with Ginger, Garlic, and Cranberries
Tami & Tim Phillips, Honey Cookies



Janice Beckerleg's Blackened Salmon, left, and Chris Lueck's Red Lentil Squash and Coconut Curry, right.

Everything was delicious, so it was tough for everyone to choose, but top favorites were the Blackened Salmon, Red Lentil Curry and several dishes from The American Blue Zone Cookbook by Dan Buettner (denoted with *), which is available from the Phoenix Public Library, as well as in bookstores.



Join us next month when Melissa and Mark Esbanshade host on February 24, when the theme will be Spring in the Desert. Watch for the Evite!

Drew

Drew Templeton, Culinary Chair



2024 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

HERBIES – we ask you to start sending in your dues renewal payments NOW. Use PayPal at our website, www.AZHerb.org, or use this form and mail to:

Arizona Herb Association – P.O. Box 63101 – Phoenix, AZ 85082

Date _____

Name(s) _____
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Membership Type:

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Yes, I am enclosing a donation of \$_____ to the Jane Haynes Scholarship Fund. AHA is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization and your donations to this scholarship program are tax deductible to the extent allowed by IRS.

Current members please indicate any Changes/Corrections to our information of record

Questions about membership? Please check with Tammy Aragaki, AHA Membership Chairperson. E-mail: membership@azherb.org or call her at (480) 861-0878



Renew your AHA Membership now to continue receiving your newsletter and notices to members on special events, tours, workshops and our culinary meet ups!

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Inside this Month's Issue:

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Blue Rose Botanical Mocktail with Chris George

Blue Agave by Kathleen McCoy

'Blue Zones' Culinary

Frosty January Weed & Feed

Rosemary AHA Herbal Workshop with Ashley Johnston

“There’s rosemary, that’s for remembrance. Pray you, love, remember.....”

Shakespeare’s Ophelia in Hamlet