



HerbLetter

August, 2016

Baton Rouge Unit — Herb Society of America

www.hsabr.org

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This issue includes:

- Baton Rouge unit meeting schedule and special events for 2016
- Bring on the comfy chair! Overview from Art Scarbrough
- Photos and reports of recent meetings
- Recipes
- How you can get involved

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August 25 meeting: Preserving the Herbal Harvest

Peggy Cox, a founding member of this Herb Society Unit, will demonstrate how to preserve and keep herbs. 6:30 p.m., Burden Conference Center, 4560 Essen Lane, Baton Rouge.

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Coming in September:

Herb Garden Tour for all members who have joined since May, 2015. You will meet all the plants in the Herb Garden at Burden Center and learn what is ahead for this large public garden. **This is part of the New Member Mentoring program and is required.** There will be a choice of 2 sessions, to be announced in the September HerbLetter.

Upcoming programs:

September 22, 2016, Unit Meeting: Holiday Decorating with Herbs and Botanicals.

You won't want to miss this! Joel Franklin of [Peregrin's](#) will share his expertise and artist's eye so we can learn how to use natural materials for holiday decorating, indoors and out. Bring friends and your camera! 6:30 p.m., Burden Center.

October 1: Southeast District Gathering, Nashville

This will be a wonderful experience and gives members a chance to attend the annual Herb Day the Nashville Unit puts on every year as well as the District meeting. Members received the registration materials in email.

October 1 and 2: Hilltop Arboretum Plant Fest

We will have a tent and sell herbs and herb-related things and make friends and educate about herbs. This is a very fun event and we make money, too. Saturday, October 1, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Sunday, Oct. 2, 12 noon to 4 p.m. Volunteers needed.

October 15: Class: *The Garden as Eco-System*

Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - noon. For this class, we will gather in the large and diverse garden of the Frinks, who also keep chickens and bees. They are experts on creating a healthy urban environment. This is a fundraiser for the Baton Rouge Unit. Limited enrollment, so advance online registration and payment is required; details will be published in the September *HerbLetter*. Participants will receive a book about the effects of gardens on us and how we can help replenish the natural world. Registration will be available online at www.hsabr.org.

October 27 Unit Meeting: Baton Rouge Unit's 25th Anniversary Gala

Meet founders, learn history, eat delicious food. 6:30 p.m., Burden Conference Center.

October 30: Meet the Author

Reception sponsored by the Baton Rouge Unit and Hilltop Arboretum to honor Kathryn Aalto, the author of the NY Times bestselling book *The Natural World of Winnie the Pooh*. Ms. Aalto is a naturalist and writer, an American living in England, who has written a very beautiful book with many photographs and illustrations from the Pooh books, showing how the terrain influenced Milne in his writings for his son, Christopher Robin. Books will be available for purchase. 2:00 - 5:00 p.m., [Hilltop Arboretum](#). Free admission. Please volunteer to bring delicious snacks for this event. We will remind you closer to the date.

November 12: Class: *Making Pickles and Relishes*

Hands-on class, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, Burden Conference Center. This is a fundraiser for the Baton Rouge Unit. Limited enrollment, so advance online registration and payment is required; details will be published in the September *HerbLetter*.

Participants will receive a book about making pickles and relishes and will make and take home our creations. Burden Conference Center.

November: No unit meeting because of Thanksgiving

Sunday, December 18, 2016: Christmas Party for HSABR members. 3:00 - 5:00 p.m., Burden Conference Center.

January 14, 2017: Class: *Making Herbal Perfumes*

Hands-on class, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, Burden Conference Center. This is a fundraiser for the Baton Rouge Unit. Limited enrollment, so advance online registration and payment is required; details will be published in the September *HerbLetter*.

Participants will receive a book about making perfumes, and will make and take home 2 versions of the famous herbal medieval perfume, Queen of Hungary Water. A fabled and beautiful Queen of Hungary used this perfume and tonic all her life, and it kept her youthful and beautiful; so lovely was she that when she was 72 years old, the 18-year-old King of Poland proposed marriage to her!!! We cannot promise the same results, but it is a lovely scent. Who knows?

January 26 Unit Meeting: Medicinal Benefits of Herbs

Dr. Beth Floyd of the Pennington Biomedical Research Center will speak on Pennington's research on the medicinal benefits of herbs. Pennington is part of a national consortium of medical schools and research universities investigating herbs and health. Meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. at the Burden Conference Center, 4560 Essen Lane.

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From the New Chair — Art Scarbrough

I'm going to propose a new definition here. *Herbalist* we know refers to someone who grows, sells, or uses herbs to treat illness. *Herbarist* is defined as an archaic form of the same word; however, I would like to think that herbarist is broader in scope, encompassing the wide-ranging spectrum of native and thoughtfully introduced plants that are a delight to the senses, tantalizing to the tongue, or simply good for what ails a person.



As the Baton Rouge Unit of the Herb Society of America, we stand with thousands of dedicated herbarists across the nation to encourage the nature and benefit of key plant materials in the garden and the wild. Through a series of programs designed to educate and inform the public, coupled with educational opportunities for members and interested others, we represent a key aspect of the synergy between mankind and the plant kingdom. Working with other like-minded nature oriented groups, we present one of the broadest and most significant opportunities to address the natural world in the nation.

As your unit chair for the upcoming year, it is my pleasure to help facilitate and coordinate a wealth of opportunities for our members and the community at large. As is true with all things worthwhile, it takes the combined efforts of a dedicated membership to make our programs a success. Whether serving on a committee, helping to maintain one of our herb gardens, presenting a timely topic at one of our meetings or simply participating as is possible, you are the critical link in the success of our unit.

I look forward to working with each and every one of you in the upcoming year to develop and present fantastic opportunities for learning and understanding the fabulous world of native and introduced herbs!

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Can't Beat Those Weeds?? Just Eat Them!!

By Cathy Scarbrough

One of the best seminars I have been to, and I have lately been to many good ones, was one given by Katherine Gividen on Tuesday, July 25, at Hilltop Arboretum. If you were not there, you missed a treat on information, smells, tastes and ideas. Hosted by Peggy Coates at Hilltop's wonderful facility, and in conjunction with the newly formed Louisiana Master Naturalists of Greater Baton Rouge, 27 people lucked out on something that may become a rage! You really CAN eat your front yard!





Katherine Gividen is a Louisiana and Florida Master Naturalist, chef, hiker, and a master showwoman.

The first part of the seminar started with the normal slide show, which turned out to be different edible “weeds” found just about everywhere. Information was based on Dr. Charles Allen's *Edible Plants of The Gulf South* handbook (which was for sale) but the focus was not on the slides,

but the full experience. There were several teas, a sandwich with “salad,” jams and jellies and one glorious liqueur dessert that was made on site, all corresponding to each of the 11 items she chose to tout. The slides showed a picture of what part(s) of each plant could be used and why, but we got to taste or smell, fresh or dried (and in some cases, both), all 11.

I thought she would be overwhelmed with doing all this herself, with only her sous chef, Curt Auzenne, but it just flowed and everyone got to socialize and compare in between each “weed.” No one sat still if you wanted to participate! And some were very enthusiastic. One lady in the front of the class probably filled a whole notebook with what she was planning to do, just based on the questions she asked of both Katherine and those around her and with such a “happy” in her voice. It was Christmas in July for her!

We teased Peggy about having a Pokémon-type “weed treasure-scavenger hunt” on the Hilltop property. She has people who could provide an area map...where and what to forage? Might get more people involved in nature? And take home their bounty!

We plan on hijacking Katherine for an Herb Society experience similar to this soon as a fund-raiser, limiting the class number! Be on the look-out!

They say a weed is just a misplaced plant. But as with any other edible project, double-check anything you may eat.

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July Meeting: The Bartram Trail Project

Peggy Coates, Director of Hilltop Arboretum, presented a very interesting and lively talk at our July meeting about the explorations of William Bartram, who explored the Gulf Coast and inland 200+ years ago and kept good records of what he saw and of what plants he discovered. William was the son of noted botanist and nurseryman John Bartram from New York, who explored the wilderness of the New World in colonial times. William came



to the South to continue those discoveries. The Bartram family enabled those who followed them to learn what plants were used by the Native Americans and for what purposes, how those plants grew, etc. There are large bronze tablets up around the Baton Rouge area, including at Burden Center, and at Hilltop Arboretum and other places, with quotes from William's journals concerning what he found and saw in those places. There is renewed interest in the work of the Bartrams and there will be conferences in 2017 about their journeys and journals.

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Recipes of the Month

Lemon-Ginger Chicken Salad

From Denise Nelson, Wisconsin Unit

2 c. cooked cubed chicken breast meat (can poach in chicken broth)
1 c. halved seedless grapes
1 c. celery, thinly sliced on the diagonal
(place these items in a large bowl)

In a small bowl, mix

1 T. sugar

¼ tsp. salt

½ tsp ground dried ginger

Then add these items to the small bowl:

½ c. mayonnaise (regular, not low-fat)

¼ c. sour cream (not low-fat)

1 T. yellow zest of a lemon

1 T. lemon juice

Blend these items into the dry ingredients to make the sauce, which you will pour into the large bowl over the chicken, etc. Blend thoroughly. Cover well and refrigerate for at least 12 hours. I usually double this recipe, as it tastes even better after the ingredients blend.

Toast some almonds lightly and serve those as a garnish, along with additional lemon zest. I love to serve this with a fruit salad of cantaloupe, berries, pineapple and more grapes. Enjoy!

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Lavender Frosting

From *Sage Leaves*, the Wisconsin Unit newsletter

This is a lovely and unusual frosting using organic (food grade) lavender or lavender from your garden that hasn't been sprayed:

¼ cup powdered sugar

1 T of either Sicilian Lemon Balsamic vinegar or Peach, White balsamic vinegar

1 tsp. vanilla

1 T finely ground organic lavender (use a coffee grinder or a mortar and pestle)

Add a tiny, tiny drop of lavender food coloring

Sugar crystals, if desired

Blend all of the above ingredients. Add more vinegar a little at a time, if mixture is not easily spreadable or if you want it to drizzle, then it should be the consistency of honey. If you want to drizzle, use a plastic squeeze bottle. You might need to adjust the opening using scissors to get the desired drizzle capacity. Sprinkle sugar crystals on top to finish.

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How You Can Get Involved in HSABR

Members who have joined since the Annual Meeting of 2015 will be the first new members to go through our New Member Mentoring Program. You will be matched with

an experienced (almost said old!) member as your mentor, and will also be expected to participate in New Member group activities, starting with the Garden Tour in September. There will be 2 sessions, but you need only attend one. The dates will be announced in the September *HerbLetter*.

Volunteer to help out at the Hilltop Fall Plant Sale on October 1 and 2.

Bring food to the reception we are hosting with Hilltop in honor of *New York Times* best-selling author Kathryn Aalto (see p. 2 for more on this event).

Join at least one committee or interest group. You'll have more fun if you are meeting other members in a common activity.

Come to meetings. Get involved in the crafts meetings because these crafts are sold as fund raisers.

Take classes if they fit your interests and your schedule.

We still have THREE big garden rooms to build at Burden Center to complete our big public Herb Garden, and we have to raise money to do this. The next phase will include a pavilion to serve as a shelter from rain and sun, as well as being a place to rest. All the remaining three rooms will need fencing and paths, some will need raised beds, and this costs money. We have several fundraising events each year, the biggest of which is our March Herb Day, and we need volunteers to make that day a success.

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Farewell

We bid member Ingeborg Wald a fond farewell as she leaves Baton Rouge for Storrs, CT. Ingeborg donated many pots and plants to our unit which we will be selling at Hilltop and at Herb Day. Thanks, Ingeborg. We will miss you.

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Miscellaneous Stuff

Please send recipes, articles, thoughts, musings, questions, or complaints to Mary Williams, druid@wi.rr.com.

Members are expected to report the hours they spent on Herb Society activities every September. Please open and print out the form in the link below and jot down every hour you spend at a meeting, making a craft for the unit, participating in an event, planning a program or activity, weeding the Burden Herb Garden, etc. EVERY HOUR counts and should be recorded.



[Volunteer Hours Report Form.pdf \(Command Line\)](#)