



June 2025

A Publication for Members & Friends

<https://azherb.org/>

Dear Herbies,

By the time you read this, we will be but a few short weeks from "real" summer. If you haven't already, it's time to whip out the shade cloth and adjust your watering system to water more frequently. You can also plant your summer garden. Cowpeas, Armenian cucumbers, melons, yardlong beans, sweet potatoes, sunflowers and more can all be planted in June.

Be sure to attend the June General Membership on June 5 and the Culinary June 7 as neither will occur in July or August. Don't despair - you can still see all your herbie friends at the monthly Weed and Feed. We meet earlier in the summer to avoid the heat. Bring a water bottle (you can fill it at the fountain), hat and sunscreen. This is a buried easter egg to see who actually reads the president's letter. The first person not currently on the board or committees to email me with the thing you like best about herbies, will get five herbie bucks. The garden needs us even more in the summer to provide shade, proper water and tend to our monsoon plants.

Help wanted: We are looking for 1, 2 or 3 people to take over membership, greeting and calendar. It's not a huge job; I have been doing both membership and calendar, while I've been president, but I am stepping off the board next year and want to get someone trained before then. Bernie Arnecke has been doing the greeting, but she is also on Ways and Means. It's a great way to get to know people.

Have a wonderful summer. I eagerly anticipate seeing you all at the general meeting on Thursday, September 4.

If you need me during the summer, I can be reached by email at tjaragaki@gmail.com

You'll find me singing in my garden,

Tammy Aragaki
President



Calendar

June 2025

June 1 to 7: National Garden Week

Thursday, June 5: General Meeting

Topic: Hemp

Speaker: Dr. Ken Sweat

Herb of the Month: Citrus

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/>

Saturday, June 21: Alta Vista Garden Club Tour

What: Tour of five local gardens

Where: Prescott, Arizona

<https://prescott-now.com/event/2025-garden-tour-alta-vista-garden-club/>

Saturday, June 28: Know your A's, Bees, C's

What: Native Bees of the Sonoran Desert

Where: South Mountain Park Visitor Center

Time: 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

<https://www.active.com/phoenix-az/classes/know-your-a-bee-c-s-2025>

July and August 2025

No AHA general meetings

No newsletters

Weed & Feeds continue through the summer;

Dates for Weed & Feed are:

Saturday, July 12 at 7:00 a.m.

Saturday, August 2 at 7:00 a.m.

Wednesday, August 27, 2025; Time: 7:00 p.m. –
Arizona Herb Association Board Meeting.

All members are welcome to attend.

Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85407552525?pwd=cu3YeTKGv1ubOc7wGqInj2ej9E66sc.1>

June General Meeting

Dr. Ken Sweat, a popular and gregarious AHA speaker, returns for our June 5 general meeting to talk about Hemp, a variety of *Cannabis sativa* L. Hemp has broad appeal and use in the medicinal, recreational, industrial and commercial sectors.



Come learn why hemp grown for CBD in Arizona failed miserably! Is it much ado about nothing? Expect to expand your knowledge and understanding!

Dr. Sweat is on the faculty of ASU's west campus and has also taught numerous classes for life-long learners for both the Desert Botanical Garden and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

One of our favorite Herbies, Pam Perry, has chosen Citrus as the Herb of the Month. Bring a notebook and pen and get ready to learn insightful and practical tips on growing citrus plants.



Snacks are always welcomed at our meeting break. If you bring something to share, a recipe or list of ingredients is most helpful to those with dietary concerns. Consider incorporating citrus into your dish this month. Bringing your own plate and utensils is also encouraged.

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

Topic: June AHA General Meeting

Date: Thursday, June 5, 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:

Mari Hastings
Zip Code: 85234

Tracy French
Zip Code: 85086

Tammy Aragaki,
Membership Committee



Accepting Nominations! Let's 'Bee' Great Together

Would you like to be part of the vibrant and committed team that makes the Arizona Herb Association great for Herbies? Do you know someone else who would be perfect for one of the 25 plus positions that keep AHA going? Or maybe you and a friend would like to work together in a position. (We have done this in the past and even had co-Presidents share their position).

We are currently accepting nominations (YES! You may nominate yourself) for board positions and committee positions for the Arizona Herb Association. We meet in person once a year and via Zoom three times a year. Positions vary in time commitment required.

Just send your name, or the name of someone you think would be perfect and what types of positions you/they would prefer to tjaragaki@gmail.com with "nominations" in the subject line. If you have questions about possible positions, catch me at our June meeting, or reach out at the above email.

Remember - Uncle Herb Bee needs YOU!



You'll find me singing in my garden,
Tammy

AHA Scholarship Winners

At our May Salad Supper general meeting, AHA 1st Vice President in charge of programs, Shay Emmers, invited past AHA Jane Haynes Scholarship winners in attendance to share with us how the scholarship helped them in their educational and professional opportunities.

Cambria Dickerson came prepared with a PowerPoint to thank AHA for our "support, belief, and investment" in her journey. "Your contribution helped me plant the roots of a purposeful path I'm proud to walk today."



Photo from
www.luneherbals.com

Cambria was a winner of the AHA Jane Haynes Scholarship in 2022. She attended the Southwest Institute of Healing Arts (SWIHA) and also worked as an Admissions Coach at the school, helping students get enrolled into the Western Herbalism program.

A dedicated herbalist and nutritionist, Cambria now specializes in creating personalized, natural wellness solutions. Her focus on holistic nutrition, custom herbal remedies, exercise, and lifestyle support empowers women facing hormonal imbalances, weight loss challenges, and complex conditions like PCOS, perimenopause, and irregular cycles.

Cambria believes in the power of sustainable daily habits to restore balance, enhance energy, and help women achieve their wellness goals naturally. Her compassionate approach and expertise make her a trusted ally for women seeking long-term health transformations. Check out her website www.luneherbals.com

Two more recent AHA scholarship winners, Brittany Corral and Bobby Evans, have only recently begun their studies. They also thanked AHA for the generous scholarship.

When asked about possible improvements to the program, all commented that, despite being given a year of AHA membership along with the scholarship, they were unable to attend our meetings because of classes on Thursday evenings. A possible change might be to make the gifted membership begin when their studies end.



At our May 1 meeting, Herbies enjoyed our annual Salad Supper, sharing salads and desserts.
Photo by Lee Ann Aronson

2025 Herb of the Year – Chamomile “A Friend to Mankind”

Herbies Peggy Sue Sorensen and Mike Clow shared their research about the Herb of the Year, Chamomile, at our May Salad Supper.



Historical Uses of Chamomile:

A study using mass spectrometry at the University of Barcelona Spain in 2012 found evidence of chamomile in the dental calculus of a 49,000-year-old Neanderthal skull. This study has prompted a new understanding of the Neanderthals' interactions with their environment, specifically their use of plants for sophisticated purposes.

The Ebers Papyrus, an ancient Egyptian document dated to 1550 BCE, references folk remedies using chamomile. Egyptians used chamomile in calming teas and skincare products and North American Indigenous people had 60 uses of chamomile.

Beatrix Potter in The Tale of Peter Rabbit wrote:

“Peter was not very well during the evening. His mother put him to bed, and made some chamomile tea, “One tablespoonful to be taken at bedtime.”



Modern medicine agrees with traditional medicine on the many uses of chamomile.

Types of Chamomile:



German chamomile or *Matricaria recutita*, has branched, smooth stems, erect up to two feet. Its long, narrow leaves are bipinnate or tripinnate,

similar in appearance to carrot leaves. Its composite flower consists of many small individual yellow “disc florets” in the center, with “ray florets” around the

outside - like petals. It spreads by self-seeding and is occasionally found in the wild in Arizona.

Roman chamomile or *Chamaemelum nobile* is a low-growing perennial and a useful ground cover. It grows from rhizomes and has a flower head with a raised, cone-shaped center. Roman chamomile has a scent sweeter than the scent of German Chamomile. It is also considered by some to have medicinal properties superior to those of German Chamomile.



Wild Chamomile or pineapple weed, *Matricaria discoidea*, is native to North America and has no ray petals. It has been used by many indigenous people for a variety of purposes.

How to Grow Chamomile:

Start seeds 8 weeks before planting, in the late summer or early fall. Lightly scatter seeds on a flat of potting soil, and then lightly cover the seeds with vermiculite. This will help keep the soil moist but let in light which is critical for successful germination.

Mist with water often or cover with wrap so they don't dry out. Transplant into decorative pots or into the garden, one foot apart.

How to Harvest Chamomile Flowers:

Harvest when the flowers are fully open and fragrant (before the petals droop). Morning is the best time. Pick by hand or with a “berry picker,” picking only the flowers, not the leaves. Harvest often to keep flowers from going to seed and to extend flower production.



Chamomile flowers have been used through the ages for a calming and soothing tea.

Classic Chamomile Tea

1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon of chamomile flowers
1 cup water

Boil water, remove from heat. Put fresh or dried flowers in the hot water (tea ball optional). Steep 5 to 7 minutes or longer, as desired. Strain and enjoy!



More flowers or a longer steeping time will make a stronger, more bitter tea.

Lavender and Chamomile Tea



1/2 cup fresh chamomile flowers
1/2 cup fresh lavender flowers
1/2 cup apple mint leaves
2 whole lemons - juiced
1/4 cup honey

1. Use a kettle or large pot to boil water. Remove from heat and cool for 1 minute.
2. Add the chamomile flowers, lavender flowers, and mint leaves to a tea ball and infuse in the hot water. Steep for 5 minutes.
3. Remove the tea ball or use a fine mesh sieve to strain loose flowers and leaves.
4. Add lemon juice and honey to hot tea. Serve immediately.

https://senchateabar.com/blogs/blog/how-to-make-chamomile-tea?_pos=3&_sid=aa1c9a688&_ss=

Chamomile was used in beer brewing for centuries in Europe. Gradually, between the 11th and 15th centuries, it was replaced with hops.

Beneficial Compounds in Chamomile:

Apigenin, the main bioactive component of chamomile, is anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and anti-cancer. It reduces cortisol, the stress hormone. It also improves sleep quality and supports cellular health, contributing to anti-aging effects.

36 Flavonoids – antioxidants that protect against heart disease and diabetes

28 Terpenoids - antioxidant, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, anti-allergic, anti-cancer, anti-metastatic, anti-angiogenesis, etc.

Coumarins that help prevent the formation of blood clots.

Chamomile has a very aromatic sweet smell. It has volatile oils which are responsible for its wonderful and beneficial aromatic properties. At the same time, chamomile tastes very bitter. Tea or essential oils made from the entire chamomile plant (not just the flowers) is noticeably bitter. Peggy and Mike provided samples of teas made with the flowers and with the entire plant for us to compare.

Chamomile's usefulness focuses on two main systems of the body – the digestive system and the nervous system. Like ginger, chamomile is a carminative. A cup of chamomile tea, with or after meals, is helpful in preventing or relieving colic, bloating, gas and indigestion.

Chamomile is a nervine sedative due to the flavonoid Apigenin, which soothes and relaxes the entire nervous system and acts as an antispasmodic on the smooth muscles. This, in turn, benefits the digestive system, the autonomic nervous system and the female reproductive system.



For generations, mothers have given chamomile tea to babies for colic and to children to relieve stress and tantrums and to help them fall asleep.

Herbalist Mathew Woods says, "Chamomile is for babies of any age" and is for anyone who is "petulant, quarrelsome, inclined to be angry and out of sorts with everything and everybody."

Chamomile is also a vulnerary herb and can be used to make an oil or a salve for topical use. Its sesquiterpene content gives relief to skin inflammation, irritation and swelling, as from insect bites, sunburn, eczema and psoriasis.

Essential oil derived from the chamomile flowers is blue in color, thus the common name "Blue Chamomile."

For its soothing, calming and healing properties for adults and children, chamomile has indeed been "a friend to all mankind" from ancient times to our modern era.

Banner Photos (left to right): On May 1, at our annual Salad Super meeting, President Tammy Aragaki shared with us that AHA had received an award from Arizona Federated Garden Clubs (AFGC) for being the club having the most new members in one year (80+). We are now 240 herbies strong! Next, tall plantain grows in the Sonoran University of Health Sciences Herb Garden. See Page 9 to learn about it and other healing plants seen on this AHA tour. At center, Herbie Kim Rosenlof is shown in front of the Central District's quilted district banner at the AFGC Regional Convention. Kim was instrumental in planning and running this year's convention. Next, a garden chimera or variegated leaf on the Queen's Wreath vine in our Demo Garden. Mike Hills says we may try to propagate this for future sales. Lastly, baby finch nestlings were observed in one of Pam Perry's "overwintered" tomato plants. Read about other Weed & Feed happenings on page 11.

Photos by Lee Ann Aronson, Debra Mies and Mike Hills

May 2025 Culinary Dinner Parsley, Sage, Rosemary, and Wine!

Saturday, May 10, found 28 Herbies enjoying dinner al fresco, hosted by Donna and Keith Lorch in their beautiful garden. Our theme was Parsley, Sage, Rosemary, and Wine! and everyone was up to the task of creating delicious dishes.



Our May Culinary, "Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Wine!" was hosted by Donna and Keith Lorch.

Culinary photos by Drew Templeton

The starters included Donna Lorch's Melted Brie Appetizer and Todd Templeton's White Bean and Celeriac Fluff with Pita Points

For beverages Teri Thorpe brought wine, Katherine Tarr brought red and white wine, and Henry Harding brought Prosecco.

Everyone got creative with salads! Susan Adamczyk made Summer Corn Salad; Chris and Gary Lueck fixed a spicy Chopped Salad with Spiced Skillet-Roasted Chickpeas; Heidi and Russ Maxson prepared Charlie Bird's Farro Salad; Pam Posten made Parsley Salad (Tabbouleh); and Kathleen and Eli McCoy came with a tasty vegetarian grain-based salad.

Linda Overby baked Roasted Garlic and Herb Bread, while Nancy and Jerry Greenberg made unique Bourbon Pumpkin Bread; and Kathy Eastman made delicious, citrusy Summer Borscht.

Proving how many variations we can come up with for a basic ingredient, Eric Adamczyk grilled Chicken with Chimichurri and Pam Schuler prepared Apricot/Mustard/Rosemary Chicken with Saffron Rice. Mike Hill's sister Louise Lane sent Savory Chicken Thighs and Diane and Chris Knudsen made Chicken Breasts in Creamy Tomato Sauce.

Janet Coleman and Zac Thayer made an incredible Mushroom Bourguignon with Wasabi Potatoes, while Pam Perry prepared Garlic/Rosemary Roasted New Potatoes.

For dessert, we had Mike Hills' Rosemary Rosé Sorbet, Drew Templeton's Pear Prosecco

Sorbet with Lemon Thyme, Donna Lorch's Raspberry Torte with Chocolate Raspberry Sauce, and Elizabeth Trembath-Reichert's two kinds of Almond Cookies with Sage and Rosemary.

What a feast! Top favorites were the Prosecco Pear Sorbet, Mushroom Bourguignon, Summer Corn Salad, and the Summer Borscht.

Please join us on Saturday, June 7, at Drew and Todd Templeton's for an Herbie Baked Potato Party!

Drew Templeton,
AHA Culinary Chair

Prosecco Pear Sorbet with Lemon Thyme



1 bottle Prosecco or sparkling white wine
3 large pears, peeled and cubed
1 cup sugar
2 teaspoons lemon juice
2 large sprigs of lemon thyme

Combine the Prosecco, pears, thyme, and sugar in a pot or large saucepan. Stir over medium heat until the sugar is dissolved.

Bring to a boil and let cook for about a minute, then remove from the heat and let cool. Remove the thyme stems (the leaves have likely come off in your mixture, that's fine).

Once cooled, pour the mixture into a blender, add the lemon juice and blend until smooth. I just use an immersion blender in the pot. Refrigerate until cold. (Tip: to cool fastest, pour mixture into a large Ziplock bag and place in an ice water bath.)

Once cold, pour mixture into a prepared ice cream maker and freeze according to manufacturer's instructions, usually about 20 - 25 minutes.

Prepared by Drew Templeton for the May Culinary



Find the recipe for the **Summer Corn Salad** prepared for the May Culinary made by Susan Adamczyk at

<https://cookieandkate.com/garden-fresh-corn-salad/>

Summer Borscht

This is an edited/alterd recipe from the cookbook 125 Best Vegetarian Slow Cooker Recipes by Judith Finlayson

3-1/2 cups of cubed beets
4 cloves garlic
5 cups enhanced vegetarian broth (I used extra parsley and garlic making the broth)
Salt and pepper to taste
1 tablespoon orange zest (save orange slices for end of cooking)
1 cup frozen cranberries
2 tablespoons sugar
1/2 cup Cabernet (or to taste!) If you prefer a non-alcoholic ingredient, use orange juice.



1. In slow cooker combine beets, garlic, stock, salt, pepper and orange zest and cook until beets are done. (about 5 hours on high)
2. Add cranberries, sugar and wine. Cook on high setting until cranberries pop. (about 1 hour)
3. Allow to cool a bit and use a food processor, stick blender or whatever to purée the soup.
4. Add the saved orange slices.
5. You can eat the soup hot, cold or at room temperature. I included full fat Greek yogurt, chopped parsley and dill for toppings.

Prepared by Kathy Eastman for the May Culinary

Mushroom Bourguignon

1 pound baby portobello and cremini mushrooms
3 carrots
3 large shallots
3 cloves garlic
Coconut oil
Bottle red wine
1-1/2 cups vegetable broth
1 can tomato paste
2 tablespoons flour
1 tablespoon dark soy sauce
3 sprigs of rosemary
6 sprigs of thyme
3 bay leaves
Salt
Black pepper
1 squeeze lemon juice



Peel and slice the carrots. Peel the shallots and chop into pieces. Cut the mushrooms into cubes.

Heat the oil in a medium Dutch oven or casserole on medium-high heat and brown the mushrooms in batches to allow them to brown. Set the mushrooms

aside in a small bowl and season with a good pinch of salt and a few turns of black pepper.

In the same pot, sauté the carrots and shallots in the coconut oil. Add the chopped garlic after 5 minutes. Add the flour and tomato paste and mix well; cook until tomato paste is slightly browned and flour is cooked. Deglaze with red wine and let simmer for 2 minutes.

Pour in the vegetable broth and dark soy sauce. Add thyme, rosemary, bay leaf, salt and pepper. Pour the cooked mushrooms back into the Dutch oven and simmer for 30 minutes on low heat.

Once the mushroom bourguignon has reduced and the sauce has thickened, remove the bay leaves and the stems of rosemary and thyme with a slotted spoon. Add a squeeze of lemon juice to brighten the flavor. Top with chopped parsley, if you wish.

Prepared by Janet Coleman for the May Culinary

Summertime and the *Tecoma stans*

Summertime and the livin' is easy, especially when narrow leaf common yellow bells (*Tecoma stans*) are part of the landscape. At first glance *Tecoma stans* seems to be in every landscape. Popular in the low desert, there are nearly twelve species from North and South America, as well as two others from Africa. In the United States, the American species range from the extreme southern location, including Arizona, to Central America and the Antilles, south to northern Argentina via Andean South America. The yellow bells most attuned to the low desert climate in Arizona and Mexico is *Tecoma stans* var. *angustata*. This hardy drought-tolerant shrub is shorter and more cold-tolerant than other members of its more tropical family (Bignoniaceae).



Tecoma stans
Photo by Lee Ann Aronson

Unlike most native wildflowers, the deciduous yellow bells are a gift that keeps on giving bright buttery looking, trumpet-shaped, 2-inch-long flowers which start as a narrow tube and widen until the delicate petals begin to fold back. These attention-grabbing flowers welcome insects, birds or other

animals to partake in the bounty of nourishment provided, while enhancing the ecosystem in your garden. As a hummingbird magnet, this unevenly formed, fast growing deciduous shrub brings to our

very hot and mostly blossomless summers the promise of food. Bloom time is from late spring to early autumn. The plant also creates thin four-to-six-inch brown pods, another nutrient source for small mammals.

Compound leaves, with two-inch dentated leaflets, grow on stems that can reach up to eight feet tall by six to eight feet wide. Put the plants side by side, accounting for growth at maturity, and now a natural border, barrier, and/or windbreak is established complements of Mother Nature.

Another positive feature of this desert beauty is low maintenance. To ensure the best growth and blooming opportunities, very little water and no fertilizer is needed, although a thirst quencher once or twice a month when the soil becomes dry is a good idea. The preferred soil of the *T. stans* var. *angustata* is neutral alkaline, but the plant grows in almost any type of ground. A bonus is that, once mature, yellow bells are relatively pest free; plus they can be grown in a container.

Yellow bells are not only good for our summer souls, but they also hold medicinal promise for humans. Medicinally active compounds have been identified in the leaves and flowers and, to a lesser degree, in the roots. A method of extraction (decoction) boils the roots, leaves and flowers to gain access to its medicinal properties. The alkaloids and anthranilic acid housed in the leaves are linked to lowering blood sugar levels. In Mexico the plants are primarily used as a remedy for Type 2 diabetes. Traditional medicinal uses of *T. stans* were as a diuretic and to reduce stomach pains. An infusion (tea) made from flowers and leaves, is reported to treat kidney problems, colds, fever, jaundice and headaches.

Flavonoids, well known for providing antioxidants, anti-inflammatory and antibacterial compounds, are another superpower of *T. stans*. As such, a range of health benefits may include reduction of chronic cardiovascular diseases and even improved cognitive ability. Creating a poultice or using a wash from the leaves and flowers has been reported to treat skin infections.

Whatever the purpose of the yellow bells plant, medicinal or aesthetic, the bloom is a bright spot in our summer landscape.

By Kathleen McCoy
Herbie, Master Gardener, Master Naturalist



T. stans flowers, pods and leaves.
Wikipedia creative commons photo by Tau'olunga

Arizona Federated Garden Club & Regional Conventions Wrap Up

By Herbie and Convention Planner Kim Rosenlof



The one-day AFGC convention held at the Wyndham Phoenix Airport/Tempe had about 80 participants (which includes speakers and volunteers) from all AFGC clubs and plant societies except one, plus garden club members and other guests from

Iowa, Georgia, Oregon, California and Idaho. The Pacific Region convention had just over 100 participating, with members from seven of the eight PRGC states (only Hawaii didn't show), plus New Mexico (outside our region), Iowa, and Georgia.

At the regional convention, we had Karen Cesare from Central Arizona Project give a very informative talk about water issues across the Colorado River Basin. One of the most highly-rated presentations was Dyanna Hesson's "Wild at Art" talk on how she obtains photographs for her nature-inspired artwork. We also had a representative from the National Forest Foundation present on the work they are doing with the National Forest Service to help reforest areas hit by drought and wildfires. The foundation has planted millions of trees across the West and Midwest, including tens of thousands here in Arizona.

On display, along with flower arrangements and club displays, were "quilts," the district banners that we display at state conventions (and district meetings) every two years. Each district has a banner (AHA is considered to be in the Central District). The banners were made in the 1960s and have been carefully preserved since then.

The Herbies were well represented at this year's combined conference, including three Herbies who were session presenters: Kim Rosenlof on "A Beginners Guide to Harvesting and Saving Seeds," Lee Ann Aronson on "Wild West Herbal Tea Plants," with sample tastings of two native plants: Chaparral with Honey and Desert Broom teas, and Liz Lonetti on "Low Water Use in Vegetable Gardens" and "Designing with Purpose: Sustainable Landscaping in Action." AHA had a booth selling gloves, seeds, and tote bags. AHA President Tammy Aragaki attended and brought back some interesting insights and an award our club won for having the most new members (80) for 2024/2025; we now have a total of 240 members! The AHA Demonstration Herb Garden Tour on April 29th was very well attended. AFGC was grateful to receive the basket AHA

donated for their fundraiser. Both conventions made a slight profit, which will be split between the state and the clubs, like in 2023. Thank you to all who contributed and we hope to see more Herbies participating in the future.



Herbie Kathy Eastman, pictured left, along with Teri Thorpe and Kathleen McCoy, helped convention visitors know more about our AHA Demonstration Herb Garden. Photo by Teri Thorpe

The 2026 Pacific Region convention will be in Southern California in October 2026 and promises to be a good time. They are taking some cues from our convention with more speakers and workshops (i.e. more to do for the “regular” garden club/plant society member). It will be held at a boutique hotel in Burbank.

The next state convention will be in 2027, and I’m planning that one too. My aim is to hold it in Tucson, but there’s been a movement to keep holding them in the Phoenix area. We will have more information on that in a few months.

A Carpet of Kurapia

Thinking of replacing your grass? Kurapia might be the lush, low-water alternative you’ve been searching for!

Liz Lonetti shares her experience helping a friend swap out bermudagrass for Kurapia, a sterile, broadleaf groundcover (not a



grass!) in the Verbena family, related to lantana. Expert insights from the University of Arizona Extension and local turf guru Mike Hills on growing Kurapia are included.

Read the full article on our Herbie Forum <https://azherb.ning.com/forum/topics/kurapia-a-lush-low-water-lawn-alternative-4-years-later>

Bonus: Native bees love it. Caution: So do bare feet!

Sonoran University of Health Sciences Garden Tour - April 25, 2025

We want to thank Shannon Stapleton and the Sonoran University of Health Sciences for hosting us at the school’s medicinal garden—so well-tended to by gardeners Sanya and Jen who joined us on our tour—and Herbie Teri Thorpe for arranging our visit. Our group of curious AHA members were welcomed with a light breeze and Sanya’s brilliant red infusion of Oat Straw, Holy Basil, Hibiscus, Rose Hips and Honey.

Our tour had us wandering around the garden with joy, learning about plant medicine and stopping to feel, smell and sometimes taste the plants and their flowers.

We began the tour with a night-blooming plant. For some of us, we were just meeting Datura and were enthralled by a few large white blossoms that had yet to close, and the large stems, oh so velvety. Very beautiful and also very toxic, it is dangerous to ingest.



Shannon introduces the group to the Datura plant. Photo by Teri Thorpe

This plant has been used as an asthmatic, but has the power to shut down the bronchodilators. Topically, with guidance and caution, it is a potent anti-inflammatory. Shannon spoke of crushed Datura leaves, mixed with plantain and tobacco, applied to the bite of a Brown Recluse spider. The combination pulled out the venom.

We saw seeds—so many seeds! The delicate and vibrant orange Nasturtium houses large seeds—and they love to populate. Both the seeds and flowers, tangy like horseradish, are used for upper respiratory and sinus issues. Tiny, delicate Cleavers’ seeds, like Velcro, stick to animals and ride to a new location—making this plant very prolific in the garden. And that is a good thing! For a Spring detox, you can gather the fresh cleavers plant and juice it for a great lymphatic cleanse. Milk Thistle, a tall plant in the aster family, has showy, large purple flowers. While it can be invasive in the garden, many of us can benefit from the silymarin in the seeds--a well-known liver support. How fun to meet the flax seeds in the small spiral garden and not just grocery store packages.

And what about Castor Oil seeds—housed in the once soft, spikey and surprising red blossoming pods on the shade-giving tree. Inside the pods are large, hard-skinned seeds, near twins for pinto beans and poisonous, but home for the beloved castor oil—thick and warming. Nourishing at a deep, cellular level for inflammation, the oil is supportive for abdominal and menstrual issues, and for arthritis. As an antifungal and anti-bacterial, it is a salve maker's friend and commonly used in castor oil packs.

Big hairy leaves? That's Comfrey. With a deep root system, comfrey pulls nutrients from the richer soil below into its leaves. Shannon warned of its pyrrolizidine alkaloids, which can be harmful if you are not educated about taking them internally. These prized nutrients have been loved over the ages for healing bones and earned comfrey the common name, "Knit Bone." Historically, poultices of leaves and roots have been used to treat sprains and broken bones.

Shannon spoke of using comfrey to treat her broken arm, while navigating naysayers with five warnings that she would likely need surgery. After a few weeks, her doctors were amazed at her progress and she healed without needing the surgery. After experiencing a personal relationship with comfrey and having success healing her broken arm, she is comfortable helping others with broken bones. Comfrey has a gift that keeps on giving! As comfrey wanes, you can make liquid compost to share her prized nutrients with other garden plants.

Horsetail, the tall, jointed garden plant, is also a friend to bones with its constituent of silica. This may be one of the oldest plants in the garden, as, once the size of redwood trees, it

Horsetail and hollyhock create a semi-privacy screen.
Photo by Shay Emmers



shared the land with dinosaurs. Imagine the earth during that time—350 million years ago. A big "ouch" when dinosaurs roamed over plants. The historic nature of horsetail remains in the form of petroleum deposits, which, according to Shannon's botany teacher, contain decomposed horsetail. That was a "garden wow." Horsetail can be abrasive, so is best made as an infusion.

A plant with infamous leaves that sting is Nettles. One of the top nutritive plants with minerals galore, it

is helpful as a diuretic and so is a great Spring tonic. The seeds are also used for kidney medicine. Housed in a bed in front of the horsetail, it looks ordinary enough, but touch it and you may let out a yelp in pain from the sharp hairs on the leaves. "No pain, no gain," is true for those that swear by nettles treatment directly to the skin for arthritis. Shannon spoke of her Grandmother walking in fields of nettles for her ankle arthritis. Others, with a more timid approach, juice the nettles to remove the sting. A very drying herb, so Shannon likes to combine with more moistening plants, like Oatstraw.

You can smell the medicine in the leaves of Yerba Mansa, curiously with the fragrance of rose growing above it here—positioned so water from the roses finds its way to the yerba mansa. Shannon spoke of the Yerba Mansa Project to heal biodiversity. Like many other plants, yerba mansa is used to pull toxins out of the soil. (A warning to be mindful when harvesting plants. Shannon suggested harvesting a distance of 50 feet from a road or ditch.)



Yerba Mansa

To rival yerba mansa was the smell of Ashwagandha leaves, which smell like a horse! Sanya spoke of her son who is an athlete and liked ashwagandha—it gave him the stamina of a horse. Ashwagandha's medicine is in the roots and the plant is an adaptogen. Shannon explained, "The adaptogenic medicinal property is omni-directional, so it gives the body what it needs and is beneficial over time." Harvesting ashwagandha is typically done in the second or third year to allow the roots to mature. Small plant. Big medicine.

Tulsi Basil leaves surprised us—soft and spicy even though the plant is calming, but not a sedative. Tulsi has a spiritual essence. A good companion for times of grief or heartache. Silvery Artemisia loves her leaves and offers them as a cooling bitter to expel worms. Nice for making a smudge bundle too.



A thriving carpet of plantain
Photo by Shay Emmers

Looking at our feet, Plantain is low to the ground with tall, slim seedpods. This first-aid plant is up for grabs for calming outdoor insect bites and pulling out toxins; chew and apply. The carpet of small, hearty plantain seemed endless, a prize for this year's garden. In the distance we could see much larger and taller plantain by the garden wall. Shannon reminded us that plantain seeds are the very mucilaginous psyllium

seeds, beneficial for the digestive tract and healing leaky gut. Plantain is known as “White man’s footprint,” with the seeds following pioneers settling across the country.

As elders of the garden, the Olive trees are the oldest on the property. They were there before the school began in 1993. As the trees age, hollowed columns form—a perfect home for beehives.

We met other plants like the Artichoke, sadly no longer in glorious bloom; California Poppy and Lemon Balm and Lemon Verbena. In the far garden, Borage bloomed blue, beautiful with its star shaped, edible flowers with a distinct flavor that some say is like cucumbers. In the flower essence tradition, it is a heart remedy for heavy-heartedness or grief, used to instill courage and optimism. Can we please add this flower essence to our public drinking water?

With a heartfelt presence, Shannon shared her love for the flourishing garden, “Plants remind me how to be human.” She ended our tour with Milky Oats—one of her favorite plant allies. “Milky oats (especially the oat tops) is an herbal adaptogen,” she explained. “Our body has a complex electrical system and milky oats helps with the insulation for our ‘wiring’ and improves our nervous system, creating more calm.”

“Plants help us take care of ourselves. As a result, we show up better in the world. I know when I show up better for myself, I can show up better for others.”

After the tour, a walk into the herb processing room was magical—memories of harvests past with rows of jars with dried herbs, herbs drying on hand-crafted wooden drying shelves, and a cabinet full of tinctures made by Sonoran University herb students.

A big thanks to Shannon for sharing her soulful plant wisdom and for sharing some of the garden’s harvest with us to take home. Thank you to Sanya for the tasty pickles, sandwiches, and fruit tray—so beautifully presented!

Article by Herbie Debra Mies

Warning: Plant medicine has great value, but not every plant is appropriate for everyone. Please consult a healthcare professional before using herbal supplements, especially if pregnant or nursing, or if you have an existing medical condition.

Resources for Medicine Making:

James Green, Herbalist, *The Herbal Medicine Makers Handbook, A Home Manual*
Susan Clearwater, Holistic Nurse and Clinical Herbalist, *The Art of Herbal Healing*

Weed & Feed Saturday, May 3, 2025

Our Weed & Feed morning in the AHA Demo Garden started nicely cool for early May, as our 25+ Master Gardener and Herbie volunteers showed up, ready to work. After a brief instructional session on what to expect in your garden this month, we split into teams to accomplish many projects.

George Reconco and I thinned the sprouts on the pollarded Moringa tree, to give Pam Perry some good choices for branches to be left for the tree’s 2025 growing season. This tree tolerates hard pruning, and we like to manage its size and keep it lower so our demonstration garden visitors can admire the blooms and taste the leaves.

A group of volunteers were put to work harvesting the many seeds that were ripening with our warm-hot-cool-hot spring temperatures. These included the last of the sweet peas and chamomile, plus dill, passion vine, desert senna, globe mallow and others. Other volunteers worked on cleaning seeds that were harvested in earlier months, reducing the bulk on these fully ripe seeds so they can be packaged for future sales events. Other helpers pulled weeds, trimmed overgrown rosemary plants, and removed dead sunflowers that had finished feeding the local finches and lovebirds.

We admired some freshly hatched finches in one of Pam’s over-wintered tomato plants and the beautiful clear blue blooms of the TWEEDIA plants (*Oxypetalum coeruleum*). This is an unusual color for Arizona gardeners. The blooms turn pale purple as they age.



The blue Tweedia plant flowers in the Demo Garden, along with ornamental carrots and Black-Eyed Susans. Photo by Pam Perry

Tweedia is a pollinator plant and butterfly larval host plant from Brazil and Uruguay in the Milkweed family. In North American gardens, monarch and queen butterfly caterpillars have used it when other more preferred milkweeds are not available. The nectar is collected by many butterflies and moths, as well as native bees, honeybees and hummingbirds. They are forming seedpods from which we will collect seed and see about propagating plants to sell at future AHA events.

Teri Thorpe and John Barkley pulled some volunteers to help tie up the rapidly growing queen's wreath, as it explodes with growth in the warming spring temperatures and starts to bloom for our pollinator friends. This is a great vine to cover a large area or screen out the neighbors in summer.

Missing our captain Pam Perry (recovering from travels in Australia), we nonetheless enjoyed a great day of gardening and making new friends, as the birds chirped, the lizards ran, and the butterflies and many species of bees rambled around our great herb and pollinator garden.

As we wrapped up prior to our break, Maureen helped me double check for irrigation leaks and we had a lucky day...NO breaks! Maureen took this opportunity to share some irrigation system tips with our volunteers, tips that she has learned hands-on in our demonstration garden. Several of us sat in the air conditioning, sharing information about our own gardens and enjoying some hummus with naan and chips, plus some fruit, before we called it a day.

Please join us on **Saturday, June 7, from 7:00 a.m. to noon**, when we will have the annual hollyhock toppling in the demo garden. Anyone with chickens can take home the extra seeds to feed their birds, and volunteers can also take seeds home to plant. Hollyhock seeds planted this summer will sprout and establish, growing toward first bloom next January through May. Come enjoy the garden and be apart of fun and sharing!

Thank you,
Mike Hills, Past President
Demonstration Garden Co-Captain

A Follow-up from Pam Perry

I returned on Tuesday after the May Weed & Feed to find the demo garden exploding with flowers! Coreopsis and Gaillardia were glorious; sunflowers never quit. The *Oxypetulum ceruleum*, aka Tweedia, gleaned at the Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale, had wonderful little blue flowers and a seed pod! The caper is recovering from winter and

is spectacular early in the morning with bees aplenty!

That funny, shabby, old vinca still blooms on the south side; the lippia on the trellis was in its glory. The morning flowers of the native hibiscus popped as day broke, and the yellow violas have recovered from bird damage and were blooming bright yellow finally. Rosemaries bloom, in shades of blue and pink; the chaste tree flowers, and the *Poliomenantha* under the chaste tree is flowering along with elderberry and milkweeds. What a welcome it was!



The Demo Garden exploded with color.
Photo by Pam Perry

Those ornamental carrots, all from one plant purchased years ago, thread their way through the garden in colors ranging from burgundy to white, and keep bees and beneficial predatory insects happy. They are great cut flowers as well. The dwarf myrtle is covered with blooms, as are the pomegranates. Even the hollyhocks have gone into May looking better than they have in other years. Just WOW: such a spring we had this year!

Pam Perry, Past President
Demonstration Garden Co-Captain



Shannon Stapleton, Mike Hills, Katie Sharp, Chris George and Teri Thorpe (above) and many other guests toured our demo garden before our May Salad Supper began.
Photo by Lee Ann Aronson

Papalo – Heat Loving Cilantro Alternative

(This is an excerpt from an article written by Stephen Scott of Terroir Seeds and is reprinted with permission). Read the entire article at:

<https://underwoodgardens.com/papalo-heat-loving-cilantro-alternative/>



Papalo is a fabulous, but still relatively unknown, ancient Mexican herb you should be growing. A heat-loving alternative to cilantro, its flavors are both bolder and more complex. It has been described by some as somewhere between arugula, cilantro and rue; others say it tastes like a mixture of nasturtium flowers, lime, and cilantro. Younger leaves are milder flavored, gaining pungency and complexity as they mature.

Papalo (PAH-pa-low) is known by many names; Yerba Porosa, Killi, Papaloquelite and broadleaf in English. It is a member of the informal quelites (key-LEE-tays), the semi-wild greens rich in vitamins and nutrients that grow among the fields in central and South America. These green edible plants grow without having to plant them. They sprout with the first rains or field irrigation, often providing a second or third harvest, costing no additional work, but giving food and nutrition.

Other quelites include lamb's quarters, amaranth, quinoa, purslane, epazote and Mache or corn salad.

Papalo pre-dates the introduction of cilantro to Mexico by several thousand years, which is a very interesting story all by itself. South America is thought to be the ancestral home of papalo.

Cilantro is also known as Chinese parsley and was brought to Mexico in the 1500s by Chinese workers in the Spanish silver mines of southern Mexico and South America. Spain had a huge trade industry with China, exchanging silver from America for china, porcelain and various drugs – opium and hashish among them. They also imported many Chinese workers for the silver mines, as European diseases had decimated the native population, which had no immunity. The Chinese workers brought along foods, herbs and spices which were familiar to them, so cilantro came to the Americas.

Papalo is sometimes called “summer cilantro” due to its heat-loving character and its delay in bolting and setting seed until late summer or early fall.

The name Papalo originates with the Nahuatl word for butterfly, and Papaloquelite is said to mean butterfly leaf. The flowers provide nectar to feeding butterflies, while also attracting bees and other pollinators with their pollen.



A fully mature papalo leaf in good growing conditions looks like this – a moderately deep, rich green with oil glands distributed across each leaf. Those glands produce a fragrance which repels insects from eating its leaves. The leaves have a medium thickness to them with a fairly substantial feel. They don't feel delicate like some vegetable leaves, but aren't thick and succulent either.

Touching them will release some of the aromatic oils, so you should be able to immediately experience their singularly unique aroma, even from an arm's length away. This is the same with organically grown or home-grown cilantro – the aroma will be much more pronounced.



Papalo seeds look much like dandelion seeds, with the stalk and “umbrella” to help carry them on the wind to their new home. When harvesting seeds to save, make sure to clip the seed head after it has fully matured and begun to dry, but before it is completely

dry. Otherwise, you will go out to the garden to collect seeds to find it has all blown away!

In restaurants in the state of Puebla in Mexico, it's common to find a sprig of papalo in a glass jar of water on the table, next to the salt, pepper and salsas — ready to be added raw to soups, tacos, tortas or beans. The diners will take off a leaf or two and tear it up finely before sprinkling it over their meal.

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Inside this Month's Issue:

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- Yellow Bells by Kathleen McCoy
- Sonoran University of Health Sciences Herb Garden Tour
- AFGC Convention Wrap Up
- May Weed & Feed News

*Never underestimate the
healing power of a quiet
moment in the garden.*