



# The Arizona Herb Association

May 2026

A Publication for Members & Friends

<https://azherb.org>

Dear Herbies,

Calling all storytellers! We are in a time of honoring nature and people. Did you hold a special event to commemorate Earth Day and/or Arbor Day? Were you a Cinco de Mayo celebrater? In honor of Mother's Day, maybe you are fortunate to *still* celebrate this special day with your mother! Or, would you like to share a gardening memory that you have of your mom, or of you as a mom with your children? Share a story at our AHA annual "Salad Supper" on Thursday, May 7, at 7:00 p.m., at the Maricopa County Extension Garden.

Come early, if you can. Shannon Stapleton of SWIHA plans to bring her collegiate gardening students to tour the demonstration gardens and attend our May meeting. We look forward to hearing about the Herb of the Year – Turmeric – from Mike Hills. Bring food or drink with the ingredient turmeric, if you can.

During the month of May, I plan to separate some agave pups and transplant to other areas of the yard. After lifting and pulling them away from the main plant, I'll set them aside in a shady part of my yard for a few days, up to a few weeks. This gives the pups time to heal after any cutting away or lifting/pulling away from the principal agave. If root system is sufficient, I will then plant them in the yard, with some partial shade, for the first year.

I also have a few overgrown aloe plants in container pots. Who doesn't? Time permitting, I plan to reduce the cluster size by about 30-50%, so anyone coming to the May culinary event just may be taking home a gift!

Lastly, I plan to add mulch around some of my rose shrubs and chaste trees. Benefits of mulch: help prevent evaporation of water, reduce soil temperature, and improve soil condition. Tip: Mulch should remain a few inches away from the stems of plants. We don't want to introduce root rot or stem suffocation.

Happy gardening, everyone,

Shay Emmers  
AHA President



## Calendar

### May 2026

Saturday, May 2: Weed & Feed  
Time: 7:00 a.m.

Come help get the garden ready for visitors.



Thursday, May 7: Annual Salad Supper  
Location: MCC Extension; Time: 7:00 p.m.

Come early to tour the Demo Garden  
Guests welcome!

Topic: Herb of the Year - Turmeric

Speaker: Mike Hills

Saturday, May 9: Culinary Brunch Event

Theme: Blue Zone Dining

Hostess: Shay Emmers

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Sign up on the calendar at <https://azherb.org>

Saturday, May 23: A Tour of the Native Plant Oasis  
at Chandler Nature Center at Veterans Oasis Park  
4050 E Chandler Heights Road, Chandler  
Meet at 8:45 a.m.

Sign up on the calendar at <https://azherb.org>

More details on page 3

Wednesday, May 27: AHA Board Meeting

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Watch email for more details.

### June 2026

Thursday, June 4: AHA general meeting

Location: MCC Extension; Time: 7:00 p.m.

Topic: TBA

Speaker: TBA

Herb of the Month: Lemongrass

Presenter: Drew Templeton



Saturday, June 6: Weed & Feed

Time: 7:00 a.m.

Come help get the garden ready for summer.

Saturday, June 6: Culinary Event

Theme: A Lime Festival

Hosts: Drew and Todd Templeton

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Sign up on the calendar at <https://azherb.org>

There will be no monthly general meetings, culinary events or newsletters for the months of July and August. Weed & Feeds continue all summer!

## May 2026 Annual 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 7, 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 presentation from Past President Mike

Hills on the Herb of the Year, Turmeric, *Curcuma longa*, an ancient and versatile spice with vivid color, a distinctive taste and a long history of use.



In the March 2017 AHA newsletter, Mica Steele wrote "There are more than 100 names for turmeric in the Ayurvedic. My personal favorite is matrimanika which means "as beautiful as moonlight."

Come early and enjoy a stroll around the Demonstration Garden beforehand. If you like, bring a gardening memory to share. 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.

Meeting begins at approximately 7:00 p.m.

### Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85141170155?pwd=2bEbsoHmiH0kevN1sMvablM8j45qG.1>

Meeting ID: 851 4117 0155

Passcode: 383611

## Welcome New AHA Members:

Joniece Benjamin  
Zip Code: 85132

Dana Gant  
Zip Code: 85339

**Diane Knudsen, Membership Chair**



More info at:

<https://www.chandleraz.gov/explore/chandler-recreation/centers-and-facilities/chandler-nature-center/native-plant-oasis>

Sign up for the tour on the AHA calendar at <https://azherb.org/>

Address any questions to Teri Thorpe at [teriinthegarden@gmail.com](mailto:teriinthegarden@gmail.com)

## Herbs for the Nervous System; to Nourish, Repair and Restore

### A visit to Veterans Oasis Park



Thanks to Herbie Perry Green, our next scheduled AHA tour will take place on Saturday, May 23, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

We will meet our host, Derek Gerson, in the lobby of the Chandler Nature Center at Veterans Oasis Park at 8:50 a.m., and then walk over to the Native Plant Oasis. The tour is expected to last until about 10:30 a.m. Veterans Oasis Park is located at 4050 E Chandler Heights Road, Chandler, AZ 85249.

Perry Green tells us the Center is to help people strengthen their connection with nature and motivate them to protect the environment through high-quality, home to nature-oriented educational programs that include all aspects of green living and exhibits.

This is a great place to learn about the wonders of nature and experience the great outdoors through reactive and fun educational programs, services and exhibits. The Native Oasis Garden hosts examples of native Arizona pollinator plants and cacti, and provides information on invasive plants. The garden has a greenhouse where native plants for Arizona's pollinators are grown including: milkweeds, thistles, agaves, cactus and vines.

Please join us, and be prepared with hats, water, all the accouterments for Arizona weather! We look forward to a very pleasant walk around the water!

By Herbalist joAnna Sanchez



joAnna Sanchez, herbalist, educator and long-time herbie presented our April 2nd program on NERVINES: herbs or botanicals used for nervous system disturbance that aim to normalize the function of the nervous system.

A comparable term is NERVOUS RESTORATIVES. These are remedies

that are used to restore the nervous system in debility, having a nourishing function. The action of the nervous restoratives is generally slow but steady, providing for genuine improvement in tone of the nervous tissue over weeks or months. Some of these are relaxant, others more stimulating, and these qualities will significantly affect their application. (Simon Mills)

In commerce these botanicals are often combined into formula at what appears (to this author) to be some random inclusion of some of the most popular nervines, relaxants, sedatives, etc. Clinical herbal practice, however, allows for a more specific targeted approach, whereby herbs to support, restore, and nourish nervous system function can be chosen for individual need and application with emphasis (by proportion in formulation) based on the unique characteristics of the person at hand.

As herbalists we attempt to learn, therefore, the unique characteristics and actions of each of the botanicals in depth so as to be able to specifically utilize them in very specific circumstances. Personal experiential learning with the herbs is favored as

well as Empirical Observation (observing and documenting what occurs with many clients) in a clinical setting.

The more specifically we can match plant to person, the less quantity and time will be rendered necessary to allow balance to return. We remember the great eclectic physician Dr. John Scudder, M.D. from our historical herbal roots, who, in the late 1800's wrote Specific Medicines and Specific Diagnosis, two works that helped a system of differential diagnosis to develop. He has been quoted to say, "This herb for this person at this time." Differential assessment is a trained tool of a clinical herbalist.

As it has been pointed out, the effects of stress often bear burden on our glandular function, the endocrine system. Understanding this makes relevant an argument for the holistic approach to healing and prevention of illness: We are not just an organ or body system; We are an entire organism and what affects one arena impacts others. With a holistic approach, herbs, exercise, meditative practices and/or pharmaceuticals may play a part in restoring the nervous system.

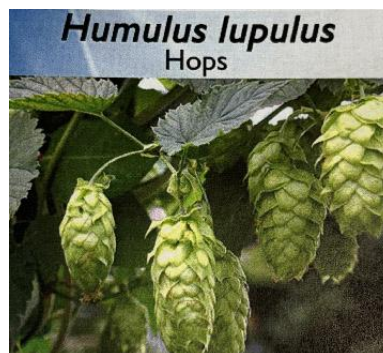
So, often the employment of ADAPTOGENS - remedies that improve adaptability, those that help maintain an adequate "stress response" (a defined by the physiologist Hans Seyle) become increasingly appropriate as companion to utilizing nervines, how adaptogens increase adaptation to stress. We could explore this concept further as we see secondary applications where digestion and detoxification is addressed.

MATERIA MEDICA - (herbal reference body of knowledge or catalog of medicinal substances)

This materia medica lesson serves as example of focusing on nuance and specificity of application for each herb in a category of plants with similar action or having action and/or affinity for a particular body system. We attempt to make the fine distinctions of herbs and their affinities so as to become practitioners of the craft, Herbalism. This materia medica offers specific focus on the actions of each of the herbs in order to be able to recognize their unique, as well as their shared, similar, and collective actions. The ideas and commentary gathered here to portray individual character of the herbs include personal observation, and also are of various accounts from experiential herbalists of our day: Christopher Hobbs, Daniel Gagnon, Judith Berger, and Sharol Tilgner.

### 1. *Humulus lupulus*, Hops

There are 2 genera in the Cannabaceae family: Cannabis and Humulus. There are 4 species of Humulus and lupulus is the official in our material medica. It is a vigorous growing perennial vine native to North America and Europe. *Humulus lupulus*, hops, is a moderately strong nervine relaxant, sedative and soporific (sleep-inducing), due to its volatile oil components. (These volatile oil components affect the brain directly through the olfactory center, explaining the folk use of hops herbal sleeping pillows). Using the strobili, or female flowers, bracts and golden pollen, which also contain up to 20% resinous bitter principles, account for its bitter tonic effect on the digestive system, being both cooling and drying.



Hops is useful for insomnia especially when caused by heartburn, and indigestion, and will calm stomach acid secretions. It is used with irritable bowel, mucous colitis, nervous

dyspepsia and also restlessness, and sleep disorders with excitability and neuralgias and to counteract the effects of excessive food indulgences on the quality of sleep. (As an aside, hops is considerably rich in oestrogens (30,000 to 300,000 IU per 100 gm. of hops) and is sexual depressant for men and sexual stimulant for women).

**Contraindicated with pharmaceutical sleep meds and in marked depression and possibly pregnancy (due to uterine stimulation), hops is safe for children, sometimes utilized for colic in formulary.**

A moderate dosage strategy two to three times daily for sleep disturbance and more frequent for digestive inclination, is appropriate. *Humulus lupulus* was official in the US Pharmacopoeia from 1820-1916 and in the National Formulary from 1926-1942. The Eclectic physicians used hops as a gentle tonic, hypnotic and sedative.

Regarding preparation, fresh is needed to achieve hormone regulating action, while freeze-dried is most effective for its nervine and sedative properties. Hops partners well with most nervines, for example, synergistically with skullcap for restlessness.

## 2. *Scutellaria lateriflora*, Skullcap

Native and abundant in America, *Scutellaria laterifolia*, or skullcap, is a tender perennial of the Lamiaceae family whose aerial portions are popularly used when in bud. A cooling bitter due to it containing a bitter glycoside and a bitter principle, it also contains a volatile oil (scutellerin), as well as being rich in calcium and magnesium.



Skullcap has its primary effect on the peripheral nervous system, that place where we touch the outside world, and is useful when

symptoms are worse with noise, odors, and light. Skullcap is a cooling, quieting, anti-spasmodic sedative safe for daytime use and is a prominent nervine tonic in our materia medica that is useful as a Trophorestorative, a food for the nervous system when the nervous system has become depleted, particularly after a long illness. Strong infusions are excellent for this purpose.

Key differential indications for skullcap include hypersensitive individuals, feeling edgy, not wanting to be touched, having muscle twitches and spasms, nervous tics, restless leg, Parkinsons disease tremors (for flare ups but not a cure), and palsies. It helps with jumpy or jittery feelings and for involuntary motions. Also, phantom pain, shingles pain, cardiac irritability, and nervous irritation of the cerebrospinal nervous system. Skullcap enjoys great popularity due to proven efficacy from longstanding use, but has had virtually no scientific inquiry. Historically, however, skullcap was official in the US Pharmacopoeia from 1860-1900 and in the National Formulary from 1916-1942. The eclectic, Dr. King, prescribed it as a warm infusion for all nervous affections, including its use in pregnancy, where it would companion nicely with Avena.

This food for the nervous system is used as a bitter tonic. Made into a tea, use 1/4 cup leaves to 1 cup water, steep and take everyday for a few months. Taken only short term there may be mild or no effect; skullcap encompasses effects in the long run.

**3. *Valeriana officinalis*, Valerian** is a robust perennial herbaceous plant of the Valerianaceae family that blooms in late April when cultivated in the Sonora desert.



The name comes from both the Latin *valere* (to be in health) and *valer* (to be strong)--perhaps as in its odor! The key constituent profile of *Valeriana officinalis* rhizome features an oil that contains acetic, formic and valeric acids. (Hops also contains valeric acid.) This Valerian warming aromatic is also made up of iridoid ester compounds called valepotriates. Alkaloid fractions of valerine and valerianine contribute activity as well. A synergistic effect of all of the above leads to its key indications.

Valerian roots are smooth muscle and central nervous system relaxants, therefore having physical as well as cerebral effects. Valeriana relieves tension, stress migraine in some sufferers, can be catalyst to lower stress related hypertension, pairing well with Hawthorne for this effect.

The following actions can be attributed to the presence of valpotriates (unstable iridoid ester compounds found in valerian root): Disturbed night patterns and possibly hypochondrias can be addressed with these roots. As hypnotic, valerian shortens sleep latency (time to fall asleep). As a tranquillizer and sedative relaxant, valerian may improve the quality of sleep and reduce the incidence of nighttime awakening. It will slow down the whole body, mind, and emotional responses that seem to prevent sleep, help reduce the negative effects of noises and is useful for agitated states. It is neither habit forming nor addictive.

The oil is primarily responsible for valerian's antispasmodic action. Due to its oil content, this root is infused as an aqueous extraction and not decocted.

"Stinky" old dried plant material has the notable and somewhat common effect of a drug-like feeling in the a.m. after its use. Fresh roots have a somewhat sweet and pleasant odor and are aromatic and spicy. Fresh roots should be simmered slowly in water with the lid on for tea. Valerian is non-habit forming, good for impatience, for depth of sleep and ADHD. There is no value to using dry roots. Valerian is easy to grow here. Use the spring annuals, harvest, then grow again next year.

A glycerine (85% alcohol with 15% water) OR alcohol extraction of valerian (80% alcohol/10% glycerine/10% water) may be made with 1 part plant material cut into 1/2" increments with two times the amount of liquid. Agitate the menstrum from one moon to the next moon. Strain and bottle. This extract keeps for 10 years in a cool dry place. Dosage: 3 or 4 dropperfuls twice a day before 3:00 p.m. and before bed. Listen to your body.

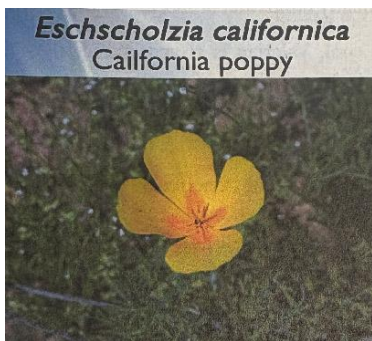
Persons seeking the qualities of this botanical who also have weakened adrenal glands may sometimes experience being stimulated rather than sedation. It appears that 5-15% of the population would find valerian contraindicated for themselves.

**Valerian potentiates anesthetics and sleeping pills and should not be used simultaneously.**

This plant has a long history of safe use; we find references from Hildegard of Bingen in the 12th century. It was listed as official in most drug books in US and England until about 40 years ago.

**4. *Eschscholzia californica*, California poppy**

The annual herb *Eschscholzia californica*, in the Papaveraceae family, is commonly known as California poppy. This is the only species that has been tested for efficacy and safety. The entire fresh aerial portions and the roots make for a remarkably gentle and cooling sedative, which has sleep



inducing properties that are reasonably attributed to the presence of more than a dozen non-narcotic alkaloids that promote and establish equilibrium and harmony to the nervous system.

Key differentials for this poppy are waking up during the night, often at a specific time or too early in the morning (known as recurring patterned insomnia), for enuresis (bed wetting), and also when a mild anodyne is needed. Its very mild effects make it safe for fretful and fidgety children, sometimes employed for ADHD. It can be specifically useful as a sleep modulator regarding the depth of sleep, deepening or lightening depending on the need, but does not interfere with REM sleep. Too mild as a tea, tincture is the preferred delivery system. *Eschscholzia* partners well with Kava for acute anxiety.

**Contraindicated in pregnancy because it can have a uterine stimulant effect from the alkaloid cryptopine.**

A side effect would be that California poppy induces sleepiness (careful about driving). Early Spanish explorers and California Native Americans used this plant as a sleep-inducing sedative.



**5. *Avena sativa*, Oat** is a mild tasting nutritive of the Poaceae family that is native to the Mediterranean region. Oat is rich in B vitamins, minerals, and protein and its action is achieved as much through its nutritive properties as through its other active constituents.

It is interesting to note that this grain contains an antioxidant that keeps it from going rancid. And, unlike other grains which are wrapped in a single husk and spiral upward toward the sun, oat plants house their seeds in a double husk that drapes downward from a pod like hull, providing its distinctive identification as unique among the grasses.

*Vena sativa*, Oat is an herbaceous annual grass that is utilized for the nervous system to bring centeredness. Both the straw and the seed are used. Due to its rich silica content, regular, longstanding use of dried straw infusions help to maintain integrity of connective tissue and support healthy bones for a lifetime.

The grain itself (what we call oatmeal, groats,) has 1/10 the value as nervine as The Fresh Seed in the Milky Stage, which is by far the preferred plant part used to make an excellent nervous system tonic. When the milk rises up the stem causing the pods to swell, a milky moisture can lubricate everything it touches!

Key uses are to support recovery from depressive states from overwork and too much continual stress, during emotional breakdown, with fatigue from longstanding illness or surgery, to address adrenaline stress of exhaustion, aiding in withdrawal from cigarettes or stimulants, with "tired" complaints, poor energy and exhaustion, and post traumatic nightmares. It is a trophorestorative, and helps to keep muscles from twitching.

*Avena* calms overstimulated nerve endings, rewiring the nervous system. Calming and centering, it has the ability to steady easily shocked nerves and can also restore nerves to fully functioning capacity during convalescence. Oats have a gently powerful nature, enormously supportive of children, elders,

and convalescents recovering from immune depleting conditions. Applications are for new mothers, in pregnancy, in menopause, and in men of middle age with longstanding, hardworking careers.

Sweet, nutritious, moistening, this emollient provides an "inner fortitude that allows us to become less unbalanced by the stressful stimuli we encounter on a daily basis." (J.Berger). Avena makes juicy the endocrine system and rejuvenates sensory sensitivity. (S. Weed)

A water-based infusion of the dried straw and/or seed heads is common. High compliance for therapeutic use is gained when prepared as a fresh seed glycerite, making for "delicious" medicine that gradually builds and brings inner centeredness.

Whereas Hops is very bitter and cold, and Skullcap is moderately bitter and cool, Valerian is aromatic and spicy and warming. Avena is neutral and nourishing and will replenish nutrients to a body that is heated and losing minerals, say, for instance when experiencing menopausal hot flashes. This commentary exemplifies the concept of energetics in plants. It is a noteworthy study that provides additional information for distinctive choice.

#### 6. *Passiflora incarnata*, Passionflower

Passionflower originated in South America but has naturalized to the United States. *Passiflora incarnata* is a perennial climbing vine of the Passifloraceae family with longstanding association to Christian symbolism. Alkaloidal fractions and flavonoids lend themselves to passion flower's

action as depressant to the central nervous system.



The Eclectics used the entire plant, fresh and when in flower and fruiting, in moderate doses for excessive mental activity and we

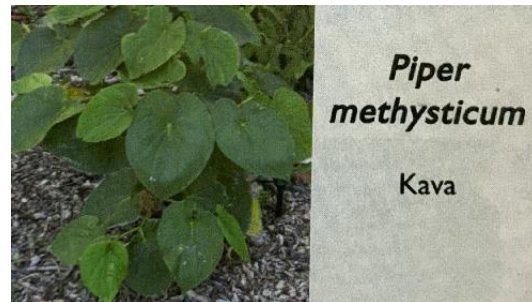
follow suit. It helps with intransient insomnia. Bland but cooling energetically, Passionflower is employed specifically for chattering mind in the day and insomnia for the busy brain at night as it slows down excessive cerebral cortex activity. It seems to work on the medulla oblongata, a part of the brain stem that controls vomiting, hiccough, blood pressure, and respiration as well as sleep. Passionflower will prolong sleep time. Key indications include intermittent hypertension, high blood pressure that is aggravated by stress, insomnia from pre-occupation or worry, and lack of focus from excessive mental stimulation. "It is wonderful for the headstrong

individual, the thinker, or the chronic worrier." (Gagnon)

The best delivery system is a fresh tincture of the entire vine, flower, and leaves 1:1 40%. (tincture strength & alcohol %). *Passiflora* is contraindicated in young children due to observed tendency to initiate vomiting, perhaps stimulating the medulla oblongata. Otherwise, there are no side effects or cautions.

7. *Piper methysticum*, or Kava Kava, Native to the Polynesian and South Sea islands, a member of the Piperaceae family, sometimes just Kava, is a plant remedy whose roots are employed in herbal medicine. Its actions and key indications of sedation to the limbic system and relaxation of the skeletal muscle are attributed to the presence of resinous constituents called kava lactones.

Kava has anti-convulsant, anxiolytic, analgesic, and local anesthetic activities, and is useful with nervous tension, anxiety, mild depression, insomnia, and muscle tension. Kava is a mood elevator and can produce a feeling of euphoria. An apt differential is the use of Kava for one track-minded persons to allow for a more wholistic perspective instead of just linear thinking and it is very useful for persons whose tension increases as the day goes on or for those who wake with muscle tightness.



Another indication is for brain induced shoulder pain (as opposed to that caused from exercise where we might employ wood betony, for instance).

A water extract is a traditional preparation, though tinctures of this not-so-pleasant tasting herb are the more common consumption method among the herbal advocates. Capsules of dried root powders do not deliver the water-soluble fractions that are present in the hydro-alcohol extract.

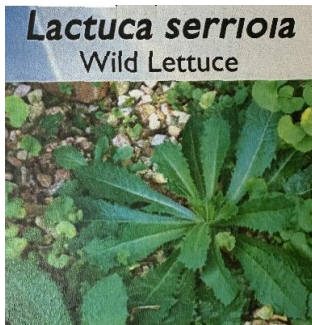
A cultural tradition of preparation was the Tongan method, which consisted of chewing the root to mix it with saliva and then storing this concoction. Certainly not a marketable method!

Tincture or water extract, kava numbs the tongue with a pungent energetic.

**Kava is contraindicated with alcohol, in pregnancy and in lactation, and in depression where no anxiety is present. One should not operate a vehicle when using Kava.**

Too high dosage (user dependent) can produce a feeling of heaviness in the limbs and walking that is slow and unsteady. Long term high dosing can cause a dermatopathy, albeit self-limiting, that manifests as a pigmented, scaly eruption on the palm of hands and soles of feet.

**8. *Lactuca virosa*, Wild lettuce** is a member of the Asteracea family. Known as wild lettuce, this weed is a calming plant remedy useful when pain and emotions interplay.



Mildly analgesic as tea or tincture, the whole plant has a milky sap.

Wild lettuce is especially useful in synergy: *Lactuca* can be used for wakeful kids who cannot sleep from stomach or intestinal cramps or

similarly in adults with Black Cohosh.

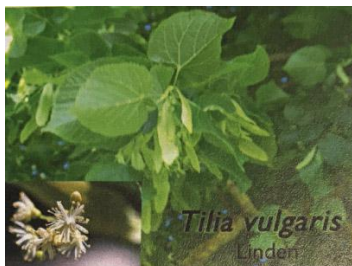
**9. Guarana, or *Paullinia cupana***, is a woody member of the Sapindaceae family from tropical America. The ripened fruit is a central nervous system stimulant due to its (high) caffeine content, as well as the presence of other alkaloids.



It is utilized for fatigue, to aid concentration, for migraines and nervous headache, as well as to lift the spirits. The most common delivery system is capsules.

**Contraindicated for pregnancy and lactation, or long-term use. Side effects are nervousness and insomnia.**

**10. The flowers and leaves of *Tilia spp.* or Linden tree**, are slightly sweet, aromatic and pleasant smelling and tasting; the herb is a member of the



*Tiliaceae* family.

Active constituents that are responsible

for most of the plants' medicinal activity are quercetin, a flavonoid compound, coumarins, and a very rich, fragrant and complicated volatile oil.

An ingredient in Celestial Seasonings Sleepytime tea as a calmative and relaxing addition, linden flower is also a stomachic, anti-depressant, and anti-spasmodic. *Tilia vulgaris*, Linden protects against stress induced ulcers, reduces palpitations due to stress, and addresses adrenal enlargement due to stress. Referenced from 1930's literature, it was then applied for psychological stress.

The reputation of *Tilia* flower to calm the nerves and at the same time invigorate the nervous system suggests it may be one of the best nervous system tonics around.

Moderate to high doses can be employed as tea or tincture and are generally safe and mild.

joAnna brought tea and shared this recipe with us:

#### Nifty Nervine Tisane

*Avena sativa* (tops and leaf - Oat 4 parts  
*Crataegus monogyna* (fruit) - Hawthorne 4 parts  
*Tilia vulgaris* (flowering parts) - Linden 3 parts  
*Glycyrrhiza glabra* (root) - Licorice 3 parts  
*Nepeta cataria* (leaf) - Catnip 1 part  
*Passiflora incarnata* (flower & leaf) Passionflower 1 part  
*Humulus lupulus* (strobiles) - Hops 1 part

#### April Herb of the Month – Ginkgo Biloba

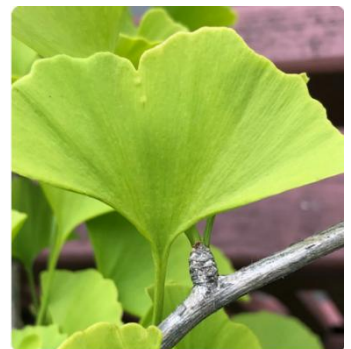
By Herbalist and Herbie, April Lillard



Our April Herb of the Month, *Ginkgo biloba*, originated in prehistoric Jurassic Forests of China, Korea and Japan. Pinyin is a traditional name for Ginkgo, which was known in the Tang Dynasty 1,400 years ago. It is the oldest living tree species on

earth and the only order in its family, Ginkgoaceae. Common names for this herb include Maidenhair tree, fossil tree and Japanese silver apricot.

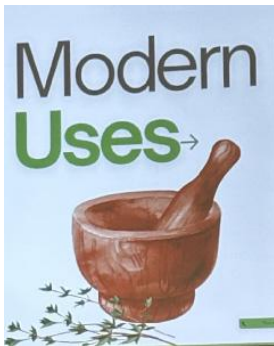
The tree is a perennial which can grow 50 to 80 feet tall by 30 to 40 feet wide. The leaves are used, and April suggested using the wider leaves, harvested in the fall



(September/October) as they turn from green to yellow for the highest potency of therapeutic actions.

**Historical Uses:** An ancient materia medica, the Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing, dated from 2,000 to 5,000 years ago, contains the oldest record of use of ginkgo leaves, seeds and roots. Historically it was used for ringworm and intestinal worms, to reduce phlegm and relieve coughs, to clear poisons, to treat asthma, to treat frequent urination, and for sores on the head and face, skin infections, and boils.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) still uses the seeds for respiratory, digestive and vascular health and for diarrhea.



**Modern Uses:** Today, the leaves of *Ginkgo biloba* are used for cognitive function such as memory, Parkinson's disease (more recent studies and trials), retinal health (glaucoma and macular degeneration) as well as for vertigo, blood circulation to

brain and extremities and tinnitus. Additionally, it is used to manage dementia or Alzheimer's symptoms and to reduce emotional and physical symptoms of PMS.

**Key Energetics:** It is warming, slightly bitter and astringent and so is used to dry dampness and move stagnant energy.

As a circulatory stimulant, it enhances peripheral and cerebral circulation, widening blood vessels for better oxygen delivery. As a cognitive support, it is known for its "nootropic" effect, supporting memory, focus and mental clarity. An antioxidant/nervine, it protects nerve cells from oxidative stress and helps regulate neurotransmitters.

#### Active Constituents:

1) Flavonoid glycosides (approximately 24%) act as potent antioxidants and free radical scavengers, protecting cellular membranes from oxidative stress.

2) Terpene lactones (approximately 6%) include ginkgolides (A, B, C, and J) and bilobalide. They are known for their ability to inhibit platelet-activating factor (PAF), thereby reducing platelet aggregation and decreasing blood clotting. They also act as neuroprotective agents by antagonizing GABA receptors.

#### Therapeutic Actions:

1) Ginkgo protects neurons against ischemic injury and aging by reducing oxidative stress and inhibiting amyloid- $\beta$  neurotoxicity.

2) Improved blood flow (hemorrhheologic): Ginkgo promotes vascular health by inducing vasodilatation, increasing nitric oxide production and lowering blood viscosity, which improves peripheral and cerebral circulation.

3) Antioxidant action: Ginkgo serves as a potent free radical scavenger, which is crucial for reducing inflammation and damage to nerve cells.

4) Anti-inflammatory/Anti-oedema: Ginkgolides reduce inflammation, making it useful in mitigating tissue damage.

**Ways to take/Dosage:** Capsules, tablets, liquid tinctures/extracts, teas, and powders. Usually at doses of 120 to 240 mg daily (split into two or three doses), ideally with food for optimal absorption. It is best to choose products containing standardized extract EGb 761 to ensure quality.

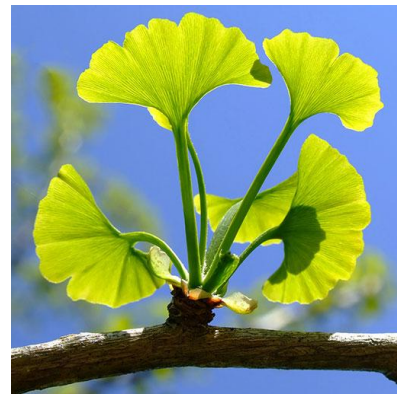


Photo credit:

<https://files.nccih.nih.gov/ginkgo-biloba-thinkstockphotos-146806903-square.jpg>

**Preparations:** Finely chop or crush the dried leaves or use a blender to create a powder for better infusion. Add 1 to 2 teaspoons of leaves per cup of water. Pour hot, but not boiling, water over the leaves and steep for 5 to 10 minutes. For acute medicinal uses, steep 20 to 30 minutes. Strain the leaves using a strainer or a French press. Sweeten with honey/agave or lemon, or enhance it by blending it with green tea.

**Synergistic Herbs:** Consider using *Ginkgo biloba* with these herbs for added enhancement actions:

- Green Tea
- Gotu kola (memory and nerve nourishment)
- Panax Ginseng (cognitive energy)
- Rosemary, *Salvia rosmarinus*, and Sage (memory support)
- Hawthorne and lemon balm (cardiovascular/circulatory support and nervine)
- Eleuthero, *Eleutherococcus senticosus*, (circulatory support)
- Lion's Mane, *Hericium erinaceus* (enhance cerebral neuroplasticity)
- Shrubby Cinquefoil, *Potentilla fruticosa* (boost antioxidant enzymes)

**Contraindications:** For specific medications significantly associated with the risk of bleeding and abnormal coagulation in patients. Do not take prior to surgery due to potential adverse effects (bleeding and arrhythmias) and interactions with anesthetic drugs. May cause asymptomatic ventricular premature contractions.

**References:**

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- [2#:~:text=Gotu%20kola%20is%20one%20example,for%20a%20quick%20brain%2Dboost](#)

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**Herbies Tour Boyce Thompson Arboretum**



On a cool and sunny April 11th Saturday morning, AHA members Teri Thorpe, Rachel Diamant, Mike Hills, and Kathy Eastman and friends Molly Kelly and John Volk went on a self-guided tour through Boyce Thompson Arboretum near Superior, Arizona. We followed the main trail to Ayer Lake and down around the magma ridge to the riparian area along Queen Creek, through the herb garden, the eucalyptus forest and the butterfly demonstration garden.

The group admired the blooming plants, enjoyed watching the wildlife, and being in the cool shade along Queen Creek. Many native desert plants were in bloom: orange globe mallow, yellow desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*) and Senna, yellow-orange flowers of barrel cactus and chain-fruit cholla, fuchsia flowers of hedgehog cactus, lavender flowers of *Gilia diffusum*, red flowers of ocotillo, large white trumpet blooms of *Datura*, mesquite, wolfberry,

purple-blue asters (*Machaeranthera tephrodes*), and pinkish-white flowers of desert milkweed to name a few.

Many butterflies were seen during the walk, including painted lady, swallowtail, queen, and



Antillean blue. Although there were many flowering desert and trailing milkweed plants, no Monarch butterflies were seen. A large Clark's Spiny lizard was sunning itself on a rock.

The Wing Memorial Herb Garden had many varieties of oregano, rosemary, lavender, garlic,

yarrow and geranium, along with a blooming hedge of dwarf pomegranates. Earlier in the morning, a park guide reported that a family of coatimundi were seen in the herb garden area, foraging in the kumquat trees. Unfortunately, the coatimundi family was gone when we arrived in the herb garden area.

We enjoyed



our lunch in the picnic area. A male and female cardinal entertained us by sitting and singing in the branches of the tree shading the picnic table. We made sure we kept our hats on! Other birds that were seen during the walk were coots, ravens, Abert's towhee, turkey vultures, vermilion flycatcher, verdin, and Anna's hummingbirds. After lunch, we strolled through the Wallace Rose Garden which was exploding with rose flowers of many varieties and colors. The Iris Garden area still had a few blooms of dark and light purple, yellow and white irises. All in all, a beautiful day in nature!

Article by Rachel Diamant

Photos by Teri Thorpe and Mike Hills

## April Culinary Dinner - A Taste of Your Favorite Vacation



Our hosts for April Culinary  
Susan and Eric Adamczyk.

Photos this article by  
Drew Templeton

What an amazing evening we had on April 11th, when 22 Herbies gathered at Susan and Eric Adamczyk's home! We got to explore their layered gardens, as well as dine on a delicious array of cuisines.

Susan Adamczyk remembered Italy with Prosciutto wrapped Cantaloupe; Pam Perry and Henry Harding prepared Stuffed Mushrooms; while Todd Templeton told tales of his dad and Fisherman's Wharf with his Vegan Crab Cocktail. Diane and Chris Knudsen celebrated Italy with their tasty Bruschetta with Kalamata Olive Bread Crostini.

Nancy and Jerry Greenberg had stories of trying Clam Chowder in a bread bowl all over the country. Chris and Gary Lueck made Roasted Green Chili Stew-New Mexico Style.

Drew Templeton remembered her days as an exchange student learning to eat French Artichokes with Mustard Sauce; Eric Adamczyk celebrated their trip to Italy with a hearty Lasagna; Kathy Eastman recounted how in Australia you must stop often in your cross-country travels for a "cuppa" and a sweet or savory Australian "Slice." Donna and Keith Lorch made Costa Rican Red Beans and Rice which is a happy memory and comfort food!

Haley Heng brought honeymoon memories with his Greek stuffed Grape Leaves. Helen and Brian Maxwell remembered Santa Fe with Georgia O'Keefe's Green Chile Chicken Enchiladas with shredded lettuce, tomatoes, sour cream, and cilantro.

Marge and John Mogelnicki enjoyed memories of Hawaii with fresh Pineapple and Coconut Cookies; Janet Coleman prepared her family's favorite Whiskey Cake from Texas. Vi Le celebrated their Greek honeymoon with Portokalopita Orange Cake, and Eric remembered a trip to Spain with his

incredible Burnt Basque Cheesecake with Berry/Cherry Compote!

Top favorites were hard to pick, but we chose the Lasagna, Clam Chowder, Portokalopita, and the Basque Cheesecake!

ALSO: Plan to join us for May culinary. We will be at President Shay Emmers' home in Wittman for a brunch with the theme, "Blue Zone Dining" on Saturday, May 9. Todd and I will be hosting on June 6<sup>th</sup> for A Lime Festival!

*Drew*

Drew Templeton, Culinary Chair

<https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/9530-lasagna?smid=em-share>



[Clam Chowder Recipe - The Cozy Cook](#)



[Traditional Greek Orange Cake with Syrup \(Portokalopita\) - My Greek Dish](#)



<https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1024483-basque-cheesecake>

Notes from Eric:

I used 2 pounds of Philadelphia cream cheese instead of the 2.25 pounds listed in the recipe. I used cornstarch instead of flour to make it gluten free. I reduced the cream, sugar, and cornstarch by roughly 10 percent since the cream cheese was cut back. And I added a teaspoon of vanilla in the mix.



## Weed & Feed April 2026

Volunteers gathered the first Saturday in April to watch the bunny actively controlling the proliferation of ornamental carrot seedlings. Last year they were four feet tall and flowering. This year: bunny food. After looking at several weeds and other seasonal plants of interest, we dispersed throughout the garden.

Seeds were collected from the self-sown native tobacco and the Dolichos lab-lab. We were blessed with a tall volunteer who could even reach the seed pods at the top of the trellis. Seeds were collected from the little bags previously placed on the tropical asclepias pods which have bloomed all winter. The pods will always break and disperse seed when we are not watching; bagging eliminates the guesswork. The plants bloomed all winter; no dormancy for them this year at all.



Portuguese Squill in the bulb garden  
Photo by Heidi Maxson

Heidi Maxson and Elena tackled grasses lurking in the bulb garden, where we watched and waited to see if the existing amaryllis blooms would open. They did not, but the *Scilla Peruviana* or Portuguese Squill were beginning to bloom.

A few more white sage plants were tucked into the garden. The very white foliage on this plant provides a counterpoint to all the various greens. The oldest plant has begun to bloom already! Pale

blue flowers are almost invisible, but give the blooming stem an almost smokey appearance.

Weeds were pulled, plants were trimmed, the queen's wreath was both trimmed and roped in to restore access to the steps. It will be a monster come summer at this rate. The big African blue basil got a haircut. Plants from last month are settling well and beginning to grow. The moringa got a hard pruning last summer after a windstorm. We did not pollard it this spring and it is flowering with enthusiasm. No pods, though. I fear it has been too hot this spring to set seed.

The pomegranates were blooming, the blackeye Susies were in full bloom and varied colors, looking particularly spectacular this year. Hot weather shortened the bloom season for sweet peas, but the seed will replenish the garden and we can look forward to another crop come next year. The French lavenders have bloomed nonstop for months, and are still glorious. Even the wimpiest of the Spanish lavenders was putting on a show this month.

Lynne cleaned seeds, while Teri, Kathy, and Perry worked at adding additional trellising under the dwarf myrtle, in hopes of providing a vertical goal for the aggressively rambling Gregg's mist flower, *Conoclinium greggii*. Keith made the rounds and checked irrigation.

Jo Setliff arrived to share baby okras; 'tis the season to get them going. Shaun made a lovely quiche to share; we enjoyed it, along with dates and Easter goodies from Mike, and other fruits, crackers, chips, and tidbits. We snacked, chatted and got a second wind. This once-a-month garden looks great; thanks to all for your help.

Pam Perry and Mike Hills, Demonstration Garden  
Co-Captains



Decollate Snails (pointy spiral shell - native and mostly beneficial) eat slugs and cutworms and insects as well as sometimes fruits lying on the ground.)

Mostly helpful snails in our demo garden. Read more here: <https://extension.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/attachment/SnailsSlugs.pdf>

Photo by Mike Hills

## Arizona Honeysuckle

On a recent visit to Boyce Thompson Arboretum (BTA) near Superior, Arizona, a stunning blossom caught my eye. Trusting technology to lead me to the name of this exotic looking flower, Google led me down the honeysuckle trail. Moving a bit deeper into the internet, an overwhelming number of images “fit” this plant and all belonged to the genus *Lonicera*.



Photo by: © Dan Beckman  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

This genus includes approximately 158 species, living virtually worldwide in the temperate northern latitude under the names of common honeysuckle or woodbine. Most of these relatives are twining vines or shrubs. Descriptive of the BTA bush, I followed a botanical path to the common honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*), highly respected in traditional herbal medicine for the ability to support immune function and reduce inflammation. But I could only suspect and not confirm its identity as a *Lonicera periclymenum*. Not quite ready to give up on honeysuckle, I found the next-door neighbor of *P. periclymenum* in the BTA ironically was also identified as honeysuckle and looked just like the one in my backyard.

Hot in pursuit of the family *Lonicera*, I tried a search for “honeysuckle native to Arizona” and found the golden pollen ticket: the Arizona honeysuckle (*Lonicera arizonica*), sometimes known by its Spanish name *madreselva*! *L. arizonica* is the only naturally occurring honeysuckle in Arizona. Adaptable to diverse microhabitats, this hardy plant grows at altitudes ranging from 6000 to 9000 feet.

*L. arizonica* is unique to Arizona and New Mexico, but might be found in Utah. Of the 46 species and hybrids, seven species are found in Arizona, six are native and one, *Lonicera japonica*, has been introduced. This perennial woody climbing shrub with simple oval to elliptical green leaves forms the perfect backdrop for the debut of two or three whorled clusters of bright tubular red flowers with an orange interior during June and July,

culminating in red berries. Coloration is an easy means of identification, or so I thought. The blossoms are sure to stand out against the deep browns and greens of coniferous forests. The plants can reach from four to six feet under the best conditions.

In popular parlance, the name is derived from the edible sweet nectar found in its tubular flowers. Without a doubt, hummingbirds and bees have discovered the tasty, sweet flavor of the *L. arizonica*. Some berries can be eaten by small mammals and birds who frequent the habitats of the plant. The berries are a whole story in themselves. To be cliché, the overwhelming variety of berries could be classified as the “good, the bad, and the ugly”.

No reports were found specifically regarding medicinal or food value for humans for *L. arizonica*, although many of its brethren are highly sought for curing several types of ailments. *L. caprifolia* has flowers, seeds, berries and leaves used for decreasing swelling and essential oils well known for antioxidants. In contrast, some of the fruit, like *L. japonica*, are mildly upsetting to toxic to humans and most birds, with the exception of the hummingbird who sips honeysuckle nectar like bears dip into beehives. Take note foragers. Due to the honeysuckle’s proclivity to hybridize, as well as the practice of many information have learned, is a like capturing the Cretan bull, truly a Herculean task.

FYI: Ethnobotany suggests that *Lonicera arizonica* has been use as food by indigenous peoples of the southwest. The Navajo also used the leaves in ceremonies involving vomiting. For additional information about *L. arizonica* consult <https://www.botanicalrealm.com/plant-identification/arizona-honeysuckle-lonicera-arizonica/>

Kathleen McCoy, Herbie, Master Gardener, Master Naturalist

Banner Photos: Wild carrots blooming, Breadseed Poppy pod popping, Milkweed bug on milkweed, Salvia thriving, Checkered white butterfly nectaring, Passion vine fruiting, and White Sage flourishing. Just some of the wonders of our spring demo garden. Come early to visit the garden before our “May Salad Super” on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m. Bring a friend, a fresh bouquet from your garden to decorate the table and a salad to share. Photos by Mike Hills

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**Gardening is how I relax.  
It's another form of creating and  
playing with colors.**

*— Oscar de la Renta*