



*Arizona Herb Association*

*May 2024*

*A Publication for Members & Friends*

*<http://www.azherb.org>*

Dearest Herbies,

I hope this letter finds you all flourishing, much like the gardens we pour our hearts into. May has arrived, bringing with it the warmth and promise of bountiful harvests and vibrant blooms. Now is the perfect time to give your garden a little extra love. With the weather warming up, it's crucial to keep your plants hydrated and adjust your irrigation timer (if you haven't already done so!). Remember to water early in the morning or late in the evening to minimize evaporation.

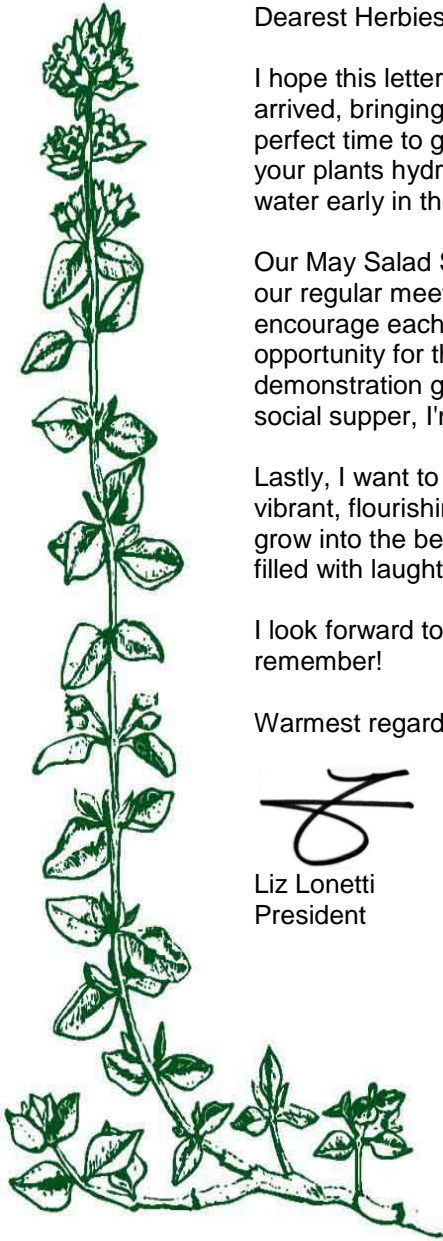
Our May Salad Supper is just around the corner – our annual "Friendraiser" event to be held during our regular meeting on May 2! We're not just growing plants; we're growing our community. I encourage each of you to bring along a friend who shares an interest in herbs. It's a wonderful opportunity for them to experience the joy and camaraderie of the Herbies. With a tour of our demonstration garden, the Herb of the Year presentation on Yarrow by Peggy Sorensen, and our social supper, I'm sure they'll leave feeling inspired and, hopefully, eager to join our Herbie tribe.

Lastly, I want to express my gratitude to all of you for making the Arizona Herb Association the vibrant, flourishing community it is. Your dedication, knowledge, and friendship are the seeds that grow into the beautiful garden of our association. Let's make this May meeting one for the books - filled with laughter, learning, and, of course, lots of delicious salads!

I look forward to seeing you all, and your friends, at the Salad Supper. Let's make it a May to remember!

Warmest regards,

Liz Lonetti  
President



## Calendar

### May 2024

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



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

Saturday, May 11: Culinary Event  
Theme: A Feast for the Eyes  
Hosts: Drew and Todd Templeton  
Time: 6:00 p.m.  
Sign up on AHA Website Calendar



Friday – Sunday, May 17, 18, 19  
Central Arizona Cactus & Succulent Society  
Plant Show and Sale  
Location: Desert Botanical Garden

Details: <https://centralarizonacactus.org/show-sale/>

Saturday, May 25: AHA Herbal Workshop  
Topic: Making an Herbal Salve  
Presenter: Ashley Johnston  
Time: 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.  
Sign-up on AHA Website Calendar

### June 2024

Saturday, June 1: Weed & Feed  
Time: 7:00 a.m.  
Let's get the garden ready for summer!

Thursday, June 6: General Meeting  
Topic: Insects and IPM  
Speaker: Dr. Shaku Nair  
Herb of the Month: Lavender  
Presenter: Katherine Tarr



Saturday, June 8: Culinary Event  
Theme: TBD  
Hosts: Diane and Chris Knudsen  
Watch for details!

Saturday, June 15: AHA Herbal Workshop  
Topic: Medicine Making with Lavender  
Presenter: Ashley Johnston  
Time: 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.  
Sign up on AHA Website Calendar

## May's Salad Supper

Our May meeting is traditionally a time for members to socialize, tour the herb demonstration garden and enjoy an herbal salad potluck supper. We will be gathering on Thursday, May 2, at the Maricopa County Cooperative Extension, 4341 E Broadway Road, Phoenix, AZ 85040 for this event.



We will dress the tables and focus on festive and social! Bring a short vase of flowers from home or come early and help us arrange small bouquets for the tables from flowers in our demo garden! We will keep our standard business meeting short, and we anticipate a great presentation from Peggy Sue Sorensen on the Herb of the Year, Yarrow! (You will alternately be able to view Peggy Sue's presentation on Zoom – the link follows.)



Peggy Sorensen  
Photo by Kelly Athena

Remember to bring your own plates, bowls, beverage holders and utensils to help us reduce waste! A recipe or list of ingredients for your dish is also appreciated; it helps those with dietary concerns make their choices and we often use the recipes in the newsletter as well.

If you would like to garnish your pot luck dish with edible flowers you might consider some of these (if they have not been sprayed with pesticides or other chemicals): basil, borage, calendula, chamomile, chervil, chives, cilantro, dill, hollyhock, lemon balm or lemon verbena, mint, oregano, rosemary, sage, savory, sorrel or thyme.

Topic: May AHA General Meeting/Salad Supper  
Date: Thursday, May 2, 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 AHA Members:

Susan Adamczyk  
Zip Code 85207

Robin Uribe  
Zip Code 85207

Cindy Jepsen  
Zip Code 85281

Courtney Gill  
Zip Code 85210

Niki Carty  
Zip Code 85225

Ana Holmback  
Zip Code 85260

Lu-Ann Armstrong  
Zip Code 85260

Clayton Bowers  
Zip Code 85395

Denise & Mike Tedeschi  
Zip Code 85086

**Tammy Aragaki, Membership Committee**



We celebrated Rebecca Senior's birthday at our April 4th meeting with cake, herbs and flowers from our demonstration garden. Happy Birthday, Rebecca!

## Native Herb Festival 2024

Willow Bend Environmental Education Center, in collaboration with The Forager's Path School of Botanical Studies, is hosting their second annual, all-day herb event that will be full of expert-led workshops, including hands-on opportunities and informative plant walks. The event takes place on Saturday, June 15, 2024, from 9:00 am to 3:00 p.m. Day pass grants attendance for three sessions during the event. Presenters include Kelly Athena on mesquite bean harvesting and milling and Susan Lamb on creating your own ethnobotanical garden. More details at: <https://willowbendcenter.org/herb-fest/>

## Master Gardener Fall Festival 2024

The annual Master Gardener Fall Festival will take place at Metro Tech High School on Saturday, October 26, 2024. This festival is a great place to get plants and garden related merchandise. Anyone can have a booth. Do you have plants or garden art you want to sell? Contact the Extension office for details. More information will be coming soon.

## Honoring Kirti Mathura: The Kirti Mathura Memorial Membership Fund

As many of you fondly remember, Kirti Mathura, Past President and a cherished member of our community, left an indelible mark on the AZ Herb Association with her spirit of volunteerism and generosity. In honoring her memory and continuing her legacy, we are thrilled to announce the establishment of the **Kirti Mathura Memorial Membership Fund**.



This fund is designed to make our club more accessible by offering free memberships to individuals who are passionate about herbs but may be facing financial barriers. It is a tribute to Kirti's belief in inclusivity and her dedication to sharing the joy of plants with everyone. We invite each of you to contribute to this fund, ensuring that Kirti's love for gardening and her spirit of giving flourish in our community. Donations can be made by contacting me, Liz Lonetti, at [liz.lonetti@gmail.com](mailto:liz.lonetti@gmail.com) or by phone at 602-361-4578. Every contribution, no matter the size, will make a significant difference.

Moreover, we are also seeking nominations for potential recipients of these memberships. If you know someone who embodies the spirit of our club and could benefit from this opportunity, please reach out with your nominations. Let us open the doors of our community wider, in memory of a person who always believed in the power of growth and community.

For more information or to discuss further, do not hesitate to contact me. Let's come together to celebrate Kirti's life, her contributions, and her enduring legacy.

Warm regards, Liz Lonetti, President

## Our New Digital Look

Located at <https://azherb.org> the Arizona Herb Association's website got a facelift and some fun new "members only" features. So if you have not renewed your membership yet this year, make sure to do this right away! Here's how...

### Paying Dues/Joining

#### IF YOU HAVE NOT PAID YOUR DUES THIS YEAR

On the home page, you will see a row of menu tabs across the top. The second one from the right is "Join." Even if you have been a member for a long time, in order to create your herbie profile and therefore avail yourself of the members only features, you will need to join. In subsequent years you will renew, but this year we are all brand new herbies.

Only the appearance of this page has changed. There are still multiple ways to join. The best and fastest way is to fill out the form online and pay via PayPal. Once you have done this, you will receive 3 emails: a receipt, a welcome letter, and a passcode.

If you don't want to pay online, you may print a form from that same page (or find it at the end of this newsletter) and pay by mail with a check; or at a meeting with check, cash, or credit card. Your account will be entered manually and you can request a password online.

#### IF YOU HAVE PAID YOUR DUES THIS YEAR, OR YOU ARE A LIFETIME MEMBER

Then your account has been entered manually.

### Logging on to the Members Only Section

If you have joined online, you will have your password. If you joined by mail or in person, you will need to request a password. To do that, go to the members only tab, enter your email and click the circle next to "Request Password." Then check your email for your password.

Come back, enter your credentials and you're good to go. You may further set up your profile, or leave it as it is and go back to the members only tab where you will find our interactive calendar (just click on an event to sign-up), our up to the second searchable directory, and a current copy of the newsletter.

We are so excited about our new look and features. We encourage you to look around at the site - you may

discover things you didn't know. If you have any trouble logging on or using the site, please reach out to our membership chairperson Tammy Aragaki [tjaragaki@gmail.com](mailto:tjaragaki@gmail.com).

### Lupine: A surprising alternative to animal protein

Move over soy (*Glycine max*). Get ready to make room for lupine as another source of plant protein. Yes, the very same glorious spring wildflower that carpets the Sonoran Desert in tall royal purple spires promises much more than a glorious vista.

Lupine (also spelled lupin) is another member of the Fabaceae family. Rich in protein and fiber and low in starch, current studies have reported positive effects on many multi-metabolic abnormalities. As such, lupine could be a valuable food crop for individuals who exhibit obesity, hyperglycemia, diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and neuro-dysfunction. Although attractive to the food industry, lupins are still awaiting a grand entrance in large scale human consumption in North America. The extraction and purification of lupine proteins, as well as how the proteins can be used in different foods on a commercial scale, is still waiting in the wings.

Lupine species are found worldwide and are plentiful.



The USDA Plants Database registers 356 species, including subspecies and varieties. Arizona can boast of 26 species of *Lupinus*. The native annual forb/herb Arizona Lupine (*Lupinus arizonicus*) in Spanish is called Trébola, Altramuz, and Lupino. The lupine can grow up to 20" tall with spreading or erect stems, generally without hairs (flabrous). From January to May the showy pink or magenta pea-shaped flowers will

adorn the stem with 20 to 50 blossoms. As the sun-loving plants begin fruiting, the blossoms change to violet, blue-purple or whitish.

With so many species and subspecies around the world, the need to differentiate between edible and non-edible varieties becomes paramount. Before taking a foray into the foodstuffs of lupine, note that most lupins are bitter, due to a high concentration of the toxic alkaloid lupanine. Boiling for 5 days and soaking the lupin seeds before cooking will leach out the toxins. If low-alkaloid "sweet" varieties developed

in the 1920s are chosen, no treatment is necessary. For some individuals eating products made with lupin may cause the same allergic reaction as ingestion of peanuts.

Edible seeds of legumes have been a food source for many humans, even Neanderthals. Historically the Egyptians and Romans have enjoyed foods from lupines for centuries. In South America and the Mediterranean, pickled lupine seeds called lupin or lupini are a popular snack. Customarily in Mediterranean cuisine, lupin beans are eaten whole. They are also used to make ingredients such as lupin flour and lupin protein that are often used in baked goods and pasta. As an alternative to soy, the beans can be eaten raw or cooked with other dishes, such as burgers, stews, and even desserts. Find a good source of [recipes](#) here.

Lupine is also a good “food” for the environment. Lupines provide nitrogen for the surrounding soil and plant life. They have special nodules on the roots and stems called Rhizobium which house bacteria. The bacteria engage in nitrogen fixing; that is, they can convert nitrogen into a necessary component for plant growth.

Hungry insects are invited by the lupine to drink their nectar. Many of the flowers are festooned with white spots on the petals that guide their pollinators, including hummingbirds, to the nectar source. As the nectar dries up, the spots turn magenta; this signals pollinators that the nectar is gone and they should move to a younger flower. The signal keeps the older and less fertile pollen out of circulation, ensuring that the healthiest plants produce future generations.

Kathleen McCoy  
Herbie, Master Gardener, Master Naturalist  
With Drawing by Jane Haynes, 1983

**Banner Photos** – May is our Salad Supper and this month’s banner features creative salads from April’s culinary event and one from May of 2013. From left to right, Kathy Eastman’s Roasted Rutabaga Salad with Pecans, Drew Templeton’s Roots and Fruits Salad with Rutabaga, Turnips, Easter Egg Radishes, Carrots, Ginger root, Honey Crisp Apple, Dried Apricots, Lime Juice and Zest with French Lavender garnish, center Pam Perry’s Jicama Salad with Red Onion and Kumquats, Deborah Ulloa’s Beet and Citrus Salad, and a fruit salad with herb dip from Nancy Matsui’s “Colorful Herbs” culinary event of May 2013. We hope these salads inspire you to create your own fresh and fabulous salad to bring (along with a friend) to our meeting on May 2. Read more about the April 2024 culinary event on page 7. April culinary photos were taken by Drew Templeton.

## Say Hi to Hibiscus



Emily Heller with *Hibiscus sabdariffa*

The guest speaker at our April 2024 general meeting was Emily Heller, a 10-year Master Gardener and a small-scale farmer who sells her produce and flowers at the Uptown Farmers Market. Emily, whose farming adventure is called “Bene Vivendo,” (Latin for “the good life”) produces commercial yields of *Hibiscus sabdariffa*, commonly called Roselle.

*Hibiscus sabdariffa* is tropical in origin and grown worldwide; Egypt is a big producer. The plant came to the American South through the slave trade. With multiple common names, Roselle is delicious in any language, including flor de Jamaica in Mexico, Gongura in India and Pakistan, and lemon bush in Australia.

Roselle is in the Malvaceae family, along with okra and cotton. There are two main types of Roselle, one for food and one for flowers. The plants can grow from 6 to 7 feet tall and 3 to 4 feet wide. It is a multi-branching shrub, with an erect growth pattern. The leaves are lobed and have red veins and toothed margins. The stems are red. Flowers, which each open for one day only, are yellow with a maroon “eye.” Although it is a perennial in the tropics, it is cultivated here as an annual.

The calyx (plural calyces) are a purple or dark red color, with five sepals and a collar of 8 to 12 pointed bracts around the base. The calyx plumps to two inches, with crisp and juicy flesh. Pectin allows the calyx to stretch and grow around the seedpod, which holds the immature seeds. When the seeds are mature, the pod dries out, turns brown, and splits open, releasing seeds. Use caution handling the dried seeds pods; wear gloves.

**Planting:** Loose, porous, well-draining soil is best. Amend with organic material. Plant seeds in late spring, when the soil is warm. You can direct sow the

seeds, 1/2 inch deep, with 3 to 4 feet spacing. Don't crowd your plants. Keep the area weed free until the canopy closes. Consider planting Roselle on the west side of fruit trees to provide the plant strategic shade. If you plant thickly, be sure to thin as needed. The young leaves can be used in salads.

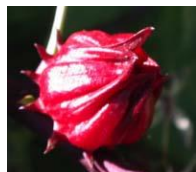
For a higher yield, provide support to keep the plant's branches off the ground. The plant has a deep taproot to help it survive the high temperatures, low humidity and possible high summer winds here in the low desert. Be sure to water deeply.

**Harvesting:** By early September you will see the first flowers. Flowers open for one day only, but they produce lots of nectar and will be readily pollinated. Harvesting begins in October and you can harvest until frost.

**Recipes:** Emily shared many recipes from her collection which feature hibiscus. Here are two:

**Hibiscus Salsa** (especially nice on fish tacos)

- Fresh hibiscus calyx, chopped
- Lime juice
- Olive oil
- Honey
- Slices of orange or mango
- Cilantro
- Red onion
- Jalapeno
- Salt and pepper



Hibiscus calyx  
Photo by Lee Ann Aronson

Mix ingredients to taste. Store in the refrigerator

**Hibiscus Holiday Sauce** (delicious with turkey, roasted or grilled meats, squash or sweet potatoes; spread on sandwiches, served with cheese, or as a topping for cookies, cakes or pies. Or try it on toast with a smear of cream cheese. Recipe from Chef Kathy Gunst.)

Boil 1 cup water with 1/2 to 3/4 cup sugar or honey to make a syrup.  
Add 8 ounces fresh or 1 cup dried hibiscus and simmer gently until it softens.  
Add 1 cup fruit such as pear, mango or pineapple.  
Add 2 tablespoons fresh ginger grated and the juice and zest of one orange.  
Simmer until sauce thickens slightly. Cool and serve.

If you missed April's meeting, below is the link to the video recording that was made:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/sH2qCISGLhAXgd2771Mer2y4dJ\\_Q1XcJoWqIXZOkMm-UabZ-Ma0ojV1D4aM0PYpy.pRfIY0L9izFhiSI0](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/sH2qCISGLhAXgd2771Mer2y4dJ_Q1XcJoWqIXZOkMm-UabZ-Ma0ojV1D4aM0PYpy.pRfIY0L9izFhiSI0)

Passcode: E?5tRe#R

**Herb of the Month – Thyme**

By Angela Smart



Angela Smart, April's Herb of the Month presenter

Thyme, *Thymus vulgaris*, is an herb in the mint family. It is native to the Mediterranean. Ancient Egyptians used thyme for embalming; Greeks used it as incense. Thyme was believed to be a source of courage; to be told you "smelled of thyme" was a compliment to your strength and bravery. The

Romans took thyme to Britain; it was carried to the New World with immigrants.

Thyme can be grown from cuttings; it is slow to grow from seed. Thyme does best in well-draining soil in a sunny location.

Thyme is considered a "subshrub," growing from two to ten/twelve inches in height. All thymes are sun loving, fragrant and high in essential oils. The plant has small, narrow leaves that come in many shades of green, including silvery and variegated. Flowers come in a variety of colors.

There are more than 350 varieties of thyme, including lemon thyme, German thyme, French thyme, Spanish thyme, caraway thyme, creeping thyme and Mother of Thyme. Many have culinary uses and leaves can be used fresh or dried. Lemon thyme is often used in salads, baked goods and vinaigrettes. Thyme is a key component of the bouquet garni, a combination of thyme, bay, and parsley commonly used to flavor French dishes. Thyme honey can be added to hot tea. Savory thyme dries well. Thyme is one of the essential ingredients in Bénédictine liqueur. Taste will vary with variety.

The essential oils of thyme are used in cleaning products and soaps. Medicinally, thyme can be used to make a tea for a cold or for indigestion. It is also used in mouthwash.

Thyme is a great plant to have in your landscape. Low growing varieties do well between flagstones or pavers and are also used as a border for knot gardens or in

rockeries. The flowers are great at attracting pollinators to your garden.

Ironically, Conehead thyme is not a thyme at all. Although it has similar small leaves, fragrance and blooms, the correct botanical name for this plant is now *Cordiothymus capitatus*.



Conehead thyme from our demonstration garden

Photo of Angela Smart and conehead thyme by Lee Ann Aronson



### April 2024 Culinary Dinner It's All about the ROOTS!

Saturday was a beautiful 95° day that cooled to a lovely evening for our Arizona Herb Association April Culinary Dinner. The event was hosted by Janet and Timorie Coleman in their outdoor kitchen and garden. Our theme was "It's All About the ROOTS!" and everyone came up with delicious and pretty-to-look-at dishes. It turned out to be a vegetarian, and largely vegan, dinner!



Culinary hosts Janet and Timorie Coleman with Zac  
Photo by Drew Templeton

Kathleen McCoy brought Peach Kombucha made by Pam Posten. Hosts Janet and Timorie Coleman, with guest Zac Thayer, provided Blackberry Lemonade and Sangria.

Beets were very popular, with Deborah Ulloa's Beet and Citrus Salad; Todd Templeton's Favorite Pickled Beets, and Michele Tourne's Beet Salad.

Other colorful salads included Kathy Eastman's Roasted Rutabaga Salad, Donna and Keith Lorch's Jicama Watermelon Salad with Feta, Drew Templeton's shredded Roots and Fruits Salad, and Pam Perry and Henry Harding's Jicama Salad with Kumquats.

Several soups graced the buffet: Chris Lueck's Curried Peanut Squash Soup, Debra Mies' Carrot Ginger Soup, and Jim and Julie DiMaria's Hearty Vegan Vegetable Stew.

Lily Molina created tasty Sweet Potato/Black Bean Tacos with Radishes, and Michele Tourne made delicious Scalloped Potatoes.

For dessert we had Jim's Moist Carrot Cake and Janet Coleman's 4-layer Spiced Parsnip Cake.

The Top Picks tonight were the Peanut Curry Squash Soup, Sweet Potato/Black Bean Tacos, and the fabulous Parsnip Spice Cake!

**Please Note:** Sign ups for all future Culinary Dinners will be through the Arizona Herb Association Calendar at <https://azherb.org> so no more Evites. Join us on May 11 when Drew and Todd Templeton will host "A Feast for the Eyes!"

Drew Templeton  
Culinary Chairperson

You can find the recipe for the Peanut Curry Squash Soup online: Soupergirl's Curried Peanut Squash Soup by Chef Sara Polon ([tastingtable.com](https://tastingtable.com))

**Spiced Parsnip Cake**  
Prepared by Janet Coleman  
for the April 2024 Culinary

Cake  
1 1/2 cups all purpose flour  
1 cup granulated sugar  
1 tablespoon ground ginger  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon  
3/4 teaspoon ground allspice  
3/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
1/2 teaspoon ground clove  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
3 large eggs  
1/2 cup vegetable oil



Janet Coleman's Spiced Parsnip Cake  
Photo by Drew Templeton

1/2 cup 2% milk  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
2 cups grated parsnip  
Simple Syrup  
1/4 cup granulated sugar  
1/4 cup water  
1 tablespoon brandy or spiced rum

#### Cream Cheese Icing

8 ounces cream cheese at room temperature  
6 ounces unsalted butter at room temperature  
2 cups powdered sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger  
Pinch salt

#### Cake

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a medium bowl whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder, spices and salt. In a large bowl whisk together eggs, oil, milk and vanilla. Add dry ingredients and whisk until just combined. Stir in parsnips.

Line the bottoms of three - 8" round cake pans with parchment and spray sides with non-stick spray. Divide batter evenly into the pans and spread out with a spatula. Bake on center rack for 20 minutes until a toothpick inserted comes out clean. Remove from oven and allow to cool completely.

Remove cake from pans and peel off parchment. Brush each layer with the simple syrup. Arrange one layer on a serving plate and spread with approximately 1/3 of icing. Top with another layer and repeat with icing; top with the remaining cake layer. Ice the top, reserving a small amount of icing to fill in the layer sides.

NOTE from Janet: I made a four layer cake and used a 9" pan instead of an 8" pan. I made two (not three) layers per recipe. I did not ice the top of the cake. If icing the top, sprinkle it with cinnamon

#### Simple Syrup

Combine sugar and water in a small saucepan over medium heat. Bring to a boil, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Once at a boil, allow syrup to boil for 1 minute. Remove from heat and stir in brandy. Allow to cool completely before brushing on the cake.

#### Cream Cheese Icing

Beat butter and cream cheese together until light and fluffy. Add powdered sugar, spices and vanilla. Beat until just combined.

### Sweet Potato/Black Bean Tacos

I used 5 sweet potatoes; I peeled and cubed them and

added olive oil, salt, garlic powder and pepper. I roasted them for about 20 minutes, till soft. For convenience, I used a can of organic black beans. (I kept the liquid they came in.) I put the beans in a pot and added cumin, pepper flakes, salt, oregano and chili powder. I don't measure; I just shake to taste. You can't mess it up. :) Then I put everything in a crockpot.



For the vinaigrette, I rough-chopped some cilantro, parsley and thin, sliced purple onion. I made my own vinaigrette with vinegar, oil, salt, pepper, mustard, an

orange and a tablespoon of agave. A store bought one would work if you have one you like. I played a bit with vinaigrette I got at Sprouts, but most everyone just ate the sweet potatoes with the toppings. I sliced radishes for crunch. It's simple.

Prepared by Lily Molina for the April 2024 Culinary

### What was in those Seedballs?

Many Herbies have reported that they have blooms coming up where they planted the seedballs they made at our hands-on November 2023 general meeting. The seeds used in our seed ball mix were collected from plants in our demonstration garden. Pam Perry reports that the mix was made up of seeds for herbs and garden flowers for beneficials, pollinators and cut flowers, including poppies (California, Shirley and Breadseed), larkspur, desert lupine, chamomile, red flax, blue flax, ornamental carrot, globemallow, alyssum, linaria, desert blue bells, Mexican hat, cosmos, zinnia, superstition mallow, chaparral sage, dyssodia and/or tall evening primrose.



### Weed & Feed April 6, 2024

This month we started with a garden tour led by Mike Hills, introducing our herbs and those ubiquitous weeds targeted for removal. A few seasonal plants were distributed for planting, and as that project got underway, the plants introduced at our April general meeting, part of the native plant/pollinator and seed source project headed up by Katherine Tarr and Lauren Espinoza, also found homes. Liz Lonetti contributed more yarrow plants, the Herb Society of America herb of the year; the ones already well established were blooming quite nicely.



Rosemary shrubs were cut back, making room for additional scented geraniums; weeds were hiding in plain sight everywhere. We began collecting sweet pea seeds. This heirloom sweet pea is a true treasure, blooming for 4 months with such fragrant flowers. Ornamental carrots were beginning to bloom, coreopsis flowers were bright against the blue of the alfalfa, and brittlebush were showy. Interesting insects were found; flea beetles were most common. They focus almost exclusively on the two *Oenothera* in the garden, the Mexican evening primrose and the tall evening primrose. Both of these plants will outgrow the damage and continue to bloom and thrive.

The last of the potted mints were divided and parts replanted in fresh soil. We had saved some of the old soil from the first batch of mints. Sitting in unattended buckets, it is now growing Mexican evening primrose, weeds of all sorts and *Verbena bonariensis*. This is why we use fresh soil to replant mint. We were able to propagate mint and lemongrass, as our extra-large lemongrass was lifted and divided. As the morning wore on, the garden took on a different appearance and the dumpster filled. Other volunteers undertook the weeding of the space to the west of the wall at the entry to the faculty parking lot. The California poppies, desert senna and mallows, linaria and fiddlehead are glorious, but the weeds were well threaded amongst the welcome specimens. The care folks took to preserve the welcome plants is so appreciated!

Tucked into another pot is a *Sansevieria*. Mike Hills contributed this bit of research to our store of data regarding this plant: Lots of traditional peoples throughout Africa, where the *Sansevieria* genus is native, used the plant both for people and animals, to help with fungal skin conditions, scabies, piles/hemorrhoids, sores, wounds and more. I first saw a sign about this in the Cape Town Botanical Garden. It said "Bush people chewed the leaves



*Sansevieria* requires very little water and grows well in pots. Photo by Lee Ann Aronson

into a poultice for use on hemorrhoids."

To everyone's delight, the arch over which the queen's wreath grows annually is back in place, only several

feet taller. John Barkley did a spectacular job of extending the height to allow the plant greater room to grow and the stairs to be of use! Wow! We will try to remember to get monthly pictures to track the vine's growth this year

Thank you, each and every one of you for your patience, help, support, enthusiasm, goodies to share, the coffee! And so much more.

We hope to see you on Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 a.m. for our next Weed & Feed event.

Pam Perry and Mike Hills, Demo Garden Captains



Hats off to Herbie John Barkley, who did a spectacular job of adding additional height to the trellis, which gets covered each year by our queen's wreath vine. He is pictured here, along with an MG volunteer who arrived early and helped move the trellis into place. Photo by Teri Thorpe

### Looking for Volunteers:

Want to get a bit more involved in AHA, but not ready to take on a Board position? We currently have two positions you might want to consider.

We are looking for someone to serve as Refreshment Chair for our general meetings. This person would help organize the food and beverages that members bring to share at our meeting breaks and also give Herbie bucks to those who bring food/drinks to share and help clean up after the meeting.

We are also looking to revive our monthly meeting raffles. If you have gardening related items you would like to donate to be raffled, or if you would like to be in charge of running the raffles, please let Liz Lonetti know.

## Spanish Thyme

### Many Uses and Many Names

By Catherine Crowley, the Herb Lady, originally printed in the East Valley Tribune on May 29, 2004

I like to grow, teach, cook with and talk about herbal mimics – plants that, through their essential oils, mimic a common herb, but are from entirely different families.



Spanish thyme

<https://www.fragrantfields.com/thymespanish.aspx>

One such herb is *Plectranthus amboinicus* syn *Coleus amboinicus* – aka Spanish thyme, Curban oregano, Indian borage, Mexican mint, French thyme, soup mint, Indian mint, country borage, Jamaica thyme or broadleaf thyme.

That's a lot of nicknames for a fragrant, useful herb that is also a landscape specimen. This member of the mint (Lamiaceae) family is a cousin of a familiar houseplant, Swedish ivy/creeping Charlie. Cultivated and running wild in Malaysia, it is probably a native of India.

A beautiful variegated herb (another version has no variegation), it grows well here in the Valley with some considerations.

Its large, succulent leaves are covered with fine velvety fuzz, and, with sufficient light, the crenulated edges turn from white to a blush pink. It will be happy in a south or east facing citrus tree well, or shaded from the afternoon sun by taller herbs, such as lavender and rosemary.

It needs to be protected from frost in the winter. Last winter, my plants retreated, but as soon as the soil started to warm, they mushroomed into new growth. One of the few herbs that will do well in the house, if given sufficient light, Spanish thyme should be a part of every herb lover's garden. If the plant flowers, it will be a deep blue to violet color.

As with most herbs, plant in well-draining soil, water deeply, then allow to dry out a bit before watering again; it needs about four hours of light a day. Most herbs do not need fertilization.

If planting this time of year, use my flowering mulch technique. Surround with three to five flowering plants, such as portulaca or moss rose.

The plant's fragrance and taste are similar to thyme, savory and oregano because of the essential oil carvacrol. Don't let the velvet leaves deter you from using this gem. Use as you would oregano or thyme.

Some chefs like to batter-dip whole leaves and deep fry for garnish. It can be used whole in soups and stews, chopped into dressing and used as part of an herb rub or paste for grilling or roasting meats, fish and chicken. Some cooks like to use it as part of a stuffing or in place of sage.

It is frequently used in Caribbean recipes, especially with fruits such as mango. Whether you call it salsa, chutney or relish, fruit condiments will benefit from this herb addition. Serve with roasted or grilled chicken, pork or fish dishes.

Watering reminder: Use your water meter to gauge when to water. It is easy to overwater when the weather is hot. A drooping plant in the midday sun may only be folding its leaves to retain moisture and may not need a drink at all.

### Upcoming Webinar from USDA Forest Service

Cities across the arid west have long faced challenges of rapid population growth, extreme heat, and drought conditions. Added to this has been an abundance of unplanned developments with fast-food swamps and food deserts, where under-employed, low-income and refugee communities have few walkable options for fresh food and local fruit. The lack of accessible water and public greenspace in high-need neighborhoods has been a barrier to the start-up of local gardens and food forests with culturally and climatic appropriate crops.

In this special webinar, we will introduce several model programs, partnerships, tools, and best practices in arid communities of the western US that have helped to overcome these barriers while reducing social isolation and training and employing neighborhood residents in tree care, garden stewardship, and culinary arts.

Wednesday, May 08, 1 – 2:15pm EDT: Food Deserts to Food Forests in Dry Climates: Models in Action

More information at

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/research/products/multimedia/webinars/food-deserts-food-forests-dry-climates-models-action>

# Arizona Herb Association Membership Application



Circle One: New Membership    Renewing Member

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## Membership Type Annually:

- Individual (\$30)
- Family - 2 people at same address (\$40)
- Senior 65+ (\$25)
- Senior Family - 65+ 2 people at same address (\$35)

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.

For internal use: Amount Paid: \_\_\_\_\_ reference # \_\_\_\_\_

## 3 Ways to Pay:

1. Complete this form and pay by check, cash, or credit card at a monthly meeting.
2. Complete this form and mail with your check to:  
Arizona Herb Association  
P.O. Box 63101  
Phoenix, AZ 85082
3. Pay on our website:  
<https://azherb.org>

Questions about membership? Please check with Tammy Aragaki, AHA Membership Chairperson. E-mail: [membership@azherb.org](mailto:membership@azherb.org)

Herbies, we encourage you to submit articles, notices of herbal events, herbal book or restaurant reviews, or your garden photos of interest by the 15th of each month. Please send your submissions to us at: [newsletter@azherb.org](mailto:newsletter@azherb.org)  
Sandy Cielaszyk and Lee Ann Aronson,  
your newsletter editors

*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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Culinary: It's All about the ROOTS!

April Weed & Feed

***All the Flowers of Tomorrow  
are in the Seeds of Yesterday.***

*Italian Proverb*