

APRIL 2022

# Herb Letter

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA  
BATON ROUGE UNIT



## Monthly Meeting, April 28, 2022

6:30–8:00 p.m.

LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens, Lone Burden Conference Center  
4560 Essen Lane, Baton Rouge, LA

Amber Ryan: Canning Jams, Jellies, Pickles, and Relishes (see details on p. 2)

## Herb of the Month—Clove Pink, *Dianthus carophyllus*

*Dianthus* is a large genus that includes many species of pinks and carnations. In addition to *D. caryophyllus*, the clove pinks, other pinks in the group are cottage pinks, (*D. plumarius*), Sweet William (*D. barbatus*), and many others. In addition to being favorite garden flowers, *Dianthus* plants have medicinal and culinary properties. The modern carnation was bred from various species of *Dianthus*, although the characteristic spicy clove fragrance has been lost in some varieties. Most *Dianthus* plants grow in full sun and prefer well-drained neutral to alkaline soil. They are grown as either perennial or annual plants, ranging in hardiness from Zones 3–9. More info on p. 4.

## Message from the Chair

April showers turned into a maelstrom as frontal system after frontal system whipped through our gardening area. Thankfully, our ever-vigilant guardians of the gardens kept them in near pristine shape for our punters' pleasure! In that same vein, a very special thanks to our own Sylvia Lowe who, aptly backed up by Kevin Folvi, conducted a fantastic tour of the Sensory Garden for the OLLI spring herb gardening class! I have it on good authority that the class instructor was blown away by the knowledge, skill level, and presentation skills Sylvia brought to that tour! On behalf of the entire unit...Well Done!

A very special thanks as well to Charbel Harb, who graciously volunteered to take the excess herbs left over from Herb Day and a subsequent sale day off of our hands and offer them at the Oasis Market. By purchasing our excess at a fair price, Charbel saved us untold time and effort going forward. Thanks so much to Charbel and Ruth Harb!

Remember, City Nature Challenge is coming April 28 thru 30. See details on p. 8 of this newsletter! CNC is a fun adventure for the whole family!

Spring has sprung and we stand on the cusp of summer. Beltane, or May Day, is rapidly approaching with the symbolism of the maypole and garlands of flowers helping emphasize this season of hope, expectation, and promise of tomorrow. Now, you may not build fairy castles in your garden, or weave garlands of spring blooms for your front door, or do anything other than take a moment to step back and consider your place in the grand scheme of things. As members of the Herb Society of America Baton Rouge Unit, we are committed "promoting the knowledge, use and delight of herbs through educational programs, research, and sharing the experience of its members with the community." But more than that, we are on the front line in the work for a sustainable future for future generations!

Think about that as the first of May approaches, and feel free to wear a flower in your hair...Nature is watching! 🌿

— Art Scarbrough, HSABR Chair

## Monthly Meeting

April 28, 2022, 6:30–8:00 p.m.

LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens, Lone Burden Conference Center  
4560 Essen Lane, Baton Rouge, LA

**Jams, Jellies, and Pickles.** Amber Ryan, of Ryan's Kitchen in Bogalusa, will speak and demo about preserving foods by making them into pickles, jellies, and jams.

Ryan's Kitchen is a cottage-law kitchen in Bogalusa, LA; Amber sells her locally sourced—and very popular—products at area farmers' markets and also makes items to order.

As always, visitors and guests are welcome. Admission is free for HSABR members, \$5 for all others. Please bring small bills if possible. 🌿



## Our Sensory Garden is Flourishing!

If you haven't visited our Sensory Garden at Independence Park lately, you're missing a treat!

Sylvia Lowe, one of the powerhouses behind keeping the gardens in top form, sent in this report:

"The Sensory Gardens are sprouting and flowering. Many of the plants survived the winter and recent storms in good shape. The parsley and cilantro are humongous!

"The cilantro is beginning to flower and butterflies and bees are everywhere. The mint bed is filling up and the mountain mint has sprouted (I sprinkled seeds from the plants onto the ground and they're growing!). The Scarborough Affair garden is filling with flowers from the self-seeding plants and several have bloomed already."

Kevin Folivi, HSABR intern, sent us a couple of recent pictures of the gardens, and Julie Walsh contributed the one of the bench we bought to allow visitors a place to rest amidst the beauty of the garden. 🌿



The Sensory Garden is in Independence Park, on Independence Blvd., in Baton Rouge.

It features a variety of herbs used for food, seasoning, and visual display. Its name comes from the herbaceous plants that stimulate the five senses of taste, touch, sight, hearing, and smell.



## Herb of the Month: Clove Pink, *Dianthus carophyllus*

From the Herb Society of America:

### Facts:

- In addition to being favorite garden flowers, *Dianthus* spp. have been part of traditional medicine in communities around the world for centuries. They have been used to treat fever, kidney stones, urinary tract infections, constipation, and dysmenorrhea, among other ailments.
- It is thought that the Romans added *Dianthus* flowers to wine to infuse the clove-like fragrance. In England, in the Middle Ages, this was done as well, which was the source of the garden pink being called sops-in-wine.
- A red or scarlet carnation was adopted as Ohio's official state flower in 1904, to honor President William McKinley who liked to wear a red carnation in the buttonhole on the lapel of his jacket.
- Carnations became the symbol of Mother's Day in the United States when Miss Anna Jarvis sent 500 white carnations in honor of her mother to everyone in her mother's church on the very first Mother's Day in 1908. She requested that the flower be considered representative of purity, strength, and endurance, symbols of ideal motherhood.
- Carnations of various colors are used around the world for a wide variety of special occasions and to express sentiments mostly relating to love, appreciation, and distinction. The color of the flower may be specific for the feeling.
- Culinary uses for *Dianthus* flowers include flavoring beverages such as wine, cordials, and cocktails, simple syrups for beverages and desserts, and adding to butter and vinegar. The flowers can be candied, pickled, added to salads, desserts, and as edible garnishes.
- Since the 17th century, carnation petals have been used in the making of the French liqueur Chartreuse.



### Tips for using clove pinks:

- Cut off and discard the white base of the flower petals, sepal, and style attached to the flowers before use as they are bitter.
- Do not use commercially grown carnation flowers to avoid pesticide residue.
- Shake out and rinse flower petals prior to use. One technique is to place in a colander or strainer and submerge into a bowl of cold water. Drain and let dry on a clean towel.
- Add to salads, top cakes and other desserts, steep in beverages, and use in candy making.
- Use in a compound butter with other herbs for muffins and other baked goods.
- Freeze flowers in ice cube trays with water, lemonade, or tea to add to beverages.
- Use with other fresh herbs or alone to make tea, 1 cup of boiling water to 1 tablespoon of fresh petals or herb blend. Steep 3–5 minutes. 🌿

## Clove Pink Recipes

### ***Dianthus* Simple Syrup**

1 cup water  
1 cup sugar  
1 cup of *Dianthus* petals, white base removed

Rinse flower petals in cold water. Lay flowers out on a clean towel to dry. Combine sugar and water in a small saucepan over medium-low heat. Simmer until sugar is dissolved, 3–5 minutes. Remove from the heat and add flower petals. Cover and let mixture sit for 30 minutes to overnight. Strain into a clean jar. Let cool and store in the refrigerator. Use in cocktails, tea, and other beverages and desserts.



### **Flower Petal Butter**

½ cup butter, softened  
*Dianthus* petals, including carnations (organic) and pinks

In a bowl, blend butter and petals together. Place blended butter on wax paper and form into a log shape. Wrap, twisting the ends to secure and refrigerate for several hours before use so the flavors will blend. Alternatively, place blended butter into a decorative bowl. Cover and refrigerate. Soften slightly before use. Note: additional edible flower petals such as violets, calendulas, roses, and lavender can be included.



### **Fettuccine with Mushrooms and Clove Pinks**

2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
2 shallots, finely minced  
1 cup sliced mushrooms  
¾ teaspoon chopped fresh marjoram or  
¼ teaspoon dried marjoram

salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

¼ cup fresh clove pink petals, torn into small pieces, white heels removed

1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley

1 pound fettuccine

Parmesan cheese, for topping

In a skillet over medium heat, warm butter and oil. Add shallots and cook for 1 minute. Add mushrooms and marjoram and cook, stirring, for 3 to 4 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, add clove pinks and parsley, and toss. Cover pan, turn heat to low, and keep mixture warm. Cook fettuccine according to package directions. Drain and immediately add hot pasta to mushroom mixture and toss well to coat. Add more butter or olive oil, if desired. Top with the Parmesan. Serve hot. 🌿



— Almanac.com

## What's Happening in Our Members' Gardens

Kevin Folivi has been growing turmeric! He has three varieties right now, including a white turmeric he says is much harder to obtain than the others. He sent us a photo of one of his plants in bloom last fall, and one featuring the rhizomes of the three varieties he's growing.



Julie Walsh is having good success with calendula. She writes: "During the fall/winter months of southeast Louisiana, calendula does grow. It grows well from October—May in the northwest corner of my yard. Once the weather turns to the typical summer temperatures these plants will die, but the oregano and tarragon become prolific and take up the empty space. Before the flowers completely fade, I harvest them to make a calendula tea and salve."



(continued)

And **Claudia Ross** says, “2022 Herb Day brought an abundance of stunning herbs this year, and it was hard not to grow all of them at home! I started a few varieties of my favorites—thyme—in a planter to use for teas and enhancing flavors in my cooking. For me, the best use is a warm cup of thyme tea to help settle down the day.

“The other two planters outside my kitchen door are dedicated to growing seasoning for cooking: cutting celery, trailing rosemary, sage, and sweet basil. A little bit of heaven awaits the day as I walk outside and catch the scents of the cilantro, sassy summer lemon yarrow, hot & spicy oregano, and lovage. It’s delightful to pull off a snippet to taste when I pass the planter on my way to check out other plants in my yard!

“I mainly use my herbs for cooking—although I know there are medicinal benefits, it’s hard to get past their flavor!” 🌿



## **HAS Online Courses: Explore the World of Herbs at Your Own Pace**

HSA is partnering with trusted herbal educators to develop online courses, workshops and on-demand programs for those who wish to further their knowledge of herbs, their cultivation and use. Designed to cover topics from growing to preserving and from cooking to crafting use, HAS’s online courses will explore the fascinating world of herbs for gardeners at all interest levels. And members always receive discounts at registration!

The first course, [Introduction to Herbs](#), offers three hours of content, downloadable resources, and quizzes. More content will follow including videos, favorite webinars from the library, demonstrations and workshops. Whether you are a newer gardener, an avid chef, or a budding herbalist, there is always something new to learn about herbs! 🌿



## The Baton Rouge City Nature Challenge

APRIL 29—MAY 2, 2022

The City Nature Challenge is a four-day friendly nature competition that goes on across the globe April 29 to May 2, 2022.

We are competing against the Greater New Orleans area, the Southwest Louisiana area, and 400+ other cities all over the world!

The goal is to see which city can show the most wildlife in their area, including wild plants, animals, insects, mushrooms, fish, turtles—everything! Let's show off Baton Rouge's amazing wildlife diversity and unique ecosystems.

**TAKING PART IS EASY!**

Find wildlife. It could be a bird, insect, plant or any other sign of life.

Take a picture. Snap a photo of what you find with your smart phone or digital camera.

Share! Upload your observation to iNaturalist.org or with the iNaturalist mobile app and it will be automatically added to the contest project.

New for 2022! Now eBird.org and eBird app observations will count toward the Baton Rouge City Nature Challenge, too.

Any observations made in these parishes during the official event period will automatically count toward the challenge: Ascension, Assumption, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, St. James, Tangipahoa, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana.

We did very well last year—help us do it again! For more information, see [BR City Nature Challenge](#). 🌿

**APRIL 29 - MAY 2**  
**IN THE 12 PARISH BATON ROUGE REGION**

**1.**  
Find a wild bug,  
animal, plant, or any  
other wild organism

**2.**  
Take a picture

**3.**  
Upload to  
iNaturalist.org  
or the app

**4.**  
Great job!  
Go find more!

**WWW.BRNATURECHALLENGE.ORG**

**PARTICIPATE LOCALLY    CONTRIBUTE GLOBALLY    400+ CITIES    LET'S WIN, BR!**

## Help Make Our Newsletter Better!

Do you like to read stories about what our members are doing in their gardens? Photos of plants? So does everyone else! Help us keep our newsletter interesting by contributing something! It doesn't have to be a long, scholarly article (although if you want to contribute something like that, we'd be glad to have it!); just a few words about your herbs, a recipe you love, or a photo of what's looking good in your garden right now will add a lot.

Please send submissions to [hsabrnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:hsabrnewsletter@gmail.com). We'll appreciate it greatly! 🌿

## Sensory Garden Update

Maintenance sessions for the Sensory Garden at the Independence Botanical Garden, 7950 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806, are on Thursday mornings from 9:00–11:00 a.m., except on the week of the monthly meeting, when we meet on Saturday instead of Thursday. Any and all are welcome, even if you can come only once a month or less. If you can help keep the largest herb garden in this area looking its best, please contact [Judy Hines](#). 🌿

*Unless otherwise specified, monthly meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month from January through October, at the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens, Lone Burden Conference Center, 4560 Essen Lane, Baton Rouge, LA., from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Visitors and guests are welcome. Admission is free for HSABR members, \$5 for all others.*

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HerbLetter is a monthly publication of the Baton Rouge Unit of the Herb Society of America, for and by its members and friends. For questions, comments, corrections, or to submit articles, announcements, or photos, please write [hsabrnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:hsabrnewsletter@gmail.com). Items must be received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month for inclusion in the next issue of HerbLetter.

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## Upcoming Events

### THURSDAY SENSORY GARDEN MAINTENANCE SESSIONS, 9:00–11:00 A.M.:

April 21  
May 5  
May 12  
May 19

### SATURDAY SENSORY GARDEN MAINTENANCE SESSIONS, 9:00–11:00 A.M.:

April 30  
May 28

**May 26, 2022**

**ANNUAL MEETING, 6:30–8:00 P.M.**

**Kevin Langley**, Capital Area Beekeepers' Association: Encouraging Bees and Other Pollinators