



December 2025/January 2026 A Publication for Members & Friends <https://azherb.org>

A Season of Giving!

Happy 2026 New Year Herbies! What a spectacular floral color show this time of year! Cooler nights and light sweater weather days remind us of the joys of living in the Valley of the Sun in fall and winter. As my Arizona Ash and Chinese Elm trees are now dropping leaves faster than I can rake them into a pile, I recognize this season of change from autumn to winter is akin to a *season of giving*.

As daylight strains to break 13 hours before the sun sets, we are mindful of the natural seasons of life – including ours. As we gather with family and friends over this holiday season, let us reflect and give thanks to our predecessors at Arizona Herb Association. We thank you Tammy Aragaki for leading us this past year as our president. We appreciate you and your devotion! We thank the volunteering efforts of our current and former officers, board of directors, committee chairs, and all other Herbie volunteers over this past year and in years past. There is no “I” in team – it takes all of us to carry the organization forward.

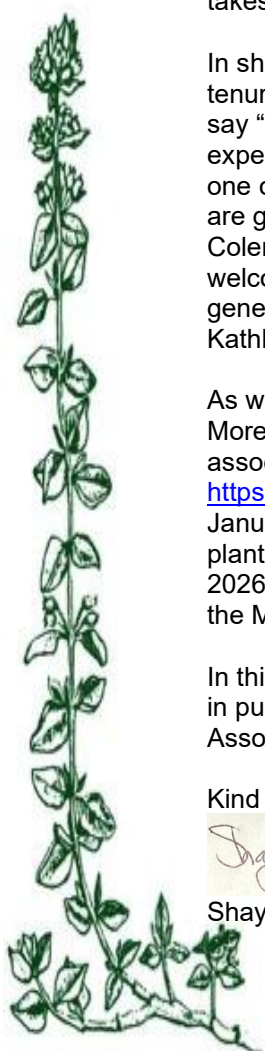
In short, the heritage of AHA is quite remarkable! Myriad volunteering hours from tenured to new members alike comprise our association. To our new members, we say “welcome.” To our tenured Herbies, we say “welcome back.” Did you get to experience this December’s holiday party? What a pleasure to meet Marge Bayless, one of our charter members, at our party. We sang “Happy Birthday” to her and we are grateful that she attended the AHA celebration. Jessica White and Janet Coleman provided a festive, warm feel to our party with exquisite decorations, and a welcoming spirit of “so glad you could make it to the party.” Kathleen McCoy generously provided her own handmade pottery for the silent auction. We thank Kathleen for her kindness.

As we look ahead to 2026, we start the new year with January’s speaker Jenn Moreland – President of Arizona Federation of Garden Clubs. Her challenge to our association is “Conservation is Key!” Check out the website <https://azgardenclubs.com/> and familiarize yourself with the charge at hand. For January’s Herb of the Month, I will do a short presentation on *Viola tricolor*, an edible plant. We thank Liz Lonetti for graciously accepting the role of VP of Programs in 2026. She will be working with Alisha O’Hara, who has accepted the role of Herb of the Month Coordinator.

In this season of giving, as we draw a close to the last few weeks of 2025, let’s unite in purpose and calling as we continue to serve each other and the Arizona Herb Association. Greatness awaits. *Carpe diem*.

Kind regards,

Shay Emmers – 2026 AHA President



And, from Past AHA President, Tammy Aragaki:

Dear Herbies,

I love the new year! I love fresh starts, but I also love reflecting on the past: what we've achieved, what we've learned, the laughter, friendships and good food we've shared, as well as the growth we've witnessed in our gardens, our club, and each other. It has been such an honor to serve alongside each of you and to watch our club flourish through every season.

Over the past year we've grown, not only in numbers, but also in spirit, collaboration, and purpose. We've educated the public and given them a place to learn more. We've helped others achieve a formal education so they can share their knowledge and skills with our community. We have learned so much about so many herbs and how they can nourish us, heal us, feed us and delight us. Each experience has reinforced my belief in the strength and potential of our community.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our officers, committee chairs, and each of you who contributed your time, ideas, and enthusiasm. You have my sincere gratitude.

As I pass the trowel to Shay Emmers, I'm filled with confidence in the bright future ahead. She brings fresh vision, energy, and commitment that will surely take the club to even greater heights. I encourage you all to continue showing the same passion and teamwork that define Herbies.

Though my term is ending, my support for this club will continue. I look forward to cheering you on and staying involved in the exciting things to come.

You'll find me singing in my garden,



Tammy Aragaki
2025 Past President, Arizona Herb Association



Photo Banner Page 1 Top: Cheers! our December Holiday Party from left to right: Kathy Eastman, Poinsettia, Drew's Mocktail "The Grinch's Delight", Drew Templeton and Chris George. Photos by Lee Ann Aronson

Photo Banner Page 1 Side Panel: Colorful plants, herbs and flowers in President Shay Emmer's garden.

Photo Banner Page 2 Below: from left to right, more holiday cheer: herbies tasting mocktails, we celebrate founding member Marge Bayless' birthday, Pam Shuler, Eric and Susan Adamczyk and Jordan Stejskal. Photos by Drew Templeton



Calendar

January 2026



Saturday, January 3: Weed & Feed
Time: 8:00 a.m.

Thursday, January 8: General Meeting
Location: MCC Extension; Time: 7:00 p.m.
Topic: "Conservation is Key"
Speaker: Jenn Moreland – President of Arizona Federation of Garden Clubs
Herb of the Month: *Viola tricolor*
Presenter: Shay Emmers

Saturday, January 24: Culinary Event
Hosts: Liz and Dan Lonetti
Theme: Recipes for Must-have American Dishes
Details & Sign-up at <https://azherb.org>

Sat-Sun, Jan 24-25: Tempe Blooms
Location: Downtown Tempe
(multiple blocks with floral displays, vendors, artists, and music)
Time: 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
<https://www.downtowntempe.com/events/tempe-blooms>

Saturday, January 31: Exploring Among Saguaros
Location: Fountain Hills Botanical Garden
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
More details on page 4

February 2026

Thursday, February 5: General Meeting
Location: MCC Extension; Time: 7:00 p.m.
Topic: Provisions, Pleasures and Poisons of the Sonoran Desert
Speaker: Dr. Ken Sweat of ASU
Herb of the Month: TBA
Presenter: TBA

Saturday, February 7: Weed & Feed
Time: 8:00 a.m.
Come learn hands-on in the Demo Garden!

Sunday, February 21: All Things Tomato Clinic
Location: MCC Extension, 4341 E Broadway Rd.
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Watch for more details!

Saturday, February 21: Culinary Event
Theme: A Taste of India
Hosts: Diane and Chris Knudsen
Details & Sign-up at <https://azherb.org>



January General Meeting

Welcome back all to our next AHA general meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 8, 2026. Join us when Jennifer Moreland, President of the Arizona Federation of Garden Clubs, presents on "Conservation is Key." As we set our sights on the New Year ahead, come hear how your gardening efforts can make a better world.
<https://azgardenclubs.com/conservation-is-key/>



The Herb of the Month will be presented by our new President Shay Emmers. She will discuss Tricolor Violas and their uses.



Bring your enthusiasm, a friend, and some food to share at our meeting break. A recipe or list of ingredients is most helpful to those with dietary concerns. **A reminder to please bring your own plate and utensils. Pack them up now so you don't forget.**

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

Meeting begins promptly at 7:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89614120282?pwd=9LqbZaDqWyzla5pwjFRaCeDxJ9l3zr.1>

Meeting ID: 896 1412 0282
Passcode: 311908

Welcome New (and Returning) AHA Members:

Oddessy Allen
Zip Code: 85029

Sasha Nichole Foster
Zip Code: 85040

Gladys and Phillip Baldwin
Zip Code: 85392

Joseph Fercho
Zip Code: 85041

Mike and Christine Smith
Zip Code: 85118

Eliz Linser
Zip Code: 85204

Diane Knudsen, Membership Chair



AHA 2026 Officers, Board Members and Chairpersons

President	Shay Emmers
President Elect	New position OPEN
1st VP – Programs	Liz Lonetti
2nd VP – Ways and Means	Katherine Tarr and Lauren Espinoza
Treasurer	Chris George
Secretary	Janet Coleman
Asst. Sec./Treasurer	Pending bylaws revision
Tours	Teri Thorpe
Herb of the Month	Alisha O'Hara
Workshops	OPEN
Fundraising Events (formerly Festivals)	Bernie Arnecke, Assistant
Board Member at Large (& AZFGC Liaison)	Kim Rosenlof
Board Member at Large	Rachel Diamant
Master Gardener Liaison	Maureen Tonn
Scholarships	Michele Spiller
Marketing	OPEN
Membership	Diane Knudsen
Culinary	Drew Templeton
Demonstration Garden	Mike Hills and Pam Perry
Webmaster	Tammy Aragaki
Newsletter	Lee Ann Aronson and Sandy Cielaszyk
Social Media Facebook	Mike Hills and Lee Ann Aronson
Historian	OPEN
Holiday Party	Janet Coleman
Meeting Refreshments	Janet Coleman
Demo Garden	Donna Lorch, Chair of
Signage/Name Badges	so many details

Exploring Among Saguaros Plant Walk

Did you know that the Sonoran Conservancy of Fountain Hills has an events calendar which



includes activities that take place at the Fountain Hills Botanical Garden – started by our own Jane Haynes (and daughter Pat)? Visit the Conservancy website <https://www.scfh.org/> and check the listings under “events.” You will need to create an account with the town of Fountain Hills to register for any of the hikes or programs, but all are free. (Thanks to Teri Thorpe for this information.)

Herb of the Month: Matcha Tea

By Timorie Coleman



<https://recipes.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/how-to-ferment-matcha-tea-1704603569.jpg>

Our November Herb of the Month was Matcha and Timorie Coleman gave us information on what it is, how it is grown, and its possible health benefits.

Powdered tea is generally believed to have been introduced to Japan in 1191 by the Zen monk Eisai, who brought it from the Song dynasty in China along with tea seeds. He authored the Kissa Yōjōki (Book of Drinking Tea for Health). The Kissa Yōjōki describes the methods of tea preparation Eisai observed during his time in the Song dynasty.

At the time, tea was regarded as a form of medicine. According to the text, tea leaves were plucked in the morning, steamed immediately, and then placed on a roasting rack to be left overnight. Modern matcha production omits the long roasting process, apart from drying for approximately 30 minutes.

The tea plant used for matcha is *Camellia sinensis*, called “cha no ki” in Japanese, and is known for its vivid green color and a balance of sweetness, umami and bitterness. Botanically, it is a perennial evergreen tree from the Camellia plant family. It has white petals with yellow stamens, and one to three flowers bloom on the new stems grown that year. In Japan, it blooms from August to December, and its fruit ripens around September of the following year.

There are different varieties of *Camellia sinensis*, primarily categorized into the “Chinese variety” and the “Assam variety.” The Assam variety prefers warm climates and is weak against cold, whereas the Chinese variety is said to be more cold-resistant. The Chinese variety is a small shrub with leaves about five centimeters long. It has excellent cold resistance and can be cultivated even in regions where winters freeze. It contains relatively low levels of catechins, which are compounds that bring bitterness and astringency. Its enzyme activity is

also weak, making it less prone to oxidation, so it is suitable for green tea.

The Assam variety, as represented by the Assam region in India, is grown in warm regions. It is a tall tree, with leaves that can reach 20 centimeters in length. It has weak cold resistance, so it can only be cultivated in frost-free areas. Since it has high catechin content and strong enzyme activity, it ferments easily, making it suitable for black tea. Its vigorous growth and large leaves result in high yields. In addition to Assam, it is cultivated in lowland areas of Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Kenya, which are major black tea producing regions.

Matcha is one of Japan's most representative teas. While cultivated alongside the traditional Japanese tea ceremony, the tea plant used as the raw material for matcha is the same *Camellia sinensis* used for other Japanese green teas, such as Gyokuro, Tencha, deep-steamed Sencha, Kabusecha and Bancha. Even brown colored Hojicha is made from the leaves of *Camellia sinensis*. In fact, it is not just Japanese tea. Oolong tea, black tea and Pu-erh tea also use the leaves of *Camellia sinensis*.

Although the raw material is the same, the appearance, taste and aroma differ significantly due to variations in cultivation methods and how the harvested tea leaves are processed. For example, Japanese green tea is brown as non-fermented tea because the harvested tea leaves are treated as quickly as possible to stop enzyme activity. Oolong tea is classified as semi-fermented tea because the oxidation of enzymes is partially allowed before the tea leaves are heated to halt the process. Black tea, on the other hand, is called fermented tea because the enzyme activity is fully allowed to occur before heating the tea leaves to stop it. Additionally, there are post-fermented teas, like China's Pu-erh tea, which are fermented using microorganisms.



https://sweetrevolution.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/AIYA_-_growing_matcha_under_cover-scaled.jp

Matcha is made from a high-grade Japanese green tea called Tencha, which is cultivated and processed from the Chinese variety of *Camellia sinensis* using special methods. The harvested leaves are processed directly without altering their shape. The processing methods and leaf structure differ from other green teas, like Gyokuro or Sancha. The stems and leaf veins are removed from Tencha, and the leaves are finely ground into powder using a stone mill. This fine powdered tea is what we call matcha. Matcha is a tea that allows you to enjoy the full flavor of Tencha by consuming the entire leaf.

While many Japanese teas are made from tea leaves grown in open fields, tencha is not cultivated in direct sunlight. Instead, the entire tea garden is covered using materials such as reed screens, straw or shading nets. This cultivation method is called shaded cultivation. The primary purpose of shading the tea garden is to improve the quality of the tea. Specifically, the entire field is covered for over 20 days after the new buds begin to sprout, preventing direct sunlight from reaching the leaves. *Camellia sinensis* can grow without direct sunlight.

By blocking sunlight, the amount of amino acids like theanine in the leaves increases, and the leaves become soft with higher moisture content and less fiber. Shaded cultivation not only blocks sunlight, but also protects plants from frost and keeps them warm. Shading suppresses photosynthesis, which slows down the growth of the new shoots – an important aspect of this cultivation method.

After harvesting, the leaves are immediately steamed to prevent oxidation. After steaming, the leaves are dried using a special drying machine for tencha and then packed into bags called taikai for distribution. During the production of tencha, the leaves are not rolled at all. This is to make it easier to remove stems and other parts that are difficult to grind into fine powder for matcha.

The first step in processing tencha into matcha is to remove the hard leaves, stems and veins to improve the quality of the matcha. The remaining leaves are cut into smaller pieces, about five millimeters in size, and slowly dried at low temperatures. After this, the leaves are slowly ground using stone mills, which rotate at a consistent speed in a room where temperature and humidity are carefully controlled. Grinding slowly ensures that the frictional heat from the stone mill enhances the tea's flavor.



Timorie Coleman

Matcha taste profile:

Grassy and vegetal: A fresh, green taste similar to other teas, but more concentrated.

Earthy: A damp, natural flavor, sometimes with a seaweed-like umami note.

Slightly sweet: High quality matcha has a natural, pleasant sweetness.

Pleasant bitterness: The bitterness is mild and balances in good quality matcha, but can become prominent in lower grade varieties.

Buttery smoothness: The texture can be smooth and frothy, especially in a well-prepared latte.

Culinary grade matcha is bolder and often more bitter. It is designed for use in recipes.

How to make matcha tea: Whisk the tea with hot water to create a smooth, frothy drink. Adding milk and sweeteners can soften the taste.

Throughout the 20th century, matcha remained central to the practice of the Japanese tea ceremony, preserved by major tea schools such as Urasenke and Omotesenke. Recently matcha has seen a growing international popularity as a health food. As demand grows, concerns have also emerged about maintaining quality standards and ensuring the authenticity of Japanese matcha.

The public and private sectors are working to preserve traditional production methods and promote environmentally sustainable cultivation practices. In recent years, some Kyoto-based tea companies have implemented purchase limits on premium matcha due to supply constraints, particularly of first-flush matcha, which was historically reserved for tea ceremonies, but is now widely consumed overseas.

Factors helpful for growing matcha include a subtropical climate, average temperatures between 57 and 60 degrees F, wet growing seasons, and stable rainfall with a yearly average of 1399 mm or more. Also important are soil that has good drainage, ventilation, and the ability to retain water with a pH of 4 or 5. Plants should be shaded for weeks before plucking leaves.

Benefits of Matcha:

Matcha decreases stress and anxiety, improves memory and improves both short and long term cognitive function in humans, while having no effect on mood.

Studies on mice showed that matcha enhanced spatial learning and upregulated Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF), an insulin-

degrading enzyme leading to reduced neuroinflammation.

Matcha improves lipid profile and glucose metabolism, reduces inflammation and results in lower weight gain due to high fat diet in mice.

In vitro studies showed the anti-tumor effect of matcha by reducing viability, mitochondrial metabolism, ATP production and oxygen consumption of breast cancer cells by disrupting cell cycle regulation and interleukin signaling.

Generally, matcha contains 10 to 44 mg of caffeine per gram. A typical serving of matcha is between 2 and 4 grams (1/2 to 1 teaspoon), which would then contain anywhere between 38 to 176 mg of caffeine. For reference, coffee beans have 10 to 12 mg of caffeine per gram.

Thin Matcha: (Matcha Stand Maruni)

Pros – Simple, pure matcha flavor, can be made with just matcha powder and hot water, great for focus,

Cons – Flavor is strong and can be bitter if not prepared correctly.

Thick Matcha (Koicha)

Pros – Rich, intense flavor and very smooth texture,

Cons – Uses a larger amount of matcha and less water, making it a thicker, more potent drink.

Matcha Latte

Pros – Creamy texture from milk, can be served hot or cold. Pairs well with various sweeteners.

Cons – Calories from milk and sugar can add up.

Iced Matcha:

Pros – Refreshing, can be customized with milk, water or lemonade

Cons – Can lose some of the frothy texture compared to hot preparations.

Matcha Smoothie:

Pros – Incorporates fruit for extra flavor and nutrients, can be a meal replacement.

Cons – Requires a blender and extra ingredients for a bright and refreshing drink.

Matcha Lemonade:

Pros – Combines matcha with citrus flavors for a zesty and refreshing drink

Cons – The strong citrus flavor may not appeal to everyone.

Real matcha is expensive because a lot of work goes into growing and processing it. Timorie said that while culinary matcha is fine for baking, we should seek out ceremonial matcha for making tea to discover why this special form of green tea is held in such high regard.



Wild, Native Tea Plants

By Lee Ann Aronson

At our November meeting we heard from Herbie and Master Gardener Lee Ann Aronson on the merits of using native plants for making tea. She also talked about the many adaptations that our Sonoran Desert plants use to thrive in their harsh environment, where they must survive our extreme temperatures, alkaline soils, very little rain and low humidity.



Tea is the most widely consumed beverage on earth. We humans find it not only thirst quenching, but we also enjoy teas for their soothing, healthful and medicinal qualities. The native Desert Marigold, *Baileya multiradiata*, for instance, blooms here from March through the summer months, and a tea may be made from the leaves, stems and flowers and taken for its calming effect. So, while life can be complicated, tea can be something simple, soothing and special that we can use to counteract the stress of our day.

Some of the adaptations that make native plants able to share their healthful properties with us include:

--Ways to prevent moisture loss, like the resinous coating on the Creosote bush leaves, *Larrea tridentate*. This resin gives off the fresh smell we recognize after a rain.



The waxy leaves of Jojoba also stand upright; two ways to minimize sun exposure and moisture loss.

--Unique ways to gather water, including the long tap root of the mesquite tree and the large network of roots up to 100' long and 12" deep of each saguaro. Saguaro roots wick up rain quickly before it runs off.

--Unique ways to store water, including the tuberous roots of the Arizona Queen of the Night (*Peniocereus greggii*)

--Sun protection provided by hairs or needles, small leaves, and processes like innovative CAM photosynthesis where saguaro cacti pores open in the cooler hours at night to finish the photosynthesis process.

--Desert ephemerals are plants that grow fast, flower early and set seed fast; they can wait for temperature, soil conditions and rainfall to be just right; seeds may not all germinate at once. An example is our California Poppy, *Eschscholzia*

californica, that can put on quite a show of wildflowers during moister years but be scarce when conditions warrant. Michael Moore tells us that a tea of *Eschscholzia californica* (one rounded teaspoon of herb per cup of water) can serve as a sedative or analgesic that is gentle enough for children; but too much and you may suffer a hangover the next day.

The plants that Lee Ann highlighted as useful for tea included:

--Chaparral or Creosote, *Larrea tridentate* - Creosote has been called "the drug store of the desert" for its many medicinal qualities, including as an antioxidant, and for its anti-aging properties. A hot tea made of the leaves helps with flu, colds and viruses and strengthens the immune system. The hot tea can also be used externally for bug bites and stings or skin infections.

--Ocotillo, *Fouquieria splendens* - A tea of ocotillo flowers makes for a pleasant beverage. Use the inner bark or growing tips for a tea to help with clearing swollen glands, clearing lymph and mucous, and clearing phlegm after a lung infection. Ocotillo blooms in the spring with striking red to orange flowers on the tips of its stalks which attract hummingbirds.



--Desert Broom, *Baccharis sarothroides* - Use for a tea that is cooling in hot weather and helps with preventing heat stroke.

--Yerba Santa, *Eriodictyon angustifolium* - A tea or syrup made with the leathery, resinous leaves relieves upset stomach, nausea and liver conditions (esp. after hepatitis). It is good for respiratory conditions and helps clear mucus from the lungs. The tea also relieves strep or sore throat and diarrhea. Dosage: it's very strong; use 1 teaspoon dried herb per quart of water; drink 3 times a day or as needed.

Lee Ann served a tasting of Yerba Santa ('Herb of the Saints'); it is a pleasant tasting tea.



Dried Yerba Santa leaves

Now, in the New Year, consider learning more about our native plants; how they can be used in your landscape, and help you get through life healthier, happier and with less stress!



Native Tea Resources:

- Useful Wild Western Plants by Peter Bigfoot, <http://www.reevismountain.org/classes>
- Mathura, Kirti. The Arizona Low Desert Flower Garden, a Seasonal Guide to Bloom, Height, Color, and Texture. Layton, Utah: Gibbs Smith Publisher, 2007.
- Cromell, Cathy. Desert Landscaping for Beginners Arizona Master Gardener Press, August 2001.
- Arizona Municipal Water Users Association Landscape Plants for the Arizona Desert. <http://www.amwua.org/plants/> January 1, 2017.
- Nabham, Gary Paul, Gathering the Desert. The University of Arizona Press, 1985

Holiday Party Happenings

Herbies enjoyed the holiday season, starting off December 4th at our meeting, where Janet Coleman had beautifully decorated all the tables. We feasted on a sumptuous variety of herbal potluck dishes and, for the third year in a row, a mocktail competition was held. Holiday Party Chair, Jess White, coordinated the revelry, and we enjoyed a fabulous evening of festivities!

Winter Sunset Mocktail

Chris George

Ingredients:

- 1 bottle (32 oz) Lakewood Organic Carrot, Ginger, Turmeric Juice (find at AJ's or Natural Grocers)
- 2 large blood oranges (or 3 to 4 small), juiced and strained
- 1/4 to 1/2 bottle of Reed's Ginger Beer (strongest)

Chill all three ingredients. Combine Carrot, Ginger & Turmeric Juice with fresh squeezed blood orange juice. Add ginger beer as you make each mocktail, right before serving.

Garnish with a thin slice of blood orange, or other citrus (lime would be good).

Serves about six (6 oz for each mocktail)

Note:

Reed's Ginger Beer is made from fresh ginger and has a nice clean ginger taste to it. Reed's offers four



different strengths of Ginger beer. I bought the 'strongest' and I didn't add very much for the tasting. I think any strength would be fine; add the ginger beer to suit your tastebuds.

Ginger Turmeric Tonic

Susan Adamczyk

<https://www.killingthyme.net/turmeric-ginger-shots/>

This is the recipe I used for the Ginger Turmeric Tonic. I added lots of extra coconut water to tone it down and maple syrup to taste.

The Grinch's Delight

Drew Templeton

- 1 part Turmeric Ginger Syrup
- 2 parts Blue Butterfly Pea Tea
- 3 parts Club Soda (I used homemade Soda Stream fizz water)

I used 1/3 cup syrup, 2/3 cup blue tea and 1 cup fizz

Turmeric Ginger Syrup

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup water
- 5 inches fresh turmeric
- 5 Inches fresh ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon black peppercorns
- 1 clove

Thinly slice the roots.

Stir sugar into water over medium heat until it dissolves.

Simmer the spices in the simple syrup for 20 to 30 minutes over low heat.

Pour through a strainer and cool. Store in an airtight glass container (plastic will stain yellow from the turmeric!). Refrigerate.

Make the **Blue Tea** by pouring boiling water over the flowers and let it steep until it reaches a deep blue. Ratio of 1 teaspoon blossoms per cup of water (which is only 3 or 4 flowers). Strain and cool.

Rim your glasses with candy sprinkles by painting the edge with the syrup. In a small pitcher, mix the desired proportions of Turmeric Syrup and Blue Tea and watch it turn emerald green! Add the club soda and it will lighten to Grinch Green.

Add a few ice cubes to your glass, pour in your drink, and top with a few sprinkles for a festive look!



November Culinary Dinner - Getting Back to Our Roots



On Saturday, November 15, Herbies gathered at Drew and Todd Templeton's to celebrate our roots, both vegetable and cultural!

Pam Schuler made an unusual German Radish Salad. Hazel and

Les Davis brought Salmon and Root Vegetable Salad, and Mindy Riddle prepared an intriguing Beet Slaw with Nuts and Raisins and Pistachio Cream.

Pam and Henry roasted Brussels Sprouts, simple but delicious. Todd invented Miso-Glazed Parsnips, while Donna and Keith brought their Lorch Family Marinated Carrots.

Vi Le brought her Chinese Beet Soup with Pork Broth, and Drew made Vegetable Barley Soup, featuring rutabagas, turnips and carrots for her Scottish side and collards and corn for her Southern roots. Haley Heng's beautiful tri-color Sweet Potato Gratin was very popular.

Hazel came with Carrot Cake with Cheesecake Topping, while Eric Adamczyk made his grandma's Kolaki for themed desserts!

Join us on Saturday, January 24, at Liz and Dan Lonetti's. For our January potluck, we're inviting Finn, their exchange student from Germany. Come help us gather a collection of must-have recipes for him to take back to Germany. He loves to cook and is excited to share American dishes with his parents and grandparents when he returns home. Please bring a dish you love to share — something that always goes over well — and, if possible, a copy of the recipe for Finn to keep.

Fresh Radish Salad

This fresh radish salad is so simple and delicious! Makes 2 servings.

300 g fresh radishes (2 1/2 to 3 cups)
1 handful fresh parsley
1 handful fresh dill
2 tablespoons avocado oil
1/2 teaspoon lime juice



1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon black pepper

Wash and slice radishes into thin circles. Transfer to a bowl and add chopped herbs, avocado oil, lime juice and spices. Mix well and let it sit for 5 minutes. Serve with the marinade and more avocado oil. Enjoy!

Prepared by Pam Schuler for November Culinary
Adapted from a recipe at
<https://tastysimplyvegan.com/fresh-radish-salad/>

Kolacki Recipe



3 1/2 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
8 ounces cream cheese
2 1/3 sticks margarine (or can use butter)
1 cup powdered sugar
1 can Solo fruit filling (we prefer raspberry or apricot)

Mix cream cheese and margarine until blended. Mix in powdered sugar.

Mix flour and baking powder separately and then blend into the creamed mixture.

Divide mixed dough into halves, form into discs, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

Roll out the dough 1/4 inch thick. Cut into diamond shapes. Put 1 teaspoon of filling in the middle of the diamond and fold the two shorter corners to the center, overlapping a little.

Bake at 375° for 12 minutes until set. Let cool and dust with powdered sugar.

Prepared by Eric Adamczyk using his Grandma's recipe

Join us for fun times and delicious meals at our Culinary Events in 2026!

January 24 – Liz and Dan Lonetti host with theme "Recipes for Must-have American Dishes"
February 21 – Diane and Chris Knudsen host with them "A Taste of India"
March 21 – Janet Coleman hosts with theme "A Culinary Color Party"

April 18 – Susan and Eric Adamczyk host; theme: tba
May 9 - Shay Emmers hosts with theme “Blue Zone Dining”
October 24 – Hazel and Les Davis host; theme: tba

Hosts are still needed for June, September, and November! Please contact Drew Templeton, Culinary Chair, drewtempleton@outlook.com, if you'd like to offer to host! As the host, you choose the date and theme, and specify how many guests you can accommodate (Drew and Todd can bring extra tables and chairs). You provide plates/napkins/silverware and a non-alcoholic beverage.

Drew Templeton
Culinary Chair

Weed & Feed November 2025

Our early set up crew got us started - restrooms and water ready to go, sign-up sheets in place, herbie bucks available for distribution, wagons of gear retrieved from shed...and then left us for other commitments. I thank you for all that work.

A full irrigation crew, with parts and pieces ready for installing along the east side, were also out early, prepping the site for the improvements. Assembled volunteers toured the garden, admiring rosemaries blooming in pink, white and shades of blue, all foraged by many bees. Sunflowers, Russian sage, pink *Pavonia*, and, of course, the queen's wreath were all flowering in full glory, only two months after the monsoon disaster.

Projects were enumerated and folks divided to conquer chores. Ron Madonna joined with Bonnie Ervine and others to remove the larger water shoots and suckers from the vitex. They also, to the consternation of the irrigation crew, removed the largest branch from the twisted myrtle which was overhanging the vegetable shed. Quickly accomplished, they got themselves well out of the way. All the pots along the walls were fertilized. A few seeds were planted. Some more trimming on rosemaries lifted skirts a bit; in the latest effort to outwit rabbits, we cut the stems with sesame seeds and bagged them. I wish I knew where that bag got to. Hopefully it is in the shed....

Weeds were pulled. The nut sedge and Mexican evening primrose received lots of attention. Seedlings were transplanted; perhaps we can convince calendulas to self-sow where we want them someday. The nasturtiums have done so

nicely on the southwest corner, as have the marigolds which were blooming.

Keith, Donna, Maureen and their crew successfully got all new drip lines installed along the east garden, just in time to encourage our very favorite sweet peas to germinate! The rescued scented geranium “Lady Jane Grey” is doing just fine, after spending all summer in a pot on the east wall. When plants are happy, they are happy.

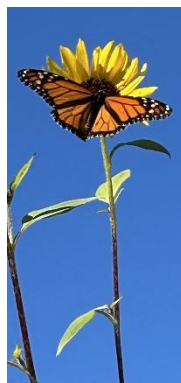


Scented Geranium: ‘Gray Lady Plymouth’
Photo by Sandy Cielaszyk

We adjourned, some to other projects, others to share Pam Poston's salad, chocolate coated berries, fruit, and other goodies, along with conversation, before closing the gates and locking the doors. We reconvene on Saturday, December 6, for the last workday of 2025! We will kick off the new year on January 3, 2026! We hope to see you then. Happy holidays and many thanks to all who have helped support and maintain this garden this year!

Weed & Feed December 2025

December 6 was a glorious Arizona desert day, with great temperatures and many happy herbie and master gardener volunteers working in the AHA Demonstration Garden. Fearless leader Pam was adventuring in New England with family, but with the help of our solid crew we managed to accomplish quite a bit in the morning. Teri, John and a few hearty gardeners arrived early to bring out our tools and get things set up.



The day was nice and warmed up, with plenty of birds, butterflies, native bees and honeybees working the garden alongside our volunteers. A flock of Queen butterflies (*Danus gilippus*) enjoyed our patch of Greg's mistflower (*Conoclinium spp.*). Plus, we were visited by two Monarch butterflies (*Danus plexippus*) who nectared on our Sunflowers, and also harassed the Queens. We will keep an eye out for eggs and caterpillars, as Monarchs visiting the Sonoran Desert for winter often breed and add to their population instead of migrating further to the groves in Mexico or California.



Emily Heller arrived in good spirits and was joined by Brendan, Ron and a few others as she gave some needed seasonal pruning to our Twisted Myrtle and Bay Laurel. She uses the trimmings to make festive hangings for

her fresh sales booth at the Uptown Farmers Market in Phoenix – www.BeneVivendoFarm.com. We also dropped a big hint to Emily to consider teaching a wreath-making workshop for AHA in 2026.

Katherine Tarr and Lauren Espinoza set up a popup shop for holiday gifts – seeds, plants, gently used and new gardening and herb books. After much hard work pruning, weeding and cleaning up the garden, we took a well-deserved break to visit and catch up on our holiday plans. The demonstration garden looked great for future tours by the public.



Lynne Senzek shared some tasty lentils, which we enjoyed along with quinoa muffins from Bernie and other tasty snacks and beverages. We also noshed on the leftover birthday cake for our 98-years young charter member Marge

Bayless – It was tasty, Thank you, Jess!

Attendees also brought supplies to Maureen for delivery to the nearby ART RESOURCE CENTER which has limited hours for donations and “shopping,” but is worth checking out – especially for teachers and non-profits. If you don’t know this group, check out the “wanted” lists at their website and see what you have that needs a home: <https://sites.google.com/view/artresourcecenter>

Pam and I hope that you had a great holiday and look forward to seeing you at future Weed & Feeds.

Mike Hills and Pam Perry, Demo Garden Captains



The Arizona Herb Association made two “visits” to Friendship Evergreen Community Garden in Tempe in recent months. Friendship Evergreen Community Garden is a cooperative effort between Friendship Village Tempe and the neighborhoods and communities surrounding Ehrhardt Park.

On Saturday, November 1, Mike Hills, assisted by Teri Thorpe and Katherine Tarr, gave a talk to the community gardeners gathered for their monthly “Treat and Greet” event.

According to Nancy, Vice Chair of the FECG Governing Board, in her thank you letter to AHA, “Our gardeners enjoyed the Show and Tell presentation and could have kept you talking much longer...and they had a great time at the sales.”



Above, Mike Hills presents his talk at Friendship Evergreen Community Garden. Below, Katherine Tarr with items to sell at the talk.



On the morning of Saturday, December 13, 2025, a group of herbies gathered at Ehrhardt Park and proceeded through the gate to visit Friendship Evergreen Community Garden in Tempe. Our tour was organized by Teri Thorpe, "with many thanks to Linda Overby for keeping on me to get this scheduled, and to Kathleen McCoy for getting me to this garden initially

We were welcomed by Nancy Pearson, who gave us a brief history of the Community Garden. The garden encompasses one acre of Ehrhardt Park's 4.5 acres. The City of Tempe pays for safety, lights and irrigation; Friendship Village pays for Cara Strange to serve as garden manager. Cara, who is also a Master Gardener, handles day to day projects at the garden. She gave us a tour, including the pollinator garden, the orchard, greenhouse and worm farm.

We had a beautiful morning and a fun and informative visit. No two garden plots were the same, and we marveled at the size of some of the veggies growing. And a big thank you to Linda for the yummy treats!



Above, Nancy gives us a short history of the Community Garden.

Left, Cora explains the working aspects of the garden.

Photos by Teri Thorpe and Sandy Cielaszky

Herbies: please let Teri know about community gardens in your area that we should visit!

Remembering Lifetime Herbie Mica Steele

We learned recently from her daughter Suzanne that lifetime member Mica Steele passed away. Mica was an active Herbie before moving to be near her daughter in Colorado. She was submitting articles to the newsletter as early as 1998.



The May 2004 issue of the newsletter had an article on Jerusalem artichokes by Mica, which started "At the January meeting Carolyn Hills brought tubers of the Jerusalem artichoke to share with us. My atrophied thumb and night work hours are not conducive to planting, but plant history is a true love of mine. Curiosity about the name of this North American native plant piqued my interest."

Mica's column in the newsletter, called "Historically Herbal," was full of interesting historical facts about a wide variety of herbs and herbal topics. Here is a reprint of her article on tomatoes from the October 2006 newsletter.

Historically Herbal

You Say Tomato, I Say Tomato...

Can any of us imagine Italian food without the pasta that Marco Polo brought from China and the tomatoes that followed Columbus' discovery of the Americas? Try to imagine our own cuisine without them. Is a salad really a salad without tomatoes?

Tomatoes came to Italy by way of Naples, which at that time was a Spanish possession. It was known there as apple of gold because the first tomatoes brought to Europe were yellow. These first tomatoes were small, about marble size, and the plant was considered a medicinal. Actually, tomatoes were not widely known in the New World. It is the Mexicans, primarily the Aztecs, who are responsible for introducing the tomato to the Spanish. They explained that tomatoes made good sauces when mixed with chili pepper. A priest of the time, Father de Acosta, described these sauces as "extremely sharp and biting".

In 1554, Pierandrea Mattioli is thought to be the first person to write about tomatoes. He originally called it "mala aurea" meaning golden apple, but later revised it to "mala insana" which means unhealthy apple. Early botanists, following his lead,

considered the tomato to be poisonous as it belonged to the same family as belladonna, deadly nightshade and black henbane. This accusation was also leveled at the potato and eggplant which share the same family. If they had eaten the leaves of the tomato, as they had those of the potato, rather than their tubers, it would have earned its designation as a poison. The leaves and stems of the tomato really are toxic and have been known to occasionally kill grazing livestock.

The Italians appear to have been braver with regards to the tomato; it entered the Italian cuisine in the sixteenth century in Provence by the way of Genoa and Nice. The tomato was no longer accompanied by the chili as the Italians did not find the spicy flavors as enjoyable as the Spanish had. And it had also acquired the more romantic name of pomme d'amour, the love apple. In the generation after their introduction, tomatoes began to enter the Italian diet cautiously. Originally the red fruits of the plant were thought to be pretty and its aroma, which deterred ants and mosquitoes, was found to be useful. In old books the toxic reputation of the tomato caused it to be approached with caution. It was often cooked for three hours with salt, pepper and olive oil. The salt and olive oil were thought to nullify the poisons, as was the extended cooking time.



It was also slow in reaching Asia, mentioned in Java in 1658, Malaysia in 1775 and Japan in 1776, but not cultivated there until the nineteenth century. Tomatoes were found growing in Africa's interior in 1860, yet how they got there remains a mystery. Surprisingly, the Africans, who were usually game at trying any new plant that might serve as food, had not tried tomatoes. They reportedly were surprised when they saw Europeans eating them.

Thomas Jefferson is credited as one of the first Americans to cultivate the tomato. It is unknown where he got them, but one source indicates he may have gotten them from an Italian painter who attempted to make tomatoes popular around Salem, Massachusetts. Jefferson tried to introduce the tomato during his presidency (1801-1809), but it wasn't until the end of the eighteenth century that tomatoes began to catch on in the United States. The first recorded appearance of tomatoes was in the Philadelphia market in 1829; where they did not

make a big impact. Many Americans were afraid of tomatoes because it was suspected that they caused cancer, yet slowly tomato recipes began to appear in American cookbooks.

World War I marked a real turn in the use of tomatoes. Starting in 1916, farm clubs in the South encouraged children to grow healthier foods and while introducing a variety of fruits and vegetables, they highlighted only one, the tomato. In 1929 the Bureau of Home Economics proposed an ideal yearly diet which included fifty-six pounds of tomatoes per person (actual consumption at that time was thirty-six pounds). Today tomatoes are a major crop here in the United States.

Tomatoes, which are actually a fruit, were designated legally a vegetable in the United States by decree of the Supreme Court in 1893. It was thus ruled because being used like a vegetable it had to be declared one for the purpose of trade. Waverly Root, one of my favorite food historians, says that despite the numerous varieties of tomatoes, only two have any commercial importance. The first is *Lycopersicum esculentum* (aka *Solanum lycopersicum*) and the other *L. pinellifolium*, the current grape or cluster tomato, which was first mentioned in American gardens in 1863 and still grows wild in Brazil and Peru.

Mica Steele ©

Don't forget to renew your membership. You won't want to miss out on any of our Herbie happenings in the new year! Go to our website <https://azherb.org>, log into your account and scroll down to "renew." You may also renew in person at any Herbie general meeting.

A Note from your Newsletter Team:

The deadline for all newsletter submittals is the 15th of each month. When submitting articles, please cc to both Sandy Cielaszyk and Lee Ann Aronson. We welcome questions and suggestions, as well as your herbal articles, reviews and news about upcoming events. We'd love to hear from you!

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Inside this Month's Issue:

- Much Ado about Matcha
- Mistletoe with Kathleen McCoy
- Native Tea Herbs with Lee Ann Aronson
- November and December Weed & Feed
- Back to our Roots Culinary
- 2026 Officer Elections
- Holiday Party Happenings
- Remembering Mica Steele

*Your mind is the garden,
your thoughts are the seeds.
The harvest can either be
flowers or weeds.
- William Wordsworth*