



May 2025

A Publication for Members & Friends

<http://www.azherb.org>

Dear Herbies,

We have already had some record-breaking high temperatures this spring. Many of us are scratching our heads and gardening on the fly as we find our old tried and true calendars require a bit of an adjustment.

Some of our most intrepid members will soldier on through the summer, planting monsoon crops and providing their own monsoons via drip systems. Others will throw in the proverbial towel with exclamations of "Hobbies are supposed to be fun - and this isn't."

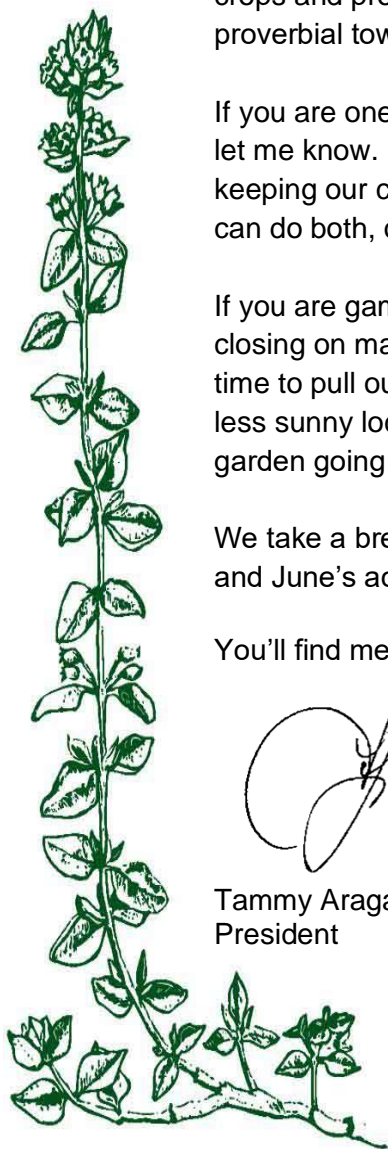
If you are one of the latter, and looking to support the Herbies while staying indoors, please let me know. We have a couple of positions for someone with moderate computer skills - keeping our calendar up to date and taking over as membership chairperson. One person can do both, or the tasks can be divided between two people.

If you are game to garden all summer, get those seeds in the ground now as the window is closing on many types of plants. Once the temperatures are consistently above 90°, it's time to pull out the shade cloth. Check your potted plants to see if they would benefit from a less sunny locale. Our monthly Weed & Feed is a must. Learn all the tricks to keep a garden going in this heat and share what you've learned as well.

We take a break from meetings in July and August, so make it a point to attend all of May's and June's activities. You will find them on the calendar on our website or in this newsletter.

You'll find me singing in my garden,

Tammy Aragaki  
President



## Calendar

### May 2025

Thursday, May 1: Annual Salad Supper  
Location: MCC Extension, Time: 7:00 p.m.  
Come early to tour the Demo Garden  
Guests welcome!  
Speakers: prior AHA Scholarship Winners  
Herb of the Year – Chamomile  
Presenter: Shay Emmers

Saturday, May 3: Weed & Feed  
Time: 7:00 a.m.



Saturday, May 10: Culinary Event  
Time: 6:00 p.m.  
Hosts: Donna and Keith Lorch  
Theme: Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Wine!  
Sign up on AHA online calendar.

Friday – Sunday, May 16 to 18  
Time: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Maricopa County Home and Flower Show  
Location: Westworld in Scottsdale  
<https://maricopacountyhomeshow.com/attend/>

### Save the Date!

Saturday, May 31: AHA Herbal Workshop  
Location: Liz Lonetti's home  
Time: 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.  
Details coming soon!

### June 2025

Thursday, June 5: General Meeting  
Topic: Hemp  
Speaker: Dr. Ken Sweat  
Herb of the Month: TBA  
Presenter: Pam Perry

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

Saturday, June 7: Culinary Event  
Theme: A Baked Potato Party  
Hosts: Drew and Todd Templeton  
Details on AHA online calendar  
<https://azherb.org/>

Tuesday, June 10: Community Free Day  
Location: Desert Botanical Garden  
Time: 7:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.  
Make your reservation now!

## 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 1, 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 gather flowers in our demo garden! We will keep our standard business meeting short, and have a brief presentation from Shay Emmers on the Herb of the Year, Chamomile, including an overview of how the Herb of the Year is chosen.



Shay Emmers



Chamomile in our Demo Garden  
Photo by Mike Hills

Our main speakers will include prior Jane Haynes Scholarship winners. Come support these scholarship recipients and learn how AHA has helped their educational and professional opportunities. Everyone, please come ready and willing to exchange ideas about our AHA program as we focus on strengths and improvements.

Come early and enjoy a stroll around the Demonstration Garden beforehand. 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.

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

### Topic: May AHA Salad Supper

**Date: Thursday, May 1, 2025**

Meeting begins promptly at 7:00 p.m.

### Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81288082383?pwd=ciryfLyJUDuyspcmvTEELZcfH705tb.1>

Meeting ID: 812 8808 2383

Passcode: 088744

## Welcome New AHA Members:

Kathlean Faver  
Zip Code: 85143

Vi Le  
Zip Code: 85040

Jo Setliff  
Zip Code: 85226

Tamera Borchardt  
Zip Code: 45387

Ellie and Jim Thompson  
Zip Code: 85204

Kristin Trautman  
Zip Code: 85050

Stella Hemp  
Zip Code: 85016

Taylor Rooney  
Zip Code: 85282

Patricia Evans  
Zip Code: 85297

Joanna Ornelas  
Zip Code: 85008

Andrew Winchel  
Zip Code: 85207

Kathy Canuel  
Zip Code: 85201

Briana Jacobs  
Zip Code: 85225

Jane Haynes Scholarship Winner: Brittany Corral  
Zip Code: 85282

Jane Haynes Scholarship Winner: Bobby Evans Jr.  
Zip Code: 85250

Dorothy Regan Haskett  
Zip Code: 85225

Anastasia and Joseph Wardzinski

Emili Quintero Salcido

**Tammy Aragaki, Membership Committee**



## Seed ID Needed

Herbies - One of you collected these seeds and gave a ziplock baggie to Katherine and Lauren for our seed sales.

Unfortunately, we have lost the tag and the bag itself is not labeled. If you recognize these seeds and can help us, please drop us an email with the seed details

Thank you,  
Mike Hills [MikeXHills@gmail.com](mailto:MikeXHills@gmail.com)  
Katherine Tarr [KTarrbaby@yahoo.com](mailto:KTarrbaby@yahoo.com)  
Lauren Espinoza [LaurenEspinoza@Gmail.com](mailto:LaurenEspinoza@Gmail.com)



## Culinary News from "Down Under"



Pam Perry and husband Henry are currently vacationing in Australia. Pam sent this photo with the following comment. "Look closely. The ants in this picture are supposed to have a lemon-lime flavor and are used to flavor foods."

Green tree ants are considered edible, with some indigenous Australians traditionally using them as a food source. A source of protein, products found in an online search include Green Ant Marmalade and Green Ant Gin. It appears they can also be purchased freeze-dried!



## April Herb of the Month Nasturtium or Nastur-YUM

Nasturtiums are a favorite herb of Bernie Arnecke, which is why she chose to share information about them with us as the April Herb of the Month. There are type types of nasturtiums - a climbing type (*Tropaeolum majus*), that can grow up to lengths of ten feet and is great for a fence or trellis, and a dwarf or bush type, (*Tropaeolum minus*), great for pots or scattered in the garden.



The nasturtium family is a small group of herbaceous flowering plants native to Central and South America with about 80 species. It is in the order Brassicales, which includes the mustard and cabbage, caper, papaya and moringa families.



Nasturtium leaves are often peltate (like lily pads) or palmately lobed. The flowers are solitary zygomorphic or bilaterally symmetrical, in vibrant colors: yellows, oranges, reds, creams, salmon or peach. The fruits are dry, indehiscent nutlets, each containing one seed.

Nasturtium plant in  
AHA Demo Garden  
Photo by Mike Hills

The genus name *Tropaeolum* comes from the Greek word "tropaeion" or "trophy." It was a Roman

custom to erect trophy poles after battles; the round leaves reminded the Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus of shields and the vibrant colors of the flowers reminded him of blood staining the helmets of the fighters.

Nasturtiums were imported to Europe by Spanish conquistadors around 1500 as a vegetable, along with the potato and tomato. John Gerard noted its presence in England in 1565. British growers knew it as "Indian Cress," due to its origins in the Americas, then known as the Indies. The plant received its common name, nasturtium, (Latin for "nose-twister"), from Renaissance botanists due to

its peppery flavor and spicy fragrance similar to watercress (*Nasturtium officinale*).

**Cultivation:** Nasturtiums are easy to grow here. Direct sow seeds October through January in full or partial sun; you don't need to soak the seeds prior to planting. The plant thrives in poor soil and is fairly drought tolerant, but plants may need some shading when temperatures are hot. Trailing varieties can benefit from a light pruning. Nasturtiums can be invasive in coastal areas.

Nasturtiums are pollinator friendly plants. The nectar is exceptionally sweet (sucrose rather than fructose or glucose) and very concentrated. The long tongues of hummingbirds and the long nectar-rich spurs of nasturtium flowers evolved together. Bees and other insects don't have long enough tongues or proboscises for the entire spur, but are well rewarded when the spur is full. The lower lip of the flower is a perfect platform for bees to land on to collect pollen and nectar. The beautiful stripes around the flower's center serve as nectar guides to help bees and other pollinators quickly position themselves for the pollen-laden outwardly-projecting anthers – as well as for any nectar that they might be able to reach.

**Culinary Uses:** The entire above-ground plant is edible. Harvest leaves when the plant is young, approximately 6 inches tall. Harvest flowers as they open. The plant has a peppery flavor, similar to watercress, horseradish or wasabi. Depending on the variety, it can also have an anise or licorice flavor. Collect the green seed pods when they are just over 1/4" inch in diameter. These can be used for pickling. Discard small, hardened pods. Flower buds or immature seed pods can be used as a substitute for capers. You can use nasturtiums in stir-fries, cook them with pasta, and stuff the flowers.

**Medicinal:** Nasturtiums have been used for medicinal purposes for centuries. The ancient Incas used nasturtiums as both an edible plant and a medicinal herb, making teas for respiratory ailments and using the plant as a poultice for cuts and burns. Renaissance botanists used nasturtium ("twisted nose") as a remedy for nasal/chest congestion. Nasturtium flowers are high in Vitamins A, C, and D.

The peppery flavor of nasturtium is primarily due to the presence of glucosinolates, a class of sulfur-containing compounds inactive in their intact form. However, when these plants are damaged or chewed, they release an enzyme called myrosinase, which hydrolyzes glucosinolates into various products, including isothiocyanates (ITCs), known

for their potent antimicrobial properties. The plant has also been used to treat baldness and UTIs.

**Symbolism:** The nasturtium is associated with patriotism, courage, victory, and conquest. The flowers can also symbolize joy, creativity, and wellness. In Victorian Language of Flowers or floriography, nasturtiums stand for patriotism or heroism. Soldiers in Europe after 1600s wore nasturtiums (given by maidens) as a symbol of victory and patriotism.

The orange nasturtium flower is also the symbol of the Family Caregivers Center of Mercy. The nasturtium stands for victory in struggle and orange signifies joy and creativity, promoting a sense of wellness and emotional energy that should be shared through compassion, passion and warmth.



Nasturtium blooms have been widely represented in works of art due their appealing shape and colors. Examples are this hand painted Moorcroft pottery ginger jar and cover (left) and *Nasturtiums*, the opaque watercolor on canvas by Dutch artist Jan Voerman from about 1894 (below).



Besides Bernie, other fans of nasturtiums include:  
King Louis the XIV of France, who grew them in his gardens in Versailles,

Elisabeth Linneas, daughter of the preeminent scientist Carl Linnaeus

Thomas Jefferson, who recorded growing *Tropaeolum majus* "in the meadow" at Monticello as early as 1774. He used the young leaves and flowers in salads and pickled the seeds.

Claude Monet, who grew nasturtiums annually along the walk of his gardens at Giverny

Isabella Gardner, whose "riotous, unruly, deliriously glorious" garden at her museum in Boston includes a hanging nasturtium display. It takes nine months to grow the nasturtium vines to lengths that would rival the locks of Rapunzel.



Hanging Nasturtiums  
Courtyard Display, 2021

Isabella Stewart Gardner  
Museum, Boston.

Photo: Jenny Pore

Martha Stewart, who developed recipes for using nasturtium leaves and flowers

Find more about nasturtiums and their pollinators at <https://botanistinthekitchen.blog/2013/10/29/nasturtiums-and-the-birds-and-the-bees/>

### Nasturtium Flower Pesto

4 cups nasturtium flowers firmly packed  
1/2 cup olive oil  
6 cloves garlic  
75 grams fresh parmesan cheese  
1 cup almonds or other nut of your choice  
salt and pepper to taste



Fry the nuts in a dry frying pan over low heat. Measure out the oil and cheese. Place all ingredients into a food processor, and blend until a smooth consistency is reached. Store in an airtight container in the fridge for 5 to 7 days.

<https://selfsufficientme.com/farming/nasturtium-flower-pesto/>

Thank you, Bernie, for the detailed presentation and delicious Nasturtium Flower Pesto!

Our banner photos this month, all taken by Mike Hills at April's Weed & Feed, feature *Salvia* "blue spires," fungi growing in Pam's composters at Maricopa County Cooperative Extension, glorious hollyhock blooms, spittle bugs on rosemary (more info in our Weed & Feed article), and French lavender.



## Powerful and petite: Carnation (*Dianthus caryophyllus*)

Does a bouquet of carnations (*Dianthus caryophyllus*) evoke nostalgic memories? Perhaps an image of your first prom? A lovely spring flower garden in New England? Thoughts of spicy tea served in a favorite eatery? If so, welcome to the phenomenon called the Proust Effect. The Proust Effect refers to the documented physiological, neurological, and psychological reasons why self-relevant memories are triggered by familiar tastes and smells. The pretty little carnation, with its potent aroma and taste, is the very embodiment of the phenomenon.

As many as 300 different types of carnations and their hybrids exist. Native to The Balkan Peninsula, this subshrub thrives in a temperate biome with 6 to 8 hours of full sun. With few exceptions, the plant does best in hardiness zones 5 through 9, with temperatures between 60°F to 70°F ideal for optimal growth and blooming.



*Dianthus* "Pinks" growing in garden pots  
Photo by Drew Templeton

Slow growing, the plants can reach about 3 feet tall by 1 1/2 feet wide. These long-stemmed Mediterranean perennials produce thin, grey-green leaves arranged in pairs on each side of the upright stem. The plants produce flowers that are about 1 to 2 inches in diameter. Adorning the top of the stem, either in clusters or individually, are the natural pink-purple fringed petals, but cultivars can be red, pink, orange, yellow, white or green.

Varieties of *Dianthus caryophyllus* called chabauds, noted for their tightly packed aromatic blooms, are typically grown for floral decorations. Often celebrated in home gardens, the sought after chabaud seeds normally are found in mixed cultivar seed packages, ultimately producing a riot of colorful blooms in summer. Extending the vase life of chabauds as cuttings is a primary concern for countries that export these fragrant flowers. In fact,

Japan has modified carnations to produce a vase life of up to two weeks.

Clever Mother Nature has endowed the carnation with more than just a vibrant radiant presence. Not surprisingly, their spicy aroma has led them out of the garden and into the kitchen. *Dianthus caryophyllus* flower petals are edible and sweet with a mild flavor of nutmeg and clove, although some describe the taste as a little sharp and peppery. Since the 17th century, liquor makers have distilled carnation petals for use in the French liqueur chartreuse. Petals can also be sautéed or candied and are found in recipes for soups, cupcakes, sorbets, and ice cream. Petals make eye-catching garnishes in salads and on pastries.

The multi-talented petal also has potent antioxidant properties and is found in many traditional Chinese medical treatments. The flower produces an essential chemical that can be used to enhance the body's anti-inflammatory response. Carnation tea is a reported remedy for stress; the brew is an energy booster. Taken internally, stomach aches and fevers allegedly respond to carnation treatments.

Rich in saponins, the leaves of the plant when simmered in water produce a very useful oil. Soaps and lotions containing this oil can be used for cleaning the skin. Conditions like eczema, rashes, and skin irritations, as well as wrinkles, find a formidable foe when confronted with oil extracted from carnation flowers. In addition, scent emitted from the oil is used in many perfumes; dried flower heads populate many cosmetic products, sachets and potpourri.

As one of the oldest cultivated flowers in the world, not surprisingly, the carnation has been linked to many and [varied symbols](#), such as the gods, birth, death, love, rebellions, socialism and more. For the delightful month of May, perhaps the supreme symbol belongs to the most significant person in our life, our mother. Carnations are the official flower for celebrating Mother's Day.

By Kathleen McCoy  
Herbie, Master Gardener, Master Naturalist



*Dianthus* in  
Mike's mom's  
garden

Photo by Mike  
Hills

## Weed and Feed April 5, 2025

With over 30 Herbie and Master Gardener volunteers, and decent temperatures, we had a great day of accomplishments in our public Herb & Pollinator Demonstration Garden. Early birds Teri Thorpe and John Barkley had help bringing out tools and irrigation supplies. We, of course, missed Garden Co-Captain Pam Perry, as she was exploring Western Australia with husband Henry. Katherine Tarr sold some herb plants and seeds, plus AFGC raffle tickets to attendees.

Training and discussion topics included some seasonal weed ID – always more weeds! We took a close look at Stinknet (*Oncosiphon piluliferum*, mistakenly called Globe Chamomile), which is a serious invasive in Arizona and southern California. Luckily (?) the lack of early fall rains in the Low Desert means there is less stinknet growing in the wild this year, but it is growing and making seeds wherever the seeds found irrigation water. A few hardy volunteers gloved up to remove several bags full from the landscape areas to the south of our garden, so these annual plants will not infest us with seeds when they dry down next month. Watch for it in your neighborhoods and pull and bag it to help reduce the spread.

Good details on identification and control at <https://extension.arizona.edu/topics/stinknet> and <https://extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/pubs/az1827-2020.pdf> Details on University of Arizona research on control at <https://turf.arizona.edu/20TH30%20Stinknet%20control%20Cave%20Creek%20+%20pix%20ltr.pdf>



We also shared information on Spittle Bugs, common on garden plants and herbs in spring in Maricopa County, and often the cause of calls to the Master Gardener Help Desk from nervous home gardeners. See page 11 of this publication on Backyard Bugs of Arizona for information on this relatively harmless insect.

<https://extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/mblock/insect-discovery-backyardbugs2022.pdf>

Several gardeners removed the 'Gold Dust' rosemary near the Bay Tree, as it was taking up too much space and our plant did not match the true 'Gold Dust' cultivar. Tasty prunings were sent home with the volunteers to enjoy. Long range we may find another true plant of this variety or another good

rosemary, but for now it is welcome space to plant other herbs. Sweet Violet plants from Mike's in-law's family were added, and we will try to keep them happily growing in the demo garden. Donna Lorch worked on replacing worn signs, and adding new where some of our spring planted herbs are thriving. Keith Lorch worked on the irrigation system, with plans for some upgrades over the next 6 months and ongoing line flushing to remove salt and mineral deposits that clog emitters.

We also had volunteers harvesting seeds of some of our seasonal herb and pollinator plants, seeds to be sold at future events and meetings. Seed Cleaning took place with good results, and I was able to drop 10 more tubs of cleaned seed off with Marge and Mary Bayless, for Marge's volunteer work packaging the seeds for our sales.



Ninety-five years young, Marge is one of the founding members of our gardening club and we are thankful for her continued help in our success.

Photo by Mike Hills

Flowers bloomed, birds sang, lizards ran and insects, native bees, honeybees and a few butterflies visited the mass of spring blooms in our public demonstration garden. Make some time in your life to stop by the AHA garden and check out the blooms; bring a friend with you. Restrooms, water fountain and offices are open 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, and the garden is open for self-tours 24/7 with excellent plant signs thanks to the ongoing efforts of Donna Lorch.

Several herbies and Master Gardeners relaxed afterward with some tasty snacks, including delicious homemade muffins from Bernie Arnecke. Her recipe follows this article.

Enjoy April in your own gardens too, and we hope to see you bright and early on Saturday, May 3rd, at 7:00 a.m., for the next volunteer garden day with the Arizona Herb Association.

Mike Hills, Past President  
Demonstration Garden Co-Captain



## Quinoa Muffins from "Forks Over Knives the Cookbook"

Makes 12 muffins

2 cups spelt or whole wheat flour  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
3/4 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/2 cup dry sweetener  
1 cup mashed banana (from about 2 large bananas, peeled)  
1/4 cup unsweetened plant based milk  
1/3 cup unsweetened applesauce  
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract  
1 cup cooked quinoa



1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line a 12-cup muffin pan with silicone liners or have ready a nonstick or silicone muffin pan.
2. In a medium mixing bowl sift together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and dry sweetener.
3. Make a well in the center of the mixture and add the mashed banana, plant-based milk, applesauce, and vanilla. Stir together the wet ingredients in the well. Then, incorporate the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients just until the dry ingredients are moistened (do not over-mix). Fold in the quinoa.
4. Fill each muffin cup all the way to the top. Bake for 22 to 24 minutes, or until a knife inserted through the center of a muffin comes out clean.
5. Let the muffins cool completely, about 20 minutes, then carefully run a knife around the edges of each muffin to remove.

Brought to April Weed & Feed by Bernie Arnecke



The Posh Picnic Culinary held April 12, 2025

## April Culinary Dinner – A Posh Picnic

On Saturday April 12, Janet Coleman hosted 11 Herbies for "A Posh Picnic." We were treated to a gorgeous sunset while we enjoyed her garden, and then the feasting began!

Appetizers included Kathy Eastman's Mushroom Pate and Drew Templeton's colorful Easter Egg Deviled Eggs.

Heidi and Russ Maxson brought a Vegan Potato Salad and Todd Templeton invented Asian Potato Salad with Kohlrabi, while Janet Coleman made Roasted Veggies and Donna Lorch prepared Rice Salad with Sun-Dried Tomato in Cucumber Cups.

For entrees we had Chris Lueck's amazing Zucchini Pie with Balsamic Drizzle and Janet's Cauliflower and Cabbage Blue Corn Tacos.

Pam Schuler created a Fruit Pizza with Sugar Cookie Crust, while Janet made both a Rosewater Cake and a Strawberry Cake. Gary Lueck brought a Chocolate Cake made with Sauerkraut!

Top favorites were the Zucchini Pie, Rice Salad with Sun-dried tomatoes, and Cauliflower Blue Corn Tacos.

Join us next month when Donna and Keith Lorch host on Saturday, May 10, with the theme "Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Wine!"

*Drew Templeton*  
Culinary Chair

Here's the link for Janet's Roast Cauliflower tacos with Blue Corn Tortillas!



<https://eatwithclarity.com/roasted-cauliflower-tacos/>



## Zucchini Pie

from Savor the Flavor of Oregon

SERVINGS: 8

- 1 pie crust
- 5 cups zucchini, thinly sliced
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/2 cup parsley, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon oregano
- 2 eggs, slightly beaten
- 2 cups mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 2 Tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar



1. Sauté the zucchini, onion and garlic in butter until tender. Stir in parsley, salt, pepper, and oregano.
2. Combine eggs and cheese, add to vegetables.
3. Spread mustard on the bottom of pie crust. Add the vegetable mixture.
4. Bake at 375 degrees for 40 to 50 minutes.
5. Serve each slice with several drops of balsamic vinegar.

Prepared by Chris Lueck for the April Culinary

## Rice Salad with Sun-Dried Tomatoes

modified from Joy of Cooking

Prepare the rice:

- 1 cup long grain white rice
- 2 cups veggie broth (I made from an Edward & Sons Garden Veggie bouillon cube)

Whisk together:

- 6 oil-packed sun-dried tomato halves, minced
- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons chili powder
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon ground coriander



Stir mixture into the warm rice along with:

- 4 more sun-dried tomato halves, diced
- 1/4 cup pine nuts, toasted
- 4 scallions, minced
- salt and ground black pepper to taste.

Serve warm or at room temperature.

Prepared by Donna Lorch for the April Culinary

## Desert Medicine,

with JoAnn Sanchez and Samantha Smith



Left to right, Shay Emmers, AHA Vice President in charge of Programs, herbalist Samantha Smith, and herbalist JoAnn Sanchez.

Our April general meeting speaker was Herbie and Herbalist JoAnn Sanchez. JoAnn has been an herbalist in the Sonoran Desert since 1981, practicing as a clinician for a dozen years before opening an herbalism training school 27 years ago. The experiential (learning by doing) program featured 14 months education in the field, classroom, lab and library.

For the same 27 years, JoAnn was employed by Sonoran University (formerly known as Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine & Health Sciences), initially writing coursework and education in the classrooms. In addition, she started and continues to manage the largest plant medicine garden in Arizona, a living laboratory and classroom for cultivation that includes many indigenous native plants. Currently, JoAnn uses her experience and continued exploratory interests as a plant forager and a public speaker.

JoAnn was assisted in her presentation by herbalist Samantha Smith.

JoAnn talked about the importance of herbariums and herbarium specimens, complete with a plant's roots, stems, leaves, flowers and seeds, along with collection information. She brought numerous herbarium sheets with her, which she passed around for the group to view. She explained that for some plants, plants in the mallow family for instance, all plant parts have the same action. For other plants, different parts of the plant are used for different purposes. With mullein, the roots and leaves and flowers are all used differently. Sometimes one part of a plant is used for medicine and another part of the same plant is used for food.

Among the plants that JoAnn and Samantha discussed were:

**Brittlebush** (*Encelia farinosa*): This spring bloomer is a small to medium shrub, with yellow ray flowers held up on a long flower stem, in the large family of *Asteraceae* plants. The fuzzy leaves are silvery in color and the stems contain a resin. Harvest flowers when 50% are open, gather leaves in the spring for a decoction, and resin after it dries on the stem. Resins are boiled in wax for a salve. Resin from the plant is used as a pain reliever; the plant's volatile oils are an expectorant and its lactones are anti-inflammatory. It gets its name because the stems are easily broken. Brittlebush was often known as the "arnica of the desert."

**Wolfberry** (*Lycium andersonii*): This spiny looking bush in the *Solanaceae* family is a perennial that grows to 4 to 6 feet tall and 3 feet wide. The plant is drought deciduous. It has small, spatulate, succulent leaves and lavender/pink blossoms which bloom March to May and attract hummingbirds and butterflies. The small red, egg-shaped fruits are edible. Leaves are harvested in spring and summer, best after a rain; fruits are harvested when ripe. Leaves are used in infusions or tinctures or poultices; the flavonoids they contain are anti-inflammatory and anticholinergic. The berries are used in making jams and jellies.

**Desert Lavender** (*Condea emoryi*, synonym *Hyptis emoryi*), is a perennial in the *Lamiaceae* mint family that grows up to 15 feet tall. It has multi-branches of square stems, silvery-white colored, lavender-scented foliage and small oval aromatic lavender flowers. Terpenes are a class of organic compounds found in many plants, including Desert Lavender, and are responsible for their characteristic smell. The plant may be found growing near ephemeral streams and is drought deciduous. Desert Lavender is used as a poultice and in tinctures and is considered safe for general use. The gel of a fresh leaf reduces bleeding. Desert Lavender has antiviral and antifungal properties.



**Canyon Ragweed** or Chicura (*Ambrosia ambrosioides*): This drought deciduous plant is in the same family as Chamomile. Plant size is about 3 feet wide and 2.5 feet tall. The leaves are elongated to lanceolate and saw-toothed. Yellow flower clusters appear on a terminal spike. The plant is related to common ragweed and pollen can be problematic.

Interestingly, the leaves are an antidote for the

problem caused by the pollen. Canyon ragweed is monoecious, meaning it has separate male and female flowers on the same individual plant. Male flowers, purple in color, make pollen and shed it down to the female flowers, which bloom later.

Canyon ragweed is sometimes referred to as a "women's plant" due to its historical use by some Southwest indigenous groups to address problems with menstrual pain. The plant is anti-spasmodic; it is used in childbirth to contract the uterus. In Mexico, it is traditionally used for aging women, to replenish and restore energy and strengthen the reproductive organs. Roots of the plant are used. You can also make a dry leaf tea, but it will be bitter.

**Ratany** (*Krameria grayii*) is a low gray shrub, very drought responsive and so often in dormancy. It has small lanceolate leaves and magenta-colored flowers. Chemistry is consistent throughout the plant, so you can use fleshy new growth and don't have to dig up and use the roots. It is used for oral and gum issues like canker sores, receding gums, and after dental surgery or mouth injury. Use as a mouthwash or mouth spray. It can also be used in a Sitz bath to relieve pain from hemorrhoids.

**Desert Willow** or Mimbres (*Chilopsis linearis*) is not a true willow. This desert dweller is part of the *Bignoniaceae* family and has thin pencil-like leaves and branches that boast spectacular, fragrant pink to lavender orchid-like blossoms in the late spring and early summer. This drought-deciduous tree is normally found in dry washes and is considered a water indicator plant as its roots go to where the water table is in the driest conditions.





Powdered bark and leaves are a topical first aid for skin conditions, specific for ringworm as a water extract. The leaves and new bark are antifungal, effective in fighting *Candida albicans* and useful in the treatment of "Valley Fever" which is caused by a fungus that grows in the dirt of the desert southwest. When the dust is stirred up by the yearly monsoon season, human and animal alike can inhale the fungus, causing severe and possibly chronic respiratory issues. "Valley Fever" can be addressed with tincture remedies of Chilopsis. Blossoms can be made into tea taken for coughs. Chilopsis is mildly astringent. When using Desert Willow to ward off fungal infection, use a tincture of the new leaves and bark, four dropperfuls, three to four times a day for a month.

**Ocotillo** (*Fouquieria splendens*) is not a cactus, but is a succulent related to the boojum tree. This desert beauty grows from 6 to 20 feet tall, with spiny, wand-like stems that bloom scarlet red tubular flowers on the top of its wands. Ocotillo can live up to 200 years, is drought deciduous, and does photosynthesis in the green bark of its stems. After rains the branches burst into leaves.

Ocotillo assists with conditions such as endometriosis, swellings in the pelvic cavity, fibroids, varicosities of the upper thighs, hemorrhoids, benign cysts and tumors. The blossoms can be used in water extracts and are sweet tasting; they are used for a sore throat or to stimulate menses (making it contraindicated in pregnancy). Flowers can also be used to make a cooling drink, high in Vitamin C, that is safe for children for a springtime beverage. JoAnn shared a drink with us made from ocotillo flowers and hibiscus calyxes. A full body bath of the outer bark will ease muscle aches.

The essence of ocotillo reminds us to respond rather than react, is associated with overcoming stagnation and creates a sense of stillness and confidence.

**Creosote bush or Chaparral** (*Larrea tridentata*) is a prolific shrub to 12 feet tall with foliage that is waxy green with a yellowish hue, turning olive in drought conditions. Creosote is the oldest living species of plant in the world; some are dated older than 11,000 years old in the southwest deserts. The small, waxy leaves reduce transpiration by the plant, making it well adapted to the desert climate. The flowers are yellow and usually show themselves after a good winter rain, making itself known first with a powerful characteristic scent. These blossoms mature into fuzzy round seed pods. The seedpods are not typically used as medicine. Use the leaves; newer leaves for tea, older leaves for tinctures.

Larrea is a powerful anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial, antiviral, antibacterial, antioxidant and antifungal plant. A weak tea in small doses has the ability to treat indigestion, heartburn and low stomach acid. Creosote is most famed for its external applications. Used fresh or dry, topical preparations of fixed oils or salves, ointments and cremes promote healing of cuts and abrasions, can be used with venomous insect bites. Powdered Chaparral is applied directly to wounds and is used as a deodorant agent.

A traditional use by Mexican Curanderas includes hanging a sprig of Chaparral from a bedpost to help process emotions during sleep.



Ocotillo  
Herbarium sheet  
with stem with  
outer bark, inner  
bark, inner pith  
and flowers.

Traditionally the  
inner bark has  
been used fresh  
with alcohol to  
make a tincture  
but other parts of  
the plant have  
medicinal uses  
as well.



## Beautiful Compost Fungi

So many different species of fungi are associated with compost, even in dusty dry Arizona. These beneficial organisms help to decompose high carbon plant materials into soil nutrients that plants can use for growth.

Going down the rabbit hole of fungus hunting, I believe these fungi growing in Pam's composters at Maricopa County Cooperative Extension are a species in the *Marasmius* genus, a large group of fungi with intricate frilled gills.

Fungi photo and write-up by Mike Hills

## March Herbal Workshop: Medicine Making with Lavender

Saturday, March 29, found fifteen herbies gathered at the home of Liz Lonetti for a Lavender Herbal Workshop taught by herbalist Ashley Johnston. We began by taking a look (and sniff!) at several varieties of lavender growing in our Demonstration Garden that Lauren Espinoza brought for display.

Lavender, from the Latin word “lavare” meaning “to wash,” has a history of use over 2,500 years, with roots in the Mediterranean, Middle East and India. Its anti-inflammatory and cooling properties calm irritated skin, reduce redness and alleviate itching, making it beneficial for conditions like eczema, dermatitis and psoriasis. It has antibacterial and antiseptic properties that help fight bacteria, making it useful for wound care. It promotes faster healing of wounds and burns, while also preventing infection, and its antioxidants help protect the skin from damage caused by free radicals. And, lavender’s calming scent helps reduce stress and anxiety.



Ashley fills containers with Lavender Tallow Lotion at the March Herbal Workshop.  
Workshop photos by Sandy Cielaszyk

Ashley demonstrated the making of an infused lavender oil using alcohol (everclear), sunflower seed oil, and ground lavender flowers. The lavender, mixed with the Everclear (to give the finished product a longer shelf life), needed to sit for 12 to 24 hours before the final preparation steps, so Ashley did that step the night before. She also had already bottled some of the infused oil for each attendee to take home.

The nourishing tallow lotion and soothing lavender salve were prepared at the workshop. We talked about the ingredients used and where to obtain them. Ashley emphasized the importance of sourcing organic materials. She also gave suggestions on how to best use the products.



### Lavender Tallow Lotion

1/2 cup tallow  
2 tablespoons mango butter  
2 tablespoons lavender infused oil (or substitute calendula or rose infused oil)

Using the double boiler method, heat the tallow and mango butter until melted.



Mix in the infused lavender oil (or infused oils of your choice, totaling 2 tablespoons).

Once everything is combined, place the glass or metal bowl in the refrigerator and allow the mixture to become firm, but not completely hard.

Using a mixer, beat on medium speed until desired consistency. The longer you mix, it will become whipped. This is a good time to add in essential oils.

A little tallow lotion goes a long way. Apply small amounts at a time, layering your moisturizer. You can use your Tallow Lotion on your body and face. This combination of ingredients can decrease wrinkles, provide some sun protection, and deeply moisturize the skin.

Ashley sources beef tallow from Arizona Soap Supply in Chandler; the mango butter was purchased online.

We all left with a calm demeanor, an informative handout and product samples. Watch for details on the Herbal Workshop planned for Saturday, May 31; you won't want to miss it.





## The Garden Can Multi-task with a Mix of Herbs

By Catherine Crowley, the Herb Lady (posthumous), originally printed in the East Valley Tribune on November 27, 2004

I have written before about using herbs and other edibles in place of some or all of your landscaping gardening decisions. To expand of it, I am including vegetables and fruits to end up with a "multi-tasking" garden that delights eye, nose and palate.



First, let's lay to rest any idea that herbs belong in the hidden section out back, where only the cook can get at them. Form, color, texture, scent and height are usually the considerations when choosing to landscape your garden. All the edibles have these elements, too. Clip this starter list and take it with you when cruising the garden nursery. Once you begin to really see the beauty of herbs and edible flowers, no doubt you will easily add to the list.

**Accent and edging plant:** curly parsley

**Fragrant flowers and foliage:** citrus, jasmine, honeysuckle, natal plum, scented geraniums, lavender, rose, dianthus, nasturtium, lemongrass, tangerine-scented marigold, chamomile

**Colorful and beautiful foliage:** Swiss chard, flowering kale, eggplant, pineapple guava, lavender, purple sage, red rubin basil, Andean silver leaf (*Salvia discolor*), Cretan oregano, scented geraniums, society garlic, variegated African blue basil, bronze fennel, lettuces, Spanish thyme



**Gray/White garden:** lavender, variegated society garlic (bulb, not edible, but the leaves and flowers are – flowers are light purple/lilac in color), sage, Andean silver leaf (leaves beautiful gray/green, except the flowers are almost black), variegated scented geraniums (some have white flowers). Cretan oregano (has a purplish flower), curry plant (has a yellow flower)

**Only white flowers:** oregano, sweet Italian basil, savory, sugar peas, flat leaf garlic chives (onion chives have a mauve flower), elephant garlic (huge flower head)



**Hedges:** citrus, scented geraniums, sage, Andean silver leaf, pineapple guava (interesting bark), rosemary, lavender

**Fernlike:** parsley, cilantro, asparagus, carrots, chamomile, anise, dill, fennel

**Grasslike:** chives, lemongrass, vanilla grass, garlic, onions, day lilies

**Ground covers:** thyme, oregano, marjoram, chamomile, mints

**Warm-weather flowers:** portulaca, sage, marigold, *Tagetes lucida*



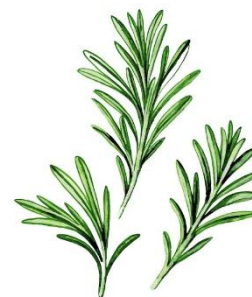
**Perennials with showy flowers:** hyssop, catnip, bachelor button, chrysanthemum, dianthus (pinks, sweet William, carnation), day lily, hibiscus, sages, basil, bee balms, chives, scented geraniums, elephant garlic

**Bulbs or bulblike:** chives (flat, round, onion or garlic – flowers white or mauve, day lilies, tulips, society garlic (only flowers are edible), *Polianthes tuberosa*

**Annuals with showy flower:** mallow malva (some), scented geraniums, dianthus, viola, pansy, Johnny-jump-ups, nasturtium, Thai basil

**Showy landscaping plants:** *Feijoa* (pineapple guava), rose, rosemary, honeysuckle, lavender, pomegranate.

To you and yours, I wish everyone all the best of this holiday season. May it be seasoned with herbs, love, peace and health.



## Nature's Penicillin

Chicken broth  
Fresh ginger root (peel can be left on)  
Fresh cilantro  
Fresh lemon or lime juice

For each cup of broth, measure 1/4-inch slice of ginger root, 1/8 cup of cilantro and 1/8 cup of lemon or lime juice, divided.

Place broth, ginger, cilantro and half of the juice in a pot and bring to simmer. Simmer covered for 10 minutes. Strain, then add remaining juice and enjoy!

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### Inside this Month's Issue:

- Herbalist JoAnn Sanchez, with Samantha Smith, on Desert Medicine
- Herb of the Month: Nastur-YUM with Bernie Arnecke
- A Posh Picnic Culinary Dinner
- Powerful and petite: Carnations by Kathleen McCoy
- March Weed & Feed News

*A society grows great when  
old men plant trees whose  
shade they know they shall  
never sit in.*

*Greek Proverb*