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November 2024

A Publication for Members & Friends

<http://www.azherb.org>

Dear Herbies,

I want to start by giving a huge thank you to all for making October's Herb Festival a resounding success! Whether you volunteered your time or purchased tickets, your hard work and dedication made it a wonderful event for our Herb Association and our community. I'm incredibly proud of what we accomplished together.

A special thanks goes out to our board and committee members for their continued efforts in keeping our organization running smoothly. To any new members, I encourage you to get involved! Volunteering is the quickest way to connect with your fellow Herbies and truly feel part of this amazing group.

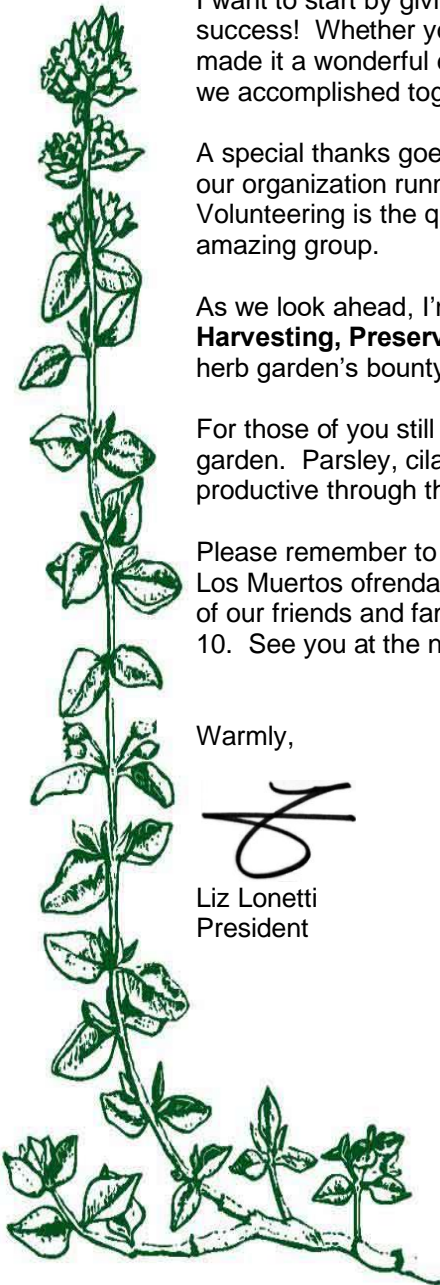
As we look ahead, I'm excited about our November meeting, where I'll be presenting on "**Tips on Harvesting, Preserving, and Using Herbs.**" We'll dive into practical ways to make the most of your herb garden's bounty, and I hope you'll all join us for an engaging and informative discussion.

For those of you still planting, November is a great time to add some cool-weather herbs to your garden. Parsley, cilantro, and dill thrive in the cooler temperatures and will keep your garden productive through the winter. Happy planting!

Please remember to bring mementos for the Dia de Los Muertos ofrenda, where we will celebrate the lives of our friends and family. More information on page 10. See you at the next meeting!

Warmly,

Liz Lonetti
President



Calendar

November 2024



Saturday, November 2: Weed & Feed
Time: 8:00 a.m.

Thursday, November 7: General Meeting
Location: MCC Extension; Time: 7:00 p.m.
Topic: Harvesting, Preserving & Using Herbs
Speaker: AHA President Liz Lonetti
Herb of the Month: Cilantro
Presenter: Tammy Aragaki

Bring mementos for the Dia de Los Muertos ofrenda



ARIZONA
**HONEYBEE
FESTIVAL**

Saturday, November 9:
Arizona Honeybee Festival
Where: Paradise Valley Community College
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Katherine Tarr will need volunteers; see page 9
<https://azhoneybeefest.org/>

Saturday, November 16: Herbal Workshop
Topic: Tom Yum Gai Soup with Cilantro
Presenter: Ashley Johnston
Details on page 3, Sign up at <https://azherb.org>

Saturday, November 16: Culinary Event
Theme: Three Sisters – Corn, Beans, Squash
Hosts: Diane and Chris Knudsen
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Details & Sign-up at <https://azherb.org>

Saturday, November 23: AHA Field Trip
Where: Tempe Women's Club Garden
1265 N College Avenue, Tempe, 85288
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
Details on page 3; Sign-up at <https://azherb.org>

December 2024

Thursday, December 5: AHA Holiday Party
Location: MCC Extension; Time: 7:00 p.m.
Herb of the Year 2025: Chamomile
Another mocktail competition will be held.
Write-up is on page 10
Sign up at <https://azherb.org>

Saturday, December 14: Weed & Feed
Note: This is the second Saturday in December
Time: 8:00 a.m.
Come, enjoy the cooler weather and get some hands-on learning!



November General Meeting

You have bought and nurtured the herb plants and now they are thriving in your garden. What's next? Join us for our November AHA general meeting on Thursday, November 7, 2024, when President Liz Lonetti will present the program on **"Tips for Harvesting, Preserving, and Using Herbs."** We'll dive into practical ways to make the most of your herb garden's bounty. Bring your tips to share and join us for an engaging and informative discussion.



Our Herb of the Month is Cilantro, and Tammy Aragaki will present.



Snacks are always appreciated for our meeting break; a recipe or ingredient list helps those with dietary concerns. Consider using cilantro in your recipe...or NOT! And bringing your own table service helps reduce our carbon footprint!

A Note from Tammy Aragaki, Membership Chair

"We love it when you can attend in person so we can get to know you better and put names with faces. To help us with that, please remember to wear your name tag. If you have misplaced yours, or never got one, please see me at the welcome table.

Also, please remember to ALWAYS stop by the welcome table to sign in. You never know what information we have for you, and I get lonely and sad when people don't drop by. "

If you can't attend in person, you can join us via Zoom at the link below.

Topic: November AHA General Meeting
Date: Thursday, November 7, 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

Welcome New AHA Members:

Kat Herrick
Zip Code: 85251

Linda Arandas
Zip Code: 85251

Bernadette Arnecke
Zip Code: 85020

Brady Laughlin
Zip Code: 85020

Kimberly and Doug Salaway
Zip Code: 85254

Nicole and Damonn Psket
Zip Code: 85257

Elizabeth Newman
Zip Code: 85387

Ashley Wilkens
Zip Code 85021

Mary Habeeb
Zip Code: 85211

Karin McAreavy
Zip Code: 85018

Susan L Baker Carol
Zip Code: 85249

Shaina Pruden
Zip Code: 85331

Rachel Lee
Zip Code: 85396

Mary Crenshaw
Zip Code: 85326

Kelly Emme
Zip Code: 85253

Amber and Mike Cargile
Zip Code: 85086

Tammy Aragaki, Membership Committee



Tempe Woman's Club Garden Tour

AHA members are invited to sign up now for a tour of the Tempe Woman's Club Xeriscape Garden to be held on Saturday, November 23. The tour will be led by Ryan Wood, Water Program Specialist with the City of Tempe; it will begin promptly at 9:00 a.m. The garden is located at 1265 N College Ave, Tempe AZ (College Avenue and Weber Drive, with parking lot entrance off Weber Drive).

Formerly known as Marlborough Park, this park was built in 1989 as a mini park and was named after Tempe's first women's organization, the Tempe Women's Club. In 1995, the garden was converted into a xeriscape demonstration garden to promote low water use plants and desert landscaping practices. All of the plants, trees and shrubs at Tempe Women's Club Park are identified by plaques and other signs so that visitors can get practical ideas on how they can convert their yards to desert-friendly, low water use landscaping.

Sign up for the Garden Tour (above) or the Herbal Workshop (below) on the calendar under the Members Only tab at our website <https://azherb.org>

Herbal Workshop

Herb of the Month

Cilantro

As the season of Kitchen Witchin draws to a close, we invite you to join us for our final workshop of the year! This month, we'll embark on a flavorful journey into the world of cilantro—the little green herb bursting with medicinal magic. Discover its myriad medicinal & nutritional benefits, from boosting digestion to supporting heart health. To conclude our kitchen series with a flourish, we'll be whipping up a fragrant bowl of Tom Yum Soup. Don't miss this last workshop learning about this powerful little herb & sampling of a tasty soup.



Event Details

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 16TH
11 AM TO 1PM

6631 N 13th St
Phoenix, AZ 85014



Cheers! for the Herbal Mocktail



At our October 2024 AHA general meeting, herbalism student Sarah Sandhaus introduced us to a fun way to introduce herbs and their powerful healing properties to friends and family: plan an Herbal Mocktail Hour! A mocktail is a nonalcoholic drink that resembles a cocktail in appearance and taste, but keeps you sober and healthy!

Besides the herbs, fruits, mixers and garnishes for your drinks, you will also need a few bar supplies, including jigger for measuring liquids, muddler for extracting flavor from fruits and berries, bar spoon for stirring, shaker, strainer to strain shaken mocktails, and appropriate glassware. Some of Sarah's recipes also included simple herbal syrups.

Tips and tricks that Sarah shared with us included:

Mix flavors

- Bitter – orange, gentian, dandelion root
- Spicy – ginger, turmeric, peppers
- Sweet – fresh seasonal fruit, cinnamon, nutmeg
- Sour – lemon, lime, grapefruit

Understand what you're mixing: Start with one to three herbs; don't overdo it.

Use different herbs for the seasons, cooling in spring/summer and warming in fall/winter

Cooling – mints, lavender, lemon balm, milky oats, hibiscus

Warming – turmeric, ginger, rosemary, cinnamon, nutmeg, coriander, cardamom

Some herbs are energizing and better for day; others are calming/restful for night.

Energizing – ginseng, ginkgo, eleuthero (Siberian ginseng), guarana, matcha, caffeinated teas and

Calming/rest inducing – chamomile, mugwort, tulsi (holy basil), vervains, lavender, kava

Note: some herbs, such as ashwagandha, can be stimulating or calming, depending on the person. (© Nurture, 2023)

Bubbly water is a great friend; perhaps find a way to make it at home.

A small amount of syrup, bitters and shrubs (drinking vinegars that are concentrated syrups used in beverages) can go a long way. Add in ice and bubbly water.

Store syrups and shrubs in the refrigerator. They should last a few weeks. Throw out if you see cloudiness, fermentation or mold.

Incorporate milks (dairy/non-dairy) for a thicker, creamier mocktail.

Opt for fresh, organic ingredients when possible, because you are extracting constituents out of the plants and want to avoid extracting chemicals.

Be sure to use the proper glass for each drink and serve with a fresh garnish highlighting the drink's ingredients.

Note: for those pregnant or lactating, check which herbs are safe to use, perhaps at <https://www.nurtureforall.com/>

Sarah gave fun names to the mocktails she shared with us, including Herbal Mule, Kava Colada, Turmarita, Bees Glee and Lovely Spritzer. For each drink, she shared information about the ingredients used and why she included them. She encouraged us not to be overwhelmed about which herbs and botanical ingredients to select.



Mocktails from left to right, Bees Glee, Lovely Spritzer, Herbal Mule, Turmarita, and Kava Kolada.

Photos by Lee Ann Aronson

For the Herbal Mule, use Peppermint for its pungent, cool, and dry properties. Peppermint is considered antiviral, antispasmodic, carminative, antidepressant, and analgesic (topical). It provides an uplifting herb that can also relieve nausea, cramping, gas, bloating, and menstrual cramps.

Include lime for its antiseptic, astringent, digestion stimulating, diuretic, hemostatic and febrifuge properties. Lime is also a disinfectant (as a poultice), an expectorant, and insecticide, as well as a restorative and tonic.

Ginger is added for its pungent, sweet, and warming properties. It is anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, carminative, and a circulatory stimulant. Ginger is a wonderful heart tonic and is great for nausea, bloating, gas and pain relief.

Milk thistle is added as a hepatic, galactagogue (a food or drug that increases the flow of a mother's milk), demulcent, and cholagogue (a substance that increases the flow of bile). Milk thistle is a traditional liver tonic, as its constituents protect liver cells from chemical damage.

Herbal Mule Recipe

Ingredients: Serves 1	Directions:
4 oz. ginger beer	In a mug or glass, mull the peppermint and lime to extract the juice. Add
Juice of 1/2 lime	ginger syrup with a splash of ginger beer and stir. Add ice, and
1 teaspoon ginger syrup (Recipe follows)	pour in the remaining ginger beer. Stir.
0.7 ml milk thistle herbal extract	Garnish with a lime
4 to 8 fresh peppermint leaves	wedge and fresh
Lime wedge	peppermint.
Ice	

Ginger Syrup: Heat 1 cup of sugar (or honey) and 1 cup water in a small saucepan over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until the sugar is dissolved. Add one 4-inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and cut into coins; remove from the heat. Let steep 30 minutes with lid on, then strain into a pitcher, discarding the ginger. Carefully pour the syrup into a small, airtight vessel and keep stored in the refrigerator until ready to use.

Recommended Reading:

[The Drunken Botanist: The Plants that Create the World's Great Drinks](#) by Amy Stewart

[The Herbal Guide to Botanical Drinks](#) by Michael Isted

[Apothecary Cocktails: Restorative Drinks from Yesterday and Today](#) by Warren Borrow



Cheers to Sarah Sandhaus and the ladies of SWIHA!

October Herb of the Month: Dill

By Drew Templeton

AHA Culinary chair Drew Templeton presented October's Herb of the Month, dill, *Anethum graveolens*, an annual herb in the celery family Apiaceae. It is native to North Africa, Iran, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Mediterranean, and is grown widely in Eurasia, where its leaves and seeds are used as an herb or spice for flavoring food.



Fragrant dill "weed" is easy to grow! Dill is most at home in warmer climates, and it's an annual herb, so allow some of the plants to flower and go to seed each year, and you'll have plenty of early dill to start the next growing season.

History and Folklore

- **Ancient Egypt:** Dill was found in Egyptian tombs, showing how revered this herb has been for thousands of years.
- **Ancient Greece:** The Greeks burned dill seeds as incense and believed it could bring wealth and protection.
- **Roman Gladiators:** Before battles, gladiators chewed dill leaves for strength.

- **Middle Ages:** Dill was believed to ward off witches and evil spirits. Some would even hang it above their doorways for protection.
- **Dill for Love:** In medieval times, young women would place dill leaves under their pillows to dream of their future husbands.
- **Dill Pickle Feud:** The age-old debate: dill pickles or sweet pickles? Dill is clearly the winner, of course.
- Dill is sometimes called “**meetinghouse seed**” because it was chewed in Puritan churches to keep people awake during long sermons!

Medicinal Uses

- **Digestion:** The ancient Greeks and Romans knew dill as a digestive aid. Dill seeds can be chewed to relieve bloating or indigestion.
- **Calming Effects:** Dill was historically used to soothe insomnia. A tea made from dill seeds is thought to relax the mind. Instead of chamomile, try some dill tea!
- **Dill Water for Babies:** In many cultures, dill water has been used as a remedy for colic in infants since ancient times.
- **Nutritional Value:** Dill is packed with vitamins A and C, and it's a great source of antioxidants and flavonoids. Dill's benefits are due to its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects.

Dill supplementation has been shown to reduce total cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol. However, dill may increase the effectiveness of some medications, leading to possible side effects or complications. These medications include:

Anti-diabetes drugs: Dill extract may increase the risk of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar).

Herbs and supplements that lower blood sugar: This includes devil's claw, fenugreek, Panax and Siberian ginseng and others.

Lithium: Dill is thought to have diuretic properties, meaning it causes your body to lose fluid. Therefore, it could also theoretically affect proper doses of lithium, a drug that helps stabilize moods in mental health conditions like bipolar disorder.

Taking dill in medicinal amounts may decrease thyroid hormone levels and worsen symptoms of hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid).

You should also avoid taking it at least two weeks before elective surgery.

These interactions are based on dill supplementation, not the small amounts of fresh dill you would use in cooking.

Growing Tips for Dill

Dill plants grow best in full sun (6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight) in well-draining soil which is rich in organic matter. The soil's pH should ideally be between slightly acidic and neutral (6.5–7.0). Choose a location that is protected from strong winds, as dill's tall foliage can be easily blown over. Plant dill near cabbage, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, and other Brassicas; it is thought to improve their growth and protect them from pests. Keep it away from carrots, however, as it can decrease yields!

Dill is a cool-season herb that grows best during fall and winter's cooler temperatures in our climate. In the low desert of Arizona, plant dill seeds and transplants beginning in October and continuing through January. Succession plant dill every three weeks for a continual harvest of the leaves. It bolts quickly in hot weather. Harvest often for a longer growing season.

- Bouquet dill has large blooms and seed heads. Excellent for pickling.
- Dukat dill is darker green with large seed heads. Excellent for pickling.
- Fernleaf dill is slow to bolt and suitable for growing indoors and in containers.
- Tetra dill is a bushy, late-flowering variety and somewhat more heat-tolerant.



Dill seed head.

Dill has a long taproot; it's best to plant seeds directly in the ground 1/8 inch to 1/4 inch deep. Dill grown from transplants often bolts more quickly than dill grown from seed. Keep the soil moist until the seeds sprout. Thin seedlings to 12 inches apart. If you choose to transplant, choose young seedlings and handle the roots carefully.

Dill attracts beneficials such as wasps and other predatory insects to your garden, and it is a host

plant for the caterpillar of the black swallowtail butterfly. The larvae of Arizona's state butterfly, the two-tailed swallowtail, can often be seen enjoying dill plants. Dill flowers attract pollinators, especially ladybugs, which help if the plant gets aphids.



Umbel shaped dill flowers attract many insects.

Culinary Uses

Pickles: The star of dill's culinary fame! Dill pickles are a staple across the world.

International Cuisine: From Scandinavia to India: Scandinavians use dill in dishes like **gravlax** (cured salmon).

In Eastern Europe, it's a must for soups like **borscht**.

In India, dill is called "**Savaa**" and is used in everything from curries to breads.

Salads & Soups: Fresh dill brings a bright, grassy flavor to potato salads, egg salads, chicken salad, potato soup, and even cold cucumber soup.

Sauces: Think of creamy dill sauces for fish, particularly salmon.

Spread: Add dill to butter for a quick herb butter—perfect on toast or roasted veggies!

Tzatziki Sauce: Greek yogurt, grated cucumber, garlic, lemon juice, fresh dill, olive oil, and salt.

Dill Sauce: A sour cream, Greek yogurt or mayonnaise base that pairs well with fish or vegetables.

Dill Soup Roasted Carrots

Prickly Pear Cactus: A Plant for which We Are Thankful

During the harvesting season, our thoughts dwell on cornucopias filled to overflowing with a profusion of fruits, vegetables, grains, and, of course, pumpkins. In the southwest we have one more member to add to the bounty, the tuna or fruit of the nopal cactus, grown on the common prickly pear. Sharing a color palate specific to the autumn season, the maroon

tuna of the prickly pear is a lovely addition to the November holiday décor and a healthy supplement for fall feasts.

Drought tolerant and spreading 3 to 15 feet wide and to a height of 3 to 20 feet, this member of the genus *Opuntia* has 18 representatives in Arizona. Basically green with showy spines, the prickly pear produces pads, often mistaken for leaves, which are very thick modified stems. True leaves have been reduced to spines. During spring, many yellow to orange to red flowers sprout at the top of the pads.



Prickly pear with ripe fruit called "tunas"

Photo by Lee Ann Aronson

At its peak harvest season, September through December, the prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia* spp) produces an edible berry (tuna); even the pads (nopales) offer a tasty treat. The two-to-five-inch oval shaped tuna is dressed in red, green, brown, yellow or purple, with decorative, but not edible, spines on the skin.

Except for the spines, the rest of the plant is edible. A light sprinkling of finely chopped tuna or nopal can energize your salads. Fresh tunas can be enjoyed raw, frozen, or cooked to make jams, syrups, candies, jellies, and juices. The seeds packed in the fruit can be swallowed whole, spit out, or strained. Pureed or as juice, prickly pears can take baked goods or yogurt up a healthy notch or two. When ripe, the tuna produces a sweet melon or berry-like flavor which can explode into a panoply of nutritious vitamins and minerals.

More than just a gustatorial delight, the *Opuntia* has been called "la planta de vida" or "the plant of life" due to multiple health benefits. For thousands of years, these plants have been used as medicine. Currently products containing *Opuntia* are being commercially sold as capsules, drinks, pills and powders.

Packed with vitamin C, magnesium, potassium and lots of fiber, tunas and nopales may be the botanical equivalent of a superfood. They provide betalains,

unique nitrogen-containing pigments which have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Tunas are reportedly able to boost heart health by improving benefits from exercising, reducing heart disease, and lowering LDL cholesterol levels. They may also be a treatment for fibromyalgia.

Early evidence suggests that prickly pear cactus can decrease blood sugar levels in people with type 2 diabetes. Although commonly used to lower blood sugar levels, the result of long-term use is not clear. Caution should be exercised when taking medications for diabetes to avoid dropping blood sugar too low. Emerging research has demonstrated that prickly pear extract also may assuage the inflammatory effects of a hangover.



Prickly pear typically flowers in April in the low desert.

Photo by Lee Ann Aronson

As if the health benefits are not enough, scientists in Mexico have also discovered *Opuntia*'s capability to be used as a stable biofuel. Due to its abundance of sugars, *Opuntia* may one day be used, not only for healing our bodies, but also as a renewable energy source, helping to reduce waste, conserve water and lessen our over reliance on traditional fuels.

Kathleen McCoy
Herbie, Master Gardener, Master Naturalist

Editor's Note: for more Prickly Pear information and fun, be sure to check out the town of Superior's Prickly Pear Festival held each August. Check this link for next year's information:

<https://www.superiorarizona.com/events>

Weed and Feed, October 5

Many hands helped on another record setting, above-average, roasty and toasty, 100 and too many degrees October Saturday in the garden! We did find a few weeds to remove, many more dead coreopsis to clean up, and other bits of things here and there...sigh. But the garden reflects the summer and our climate, and was definitely fit for guests for the festival the following week! Thank you to all of our Herbie and Master Gardener volunteers!

We had time to refresh the many containers that have homes along our walls, as examples for apartment and condo dwellers and other herb gardeners who choose to grow in pots. The many different styles and shapes, sizes and colors of our pot collection look mish-mash, but let our garden visitors see a variety of herbs in different types of pots that they may already have at home. On this Saturday we worked to prepare them for new plantings, and found a home for a green and red holy basil plant that jumped into Mike's hands at the Vilardi Gardens booth at the Roadrunner Park Farmers Market.

A significant observation was the lack of seedlings expected to sprout by this time, very few hollyhock and sunflower or other seedlings; maybe it was too hot in our upper soil during September. The 'non-soon' really has had an effect, as salts accumulate in our gardens without a nice drenching summer rain. We will see what fall finally brings forth. We have begun a deep watering initiative to soak accumulated salts below root zones. This will happen over the course of several weeks, as we are using sprinklers to regulate added watering between our driplines.

The native loofa plant festoons the dwarf myrtle, and Kathy Eastman hopes to see some blooms and fruits set as temperatures cool a bit.



And we have several Sonoran passion vines (*Passiflora aridus*) (photo left), threading their way through various places, blooming and setting small edible fruits, ready for an influx of Gulf Fritillary butterflies to lay eggs this fall.

Several colors of rain lilies that have self-seeded and multiplied have bloomed this summer for our local pollinators. The gaillardias in the garden have taken a cue from the Energizer Bunny; they just keep blooming and blooming with many pollinators visiting the nectar and pollen filled blooms all summer! And the desert senna is indestructible - a very reliable summer blooming small shrub, when given a little extra watering to offset the missing monsoon rains.

Seed elves were busily separating seeds from chaff, chatting happily among themselves, and making headway on the many bulk seeds collected from the

demonstration garden and some home gardens. Think about saving some of your own garden seeds and sharing with your Arizona Herb Association.



Volunteers harvesting seeds from Desert Senna. Weed & Feed photos by Mike Hills

We look forward to cooling temperatures, hopefully some seedlings sprouting, and perhaps being optimistic enough to get those winter annual herbs and flowers planted! We have space in the garden, we have space in some pots, and we have willing and helpful hands. Saturday, November 2, may bring a real flurry of activity to the garden. Hope to see you there, beginning at 8:00 a.m., digging in with our volunteers

Pam Perry and Mike Hills, Past Presidents and Demonstration Garden Co-captains

Banner Photos: Our banner features pictures taken on Saturday, October 12, 2024, at our Herb Festival. (From left to right): Caltrop Poppies in full bloom, our headline speaker Angela Judd, Herb Fest Sign In and shopping experience, and perky Desert Senna flowers greeting festival participants on the Demonstration Garden Tour. Photos by Mike Hills

Keith Lorch was pursuing irrigation challenges from thirsty neighborhood critters chewing lines, while Donna Lorch was updating plant signage in preparation for the festival the following week. Mike Hills shared several packages of mixed flower seeds from a local wildflower company, and we were able to get them scattered, watered and netted in hopes that temps will cool soon!

The odd little vine that we have labeled 'Kirti 2' is blooming again, having survived the summer in a 5-gallon black nursery pot, no less. Someday we may learn what this might be. We are thankful for the box of mystery seeds that past president Kirti Mathura shared with our group; we just have no idea where she collected the seeds on her many wanderings around the world.

Always label seeds you collect...get good pictures of the source plants to help with ID if you are unsure...alas, hindsight is always 20/20.



More Herb Fest photos by Alison Matthees



Kathleen McCoy, an art potter-in-residence, gifted our group with a lovely remembrance plaque for Kirti Mathura. John Barkley mounted it securely in full view on the north side of the garden as one rounds the curve into the employee parking area.

Nice job by all. Thank you both for this, and, Herbies, please be sure you check it out on your next visit to the garden.

A note from Katherine Tarr –



I will need volunteers for the Honeybee Festival on Saturday, November 9, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and with set up Friday evening from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. The event is at Paradise Valley Community College. Thank you! ktarrbaby@yahoo.com

Dia de los Muertos: Celebrating Life and Honoring Ancestors with Herbs and Plants

Dia de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, is a vibrant Mexican tradition that celebrates the lives of loved ones who have passed away. Celebrated on November 1st and 2nd, this holiday centers on welcoming the spirits of the dead back to the world of the living. A key feature of the celebration is the **ofrenda** (altar), where offerings such as food, photos, and mementos are placed to honor the deceased.

Herbs and plants are essential elements of these altars. **Marigolds (cempasúchil)**, with their bright orange and yellow petals, are believed to guide spirits to the altar. Their strong fragrance and vibrant color symbolize life and death. **Copal**, a type of incense made from tree resin, is burned to cleanse the area and clear the path for spirits.

Additional herbs like **rosemary** and **sage** are often used in cleansing rituals, while herbs such as **mint** and **basil** can be included to symbolize freshness and renewal.



This celebration has deep roots in ancient Mesoamerican

civilizations, such as the Aztecs and Maya, who honored death and the cycle of life. The blending of these indigenous traditions with Catholicism after Spanish colonization resulted in the modern practices seen today.

Every ofrenda includes representations of the four elements:

- **Water**, or other drinks to quench the spirits' thirst
- **Wind**, symbolized by **papel picado** (cut paper banners)
- **Earth**, represented by food offerings
- **Fire**, usually represented by candles

Special foods, such as **Pan de Muerto** (a sweet bread flavored with anise and orange), are made as offerings. **Agua de Jamaica** (hibiscus tea) is another common inclusion on altars.

The symbolic use of herbs during Dia de los Muertos extends beyond decoration. Herbs like **calendula** (for grief and remembrance), **garlic** (for protection and strength), and **rosemary** (for memory) are tied to ancient beliefs about their powers in helping both the living and the dead.

Join us at our November meeting, where we'll have an ofrenda set up for members to honor their loved ones. Bring mementos, photos, or herbs that hold special significance to you, and let's celebrate together, honoring life and those we've lost. This sacred holiday is a reminder that death is a natural part of life's cycle, celebrated with love, remembrance, and the healing power of herbs.

By Liz Lonetti

<https://aclibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/80/2024/09/2023-Dia-de-los-muertos-15.5x28-Infographic-Alameda-County-Library.jpg>

AHA Holiday Party

The holidays are right around the corner, and so is our annual holiday party! Please join us on Thursday, December 5th, at 7:00 p.m. to celebrate another successful year together and our upcoming herb of the year: Chamomile.

Sign up on the calendar at our website <https://azherb.org> where you will also be asked to list what dish you are planning to bring so we can prevent overlap and promote complimenting dishes.

Lastly, we'll be having another mocktail competition, so bring your A game!

P.S. Don't forget to bring your dishes and utensils to the event to eliminate waste!



September Culinary – Delicious Fall Dishes

By Drew Templeton, Culinary Chair

Saturday, September 28 found 22 Herbies gathered at Beatriz Cohen's lovely home in Phoenix. The weather was still beastly hot, so we got cozy inside where it was cool. We were all so happy to get together after the summer break!



Beatriz Cohen was our September Culinary host.

Culinary photos by Drew Templeton

For starters, Diane and Chris Knudsen brought Hummus, Veggies and Pita Chips, Chris Lueck made Eggplant Caponata and Crostini, Hazel prepared Roasted Red Pepper and Eggplant Spread, and Drew Templeton brought French bread rounds topped with homemade Peach Chutney.

Beatriz Cohen provided a beautiful baked Salmon; Todd Templeton brought fragrant Butternut Curry; Pauline Staples and Miki Safadi concocted Root Vegetable Casserole with Turkey Sausage.

Susan and Eric Adamczyk brought Marinated Grilled Vegetables...a feast for the eyes as well as our tastebuds. Kathy Eastman fixed Autumn Quinoa and a Fruit Salad, and Donna and Keith Lorch brought Butternut/Apple and Farro Salad. Kathleen McCoy made Roasted Root Vegetables, while Nancy and Jerry Greenberg brought a traditional buckwheat dish, Kasha Varnishkes. Elizabeth Trembath-Reichert made Eggplant with Scallions, and Julie and Jim DiMaria baked fresh Herbed Bread.

Hazel also brought Apple Honey Bars and Plum Cake, which quickly disappeared. Pam Posten made a lovely Gingerbread Cake, and Jim and Julie made a festive Pineapple Upside Down Cake.



Top favorites were the Peach Chutney (a long, exhausting project not suitable for the recipe share) and Kathleen's extremely popular root veggies.



Roasted Root Vegetables (side dish)

Roasting Tip: Cutting vegetables into similarly sized pieces will help with even cooking; however, there will still be some variation which will occur across the cooking times of different vegetables. Therefore, use several smaller sheet trays or leave some space in between different kinds of vegetables on a larger sheet tray. That way, you can easily pull each type of vegetable from the oven when it is done.

Ingredients

5 large parsnips, peeled, cut into 1" pieces
5 large carrots, peeled, cut into 1" pieces
2 large potatoes, peeled or unpeeled, cut into 1" pieces
2 large sweet potatoes, peeled or unpeeled, cut into 1" pieces.
2 large red onions, peeled, cut into 1" pieces
olive oil, to coat
salt and pepper
fresh herbs (e.g., rosemary, thyme, marjoram, parsley, chives)

Steps

1. Place ingredients on sheet trays (see note above). Drizzle with olive oil and add salt and pepper.
2. Bake at 425° F. for 20 minutes or longer. Periodically stir items—keeping different kinds of vegetables separate—to help them brown evenly. Remove vegetables from the oven when they are fork-tender. In the last few minutes of cooking, combine all of the root vegetables together and heat through.
3. Toss with fresh herbs. Adjust salt and pepper as needed.

Fried Parsnip Ribbons (garnish)

Slicing Tip: After removing and disposing of the skin of the parsnips, use the vegetable peeler to carefully cut very thin and long strips of parsnip.

Safety Tip: Use caution any time you are frying items to avoid starting a fire. Pay attention to changes in the smell of the oil and be aware of the smoke points of different kinds of oils. Don't ever leave hot oil unattended. Also, protect yourself while frying by using long metal tools like tongs. Always put items into the oil gently and away from you.

Ingredients

5 parsnips, peeled, sliced into parsnip ribbons (see above)
vegetable oil, for frying
kosher salt, use a clean spice or coffee grinder to pulverize the salt into a powder

Steps

1. Heat the oil. Fry the strips of parsnip in small batches using metal tongs. You can try to keep the pieces relatively straight (useful for a garnish that will bring height to a dish) or let them become wavy and irregular. Try not to let the parsnip ribbons touch too much to ensure they cook evenly. Remove them from the oil when they are a light golden color. If they are brown, they are burned and will taste bitter.
2. Allow the excess oil to drain off of the fried parsnip pieces by placing them on paper towels. Immediately sprinkle a light coating of the powdered salt onto the parsnips. Allow them to cool and air dry a bit before storing them in a container at room temperature.
3. Use the parsnip ribbons as a garnish on top of your favorite protein, vegetable dish, or soup.

Recipe by Wendy R. Williams

Prepared by Kathleen McCoy for September Culinary

October 2024 Culinary Tastes of Autumn



Drew and Todd Templeton hosted the October Culinary

Saturday, October 26, was a surprising 100 degrees, but Todd and I were able to host 18 Herbies comfortably indoors for a fantastic culinary dinner! Our theme was Tastes of Autumn: Cinnamon, Cardamom, and Allspice. It was such fun to welcome everyone to our newly blue-stuccoed house and be able to use our not quite finished New Room!

Hazel and Les Davis prepared melt-in-your-mouth Cardamom Maple Salmon, and Elizabeth Maher invented a Pulled Chicken and Spicy Pear BBQ Sauce.

Janet Coleman and Zac Thayer created Cheesy and Kale Orzo Stuffed Mini Pumpkins, as well as a vegan version with coconut cream. Susan and Eric Adamczyk brought Roasted Spiced Carrots and Apples, while Tami and Tim Phillips prepared Cardamom and Clove Yellow Rice Stuffed Pumpkins, and Todd Templeton invented Lentil Cardamom Balls with Spiced Tahini Sauce. Kathleen McCoy brought fragrant Simple Lentil Dal with Whole Cinnamon, Cardamom and Cloves.

Pam Schuler created a Rainbow Salad of eleven vegetables with Pomegranate Dressing, while Kathy Eastman used allspice to make Smokey Pinto Beans with Pickled Jalapenos.

Katherine Tarr brought wine, and Janet Coleman made Mulled Wine with Maple and Fall Spices.

Sweets included Drew Templeton's Pumpkin Bread with Olive Oil and Rosemary, the triumphant return of Pam Posten's Gingerbread Cake, and Diane and Chris Knudsen's Gingersnaps.

The top Favorites were the Pumpkin Bread, the Vegan Orzo Pumpkins, and the Lentil Dal!

Join us on November 16 when Diane and Chris Knudsen will host for our theme of The Three Sisters: Corn, Beans and Squash!

Remember to go to the Membership Calendar at our website and clip on the pink listing for the Culinary Dinner. We're trying a new method this time, which will allow everyone to share what they will be bringing and information for carpooling; just click the link in the event description to go to the Googledoc where you can add your details.

Drew Templeton
Culinary Dinner Chair



Pumpkin Bread with Olive Oil and Rosemary

Makes 1 loaf

Wet ingredients

- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh rosemary
- 3/4 cup packed dark brown sugar
- 3 eggs, room temperature
- 3/4 cup extra virgin olive oil, plus more for greasing
- 1 (15 oz) can pumpkin purée
- 1 tablespoon vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract



Dry ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 cup chocolate chips, optional

To bake

- Demerara sugar, for topping
- Pumpkin seeds, for topping

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F. Line a 9.25" x 5.25" loaf pan with parchment paper and grease all over with a bit of olive oil.
2. Add the granulated sugar to a large bowl and massage in the rosemary with your hands. Massage until the sugar is very fragrant, about 30 seconds to a minute.
3. Add in the dark brown sugar, eggs, olive oil, pumpkin and vanilla. Whisk to combine. Set aside.
4. Place all the dry ingredients in a medium bowl and whisk to combine.
5. Add the dry into the wet and whisk until just combined. Don't over-mix! Fold in the chocolate chips, if using.
6. Transfer batter to the prepared loaf pan and top with a bit of Demerara sugar and pumpkin seeds all over.
7. Bake for 75 to 85 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the thickest part of the loaf comes out mainly clean with a few moist crumbs.
8. Let cool in the pan for 30 minutes and then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Enjoy!

Prepared by Drew Templeton



Simple Lentil Dal with Whole Cinnamon, Cardamom and Cloves

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 tablespoons oil
- 1 stick cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 3 whole cloves
- 4 green cardamom pods
- 1 cup lentils, washed, drained
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric
- 4 cups cold water
- 1 teaspoon salt or to taste

Tempering Oil

- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, mashed to a paste
- 1 tablespoon ginger, minced
- 1 hot green chili pepper, minced (remove seeds for less heat)

Garnish

- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1/2 lemon or lime

Instructions

1. Heat the oil with the cinnamon stick in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring, until the cinnamon unfurls, 1 to 2 minutes.
2. Add the cumin, cloves, and cardamom and cook, stirring, until the cumin turns a golden brown color, about 1 more minute. Add the lentils, turmeric, water, and salt. Bring to a boil and skim well. Turn down the heat and simmer, covered, until the lentils are soft, 20 to 40 minutes, depending on the type of lentil used. Add more water during cooking, if necessary. Taste for salt and add more if needed.
3. Remove cinnamon stick. Use an immersion blender to gently purée some of the lentils. Alternatively, ladle about 1/2 cup of the lentils into a small bowl and mash them with a spoon. Return the

mashed lentils to the pot and give the dal a stir. Continue cooking at a simmer, uncovered, for 5 minutes to thicken. If you like a thicker dal, purée more of the lentils until you reach the desired consistency. If you like a thinner dal, add water.

Tempering Oil

Heat the oil in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the onion and cook until it just begins to brown around the edges, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the garlic paste, ginger, and minced chili and cook just to mellow the raw taste of the garlic, 10 to 15 seconds.

Finishing The Dish

Stir half of the tempering oil into the dal, along with half of the cilantro and all of the lemon or lime juice. Simmer very gently for 5 minutes. Transfer the dal to a serving bowl; pour the remaining tempering oil over the top, and sprinkle with the remaining cilantro. Serve hot with basmati rice and Indian bread (Naan or Kulcha are my favorites).

Adapted from Indian Home Cooking by Suvir Saran
Prepared by Kathleen McCoy for October Culinary

Orzo and Kale Stuffed Pumpkins



6 small pumpkins, about 2 lbs each
2 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra for brushing
1 medium onion, diced
3-4 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 cup white wine
3 cups vegetable broth
3/4 cup coconut cream
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon pepper
2 cups orzo pasta
1 bunch kale, chopped, about 4 cups loosely packed
1 lemon
extra vegetable broth, if needed

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 400° F. Hold each pumpkin on its side and use a heavy, sharp knife to slice the top

and stem off, about 1 inch down from the top. Use a paring knife to expose the inside. Scoop out the seeds and discard. Trim the top rim so that it is even in thickness with the walls of the pumpkin.

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Brush the top rim and inside of each pumpkin with a little olive oil and sprinkle with kosher salt. Place the pumpkins upside down on the parchment paper. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until the pumpkin flesh is tender.

In a heavy-bottomed Dutch oven, heat 1 tablespoon olive oil over medium high heat. Add the onion and sauté for 5 to 7 minutes, until the onion is softened and beginning to brown. Add two-thirds of the garlic and sauté for another minute.

When the garlic is fragrant, add the white wine and deglaze the pan. Turn the heat up to high and let the wine simmer for another minute. Add the vegetable broth, coconut cream, kosher salt, nutmeg, and pepper and bring to a boil.

Once the broth mixture comes to a boil, add the orzo pasta. Turn the heat down to medium low and keep at a gentle simmer. Stir the orzo frequently to prevent it from sticking to the bottom of the pot. As it is pasta, it will naturally stick to the pan if you leave it too long before stirring. Cover with lid in between stirrings.

To prep the kale, cut the leaves off the stem. Chop into bite-sized pieces. In a non-stick skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil over medium high heat. Add the remaining minced garlic and sauté for 1 minute. Add the chopped kale and sprinkle with kosher salt. Cook, tossing the kale, until the kale has wilted and is tender. Sprinkle the kale with lemon juice. Set aside.

Cook the orzo until it is tender and most of the liquid has been absorbed. If you feel the mixture is too dry, then add a splash more vegetable broth. Squeeze the juice from about half of a lemon into the mixture. Stir the kale into the orzo mixture.

Spoon the orzo/kale filling into each pumpkin, mounding the filling on top so that each pumpkin is generously filled. Bake the pumpkins for 15 to 20 minutes, until the filling is hot. Serve and enjoy!

Prepared by Janet Coleman for October's Culinary.



Our Fall Herb Festival Wrap Up

Saturday, October 12, proved to be a scorcher with the heat, yet dozens of Herbie volunteers came together to produce a “sizzling” herb fest to entertain, enlighten and inform 48 folks who attended this year’s event. Our featured speaker was Angela Judd, Maricopa County Master Gardener and educator who presented a talk entitled, “Herbs for the Desert Gardener: Tips and Techniques for Success.” Angela covered what herbs to grow in our difficult environment, and how and when to grow them.

You can find more about Angela at her website, “GrowinginTheGarden.com” (where she offers planting guides and calendars and informational videos on her YouTube channel.)

Angela’s tips for success included planting a variety of annual and perennial herbs, and learning basic care tips (plant in the right season, provide well-draining soil and check the soil before watering). She encouraged us to use the herbs we grow, saying “Fresh is best,” but also advocating for drying or freezing or dehydrating or sharing our bounty with others.

Our three breakout sessions included:

“Herbal Salts, Sugars, Spirits and Vinegars” presented by our culinary chair Drew Templeton and her husband Todd Templeton. They demonstrated making rosemary salt and herbed vinegar and the sample we enjoyed of Parsley/Mint Salad with cucumber and tomatoes was delicious. We all left with rosemary salt to use at home.

“Propagating Herbs from Seed” with Pam Perry and helper Maureen. Participants learned how to “read” a seed packet, buy or make a seed starting “mix” and the “lift test” for knowing when to water. We then did a hands-on seeding of winter herbs (arugula, dill and cilantro) to take home.



A tour of the AHA herbal demonstration garden with Mike Hills or Kathy Eastman. The informative tours allowed participants to see what grows well in our low desert. Each tour was different, tailored to the interests and questions of those in each group. And the garden looked lovely!

Shopping opportunities abounded with decorative plant items by Lori of Central City Gifts, herbal and healing soaps and lotions by Sheri Semones, and a table of tinctures, herb blends, and plants from NAMA (find them in their new



location in Tempe at Southern and McClintock in November) as well as AHA’s own booth with herbs, seeds, garden sleeves, our Low Desert Herb Gardening Handbook and free dried bay leaves.

Many thanks to all who made the event a successful day of fun and learning!



Angela Judd pictured left with AHA President Liz Lonetti, was our featured speaker at the 2024 Herb Festival with her talk on “Herbs for the Desert Gardener.”

Festival photos by Alison Matthees and Mike Hills

Arizona Herb Association
PO Box 63101
Phoenix, AZ 85082
<https://azherb.org>
Facebook.com: Arizona Herb Association



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*When the world wearies and
society fails to satisfy, there is
always the garden.*

Minnie Aumonier