

FEBRUARY 2024

Herb Letter

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
BATON ROUGE UNIT



Monthly Meeting, February 22, 2024

6:30–8:00 p.m.

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

All hands on deck for last-minute Herb Day preparations! HSABR members (and any interested guests!), please plan to attend! See p. 3 for a complete run-down of what to expect on our big day!

Herb of the Month — Paprika (*Capsicum annuum* cultivars)

Paprika, a vibrant and versatile herb derived from select cultivars of *Capsicum annuum* peppers, adds a burst of color and flavor to dishes worldwide. Originating from Central and South America, paprika is celebrated for its mild, sweet, or smoky taste, depending on the pepper variety and processing method. Commonly ground into a fine powder, it infuses soups, stews, meats, and sauces with its characteristic warmth and depth. Beyond its culinary prowess, paprika also boasts health benefits, containing vitamins A, E, and antioxidants that contribute to overall well-being. Whether sprinkled as a garnish or incorporated as a key ingredient, paprika remains a beloved staple in kitchens for its ability to elevate dishes with its distinctive aroma and taste. More information on p. 6. 🌿

Message from the Chair

Herb Day 2024 is shaping up to be the event of the year!! HD 2023 was absolutely wonderful with roughly 3,000 in attendance. We had to have more herbs trucked in that day as they went fast. We learned so much and have made many improvements to the flow. There will be thousands of herbs and LSU tomatoes again this year! We have three great educational classes that you won't want to miss. Vendors and food trucks will not disappoint either. You will enter through the Orangerie where you can taste and purchase special herb blend teas and herb pastries. On to the beautiful Burden grounds to visit the vendors, food trucks, and herbs. Community Coffee has generously donated free Espresso + Cream beverages for you to enjoy as well. Remember to bring your wagon! Small bills are preferred, and we will also accept card payments.

—Sylvia 🌿

Sensory Garden

The worker bees returned to the Sensory Garden earlier this month to begin the task of removing the dead plants and cleaning up. We filled four huge garbage bags and left piles of larger items to be gathered by the wonderful BREC crew. Thanks to Judy Hines, Sylvia Lowe, Heather Miller, and two non-members, Rafy Rigney and Sterling Sightler. Thank you, ladies!!

Sensory Garden Schedule: 8:00–10:00 a.m. February 29, March 7, March 16, March 21. 🌿

Herb Day 2024!

It's thyme to spice up your garden!

Join us on Saturday, February 24, 2024, for our annual Herb Day at the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens, 4560 Essen Lane, Baton Rouge, LA! Gates open at 8:00 a.m. (no early birds, please!) and we'll wrap up at 2:00 p.m.

Cash is preferred; please bring small bills if possible. Plan to arrive early for best selection and you might want to bring a wagon for your purchases!

HSABR will have thousands of healthy herb plants for sale (see below), and in the Orangerie, we'll have our Herbal Tea Bar set up to sample and sell a variety of caffeine-free tisanes!

Herbal Tea Bar

We'll not only be offering several returning favorites such as our popular Feeling Good Flower Tea and Passionberry Fruit Tisane, but have some exciting new flavors, including Citrus Chamomile, Herbal Chocolate Chai, Hibiscus Mint, and Hibiscus Zest!

In addition, we'll have free classes in the Conference Center!

Class Schedule:

9:00–10:00 a.m. | Beginning Herb Gardening with Art Scarbrough

10:15–11:15 a.m. | Container Gardening/Companion Planting with Ruby Homayssi

11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. | Preserving the Herb Harvest with Sylvia Lowe

Herbs

Because of the vagaries of weather and other factors, we don't always get everything we ask for, but this is some of what we're hoping for:

Anise hyssop

Asclepias (Milkweed) (Red Butterfly, Silky Deep Red)

Banana (Musa Dwarf Cavendish)

Basil (African Blue, Blue Spice, Sweet)

Bay Laurel

Blackberry (Prime Ark Freedom)

Blueberry (Emerald, Jewel)

Calendula (Powerdaisy Orange, Powerdaisy Sunny)

Catnip

Chamomile, German

Chicory

Chives (Garlic, Plain)

Cilantro, Santo

Chervil

Dill

Fennel

Garlic, Elephant

Geranium — Mosquito Plant
Lavender (Goodwin Creek, Pinnata)
Lemon balm (Citronella)
Lemon Grass
Lovage
Mint (Applemint, Banana, Berries N Cream, Black Currant, Chocolate, Citrata
Lime, Curly, Ginger, Hilary's Sweet Lemon, Jessica's Sweet Pear, Kentucky Colonel, Mo-
jito, Orange, Pineapple, Spanish, Strawberry, Swiss, Thai)
Oregano (Greek, Hot & Spicy, Italian)
Parsley (Curly, Plain)
Patchouli
Pepper (California Wonder, Cayenne, Habanero, Jalapeño)
Rosemary (Abraxas, Barbecue, Creeping, Hunt Carpet, Spice Island, Tuscan Blue)
Rue
Sage (Officinalis, Pineapple, Tricolor)
Sorrel
Tarragon (Spanish)
Thyme (French, Golden, Lemon, variegated, Mother of, Orange, Silver Queen lemon)
Yarrow (New Vintage Rose, New Vintage White)

Landscape plants

Digitalis (Artic Fox Rose, Dalmatian Purple, Foxglove Camelot Mix)
Firespike, Red
Lupinus, Texas Bluebonnet Blue
Virginia Sweetspire

Vegetables

Artichoke, Green Globe
Celery, cutting
Onion, Evergreen White, Bunch

LSU AgCenter Tomatoes

Large varieties

Cherokee Purple – (Heirloom) most well-known and popular
Mortgage Lifter – (Heirloom) best performer in AgCenter trials
Celebrity Plus – medium slicer but consistent taste winner (AAS Winner)
Bella Rosa – extra-large slicer with great taste (growers' choice)
Big Beef – well-known meaty beefsteak tomato (AAS Winner)
Better Boy Plus – well-known popular beefsteak tomato

Cherry varieties

Sun Gold – all-time landslide taste winner
Sun Peach – Judges' pick for best flavor

Please note that the tomatoes that will be offered for sale are immature plants; this is by design so they will be at the optimum size for planting on March 15, which is considered the earliest safe planting date. Planting tips will be available at Herb Day.

Vendors

We expect a wonderful variety of local craftspeople and artisans on hand to offer their creations:

All Jammed Up Pepper Jelly

Blue Lotus Visions — Canvas/Prints/Nature/Art

Handmade Pottery by Susan Rodrigue — Pottery

Loveday Funck Art — Digital Fairytale Art

Arte di Kristen — Butterfly wings: jewelry and pressed flowers

Bee Pure Apiary — Honey Sales

Ryan's Kitchen — Homemade Jelly and Jams

Let It Lye Soaps & Sundries — Soaps

Lauren Summers Art — Crochet, Prints, Various Art Mediums

My Friend Kelly Art — Dried flower art, jewelry, custom

Benchwork Originals — Artisan Touchstone Jewelry

Alena Vinet — Handmade Accessories

New Orleans Green Home and Garden Décor

Tiffany Ann Art Design — Colorful Art

Thomas Carpenter — Birdhouses, yard art

Washed Up by Alivia Rae — Custom/handmade soap

Kevin Langley — Beekeeper

G&K Creations — Metal Art, handmade

Sassy & Classy Design — Oyster Shell Art & Jewelry

Wildcrafted Creations — Organic Elderberry Syrup, teas, tinctures

Season to Taste — Ultra Premium Olive Oils and aged balsamics

Chenyville: Project Hope — Cookies

Sassy&Classy by Design

Creations by Shirley Alford

Other gardening groups on hand with informational booths include the Bromeliad Society and the Master Gardeners, as well as our co-hosts, the [LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens](#).

Food!

Serving up some good food and treats will be some festival favorites:

The Jambalaya Shop (Jambalaya and its kissing cousin, Pastalaya)

Louisiana Lemonade (homemade lemonade and other treats)

Grammy's Kettle Corn (sweet, salty, and spicy kettle corn)

City Gelato (gelato made with seasonal Louisiana fruit)

No need to stop for coffee on your way to Herb Day—Community Coffee has generously

provided bottles of their fabulous Espresso + Cream drinks! Get there early for your free bottle. Huge thanks to Community Coffee for helping sponsor our event!

Herb of the Month: Paprika (*Capsicum annuum* select cultivars)

From the Herb Society of America:

Facts:

- Paprika is made from grinding air dried peppers from selected varieties of the common pepper plant, *Capsicum annuum*.
- *Capsicum annuum* includes sweet bell peppers as well as spicy chili pepper varieties of all different shapes and sizes.
- Paprika can range in flavor from mild (no heat) to pungent and hot or smoked, it is made from a variety of different varieties of peppers.
- Drying the peppers over wood fires makes smoked paprika.
- The coloring agent in paprika is used to add red color to meat, sausage, and other processed foods. It can also be used to dye fabric or eggs.
- This herb is a popular seasoning in many countries, including Spain, Mexico, Hungary and those in the Balkan Peninsula. Since paprika can be made from any pepper, Spanish, U.S., and Hungarian paprika all taste different. How spicy it is also depends on whether or how much of the seeds and membrane of the chili peppers are included.
- U.S. sweet paprika is generally listed at 0 on the Scoville Heat Unit Scale. Hungarian hot paprika generally ranks between 100–500 SHUs.
- Because paprika is made by finely grinding the pepper, it begins losing flavor right away. It is recommended that paprika is replaced every 6–8 months.
- Paprika is primarily a flavorless garnish on cold foods. The flavor is released with heat and it can be added at any point in the cooking process.
- Medicinal uses for paprika include using it to reduce joint pain, as a digestive aid and to assist in circulation.
- Paprika is high in vitamin C, even more than citrus fruits, high in lutein, and is rich in carotenoids. 🌿



Tips:

- Combine paprika with other dried herbs and spices to create rubs for poultry, meat, or fish.
- Use as a seasoning with olive oil prior to roasting potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots or other vegetables.
- Season soups and stews, especially carrot, squash or pumpkin soup with favorite type of paprika.
- Mix into hummus and other dips or spreads.
- Top hummus with hot smoked Spanish paprika, fresh lemon juice, and chopped parsley or fried chickpeas.
- The flavor of paprika is released when heated.
- Paprika flavor varies by the type, the type of peppers used, and method of production. In general, there is sweet paprika (no heat); Hungarian, which varies in flavor from very mild, to pungent, to strong; and Spanish (pimentón), which comes in mild, spicy, and smoked. 🌿

Paprika Recipes

Smoky Spiced Sugar Rub

This sweet, lightly spiced rub is perfect on steaks, but also on chicken, pork, and lamb.

½ cup packed light brown sugar	2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 tablespoon ground coriander	2 teaspoons smoked paprika
1 tablespoon kosher salt	

In a small bowl, whisk all of the ingredients until well combined. Can be made ahead. Store the smoky spiced sugar rub in an airtight container for up to 3 months. Makes about ½ cup.

—Justin Chapple
Food and Wine, updated August, 2023 🌿

Lebanese Onion Sauce

4 large onions, sliced
6 tablespoons butter
2 teaspoons spice mixture (see below)

Spice Mixture
1 tablespoon cinnamon
1 tablespoon paprika
1 tablespoon salt
¾ teaspoon cayenne pepper

Warm a heavy pan over low heat and add butter. As butter begins to melt, toss in onions and cook, stirring frequently, for 30–40 minutes. Keep heat low to avoid burning the butter. When onions are done, sprinkle the spice mixture over the onions and toss

thoroughly. Serve the Lebanese Onion Sauce with meatloaf, with chopped tomatoes as a garnish. You might also try adding a bit of the spice mixture to your favorite meatloaf recipe.

Spice Mixture

Stir spices together and keep in a tightly covered jar.

— Ruth Mary Papenthien, HSA Virginia Commonwealth Unit,
Colonial Triangle of Virginia Unit

The Herb Society of America's Essential Guide to Growing and Cooking with Herbs 🌿

Skillet Pork Tenderloin with Mustard and Smoked Paprika

2 tablespoons Dijon mustard

1 ½ teaspoons smoked paprika (hot or
sweet)

1 teaspoon kosher salt

Two 1-pound pork tenderloins

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Preheat the oven to 425°F. In a small bowl, stir the Dijon with the paprika and salt. Spread the mixture all over the pork. In a large ovenproof skillet, heat the olive oil over moderately high heat. Add the tenderloins and cook until browned on the bottoms, about 5 minutes. Flip the pork and transfer the skillet to the oven. Roast for 15 to 20 minutes, until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part registers 135°F. Transfer to a work surface and let rest for 10 minutes, then cut the pork into thick slices and serve. Serving suggestion: roasted squash and garlicky green beans.

—Julia Turshen
Food & Wine, February 2017 🌿

Help Make Our Newsletter Better!

Our newsletter is only as good as what we receive to put into it! We encourage (read: beg!) our members to contribute stories about what you're doing in your gardens, photos of plants, etc. You don't have to write a long, scholarly article (although if you do want to contribute something like that, we'll be glad to have it!); just give us a few words about your herbs, a recipe you love, or a photo of what's looking good in your garden right now. It'll add a lot!

Please send submissions to hsabrnewsletter@gmail.com. We'd appreciate it greatly!

—Kathleen Harrington
HSABR Newsletter Editor 🌿

Garden Maintenance

Maintenance sessions for the Sensory Garden at the Independence Botanical Garden, 7950 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806, will be announced as they are scheduled. If you can help keep the largest herb garden in this area looking its best, please contact [Judy Hines](#) or [Sylvia Lowe](#) and they'll get you on the Worker Bees mailing list!

We also need volunteers to help maintain the Heritage Garden at Burden. If you'd like to get in on this, please contact [Julie Walsh](#). 🌿

Unless otherwise specified, monthly meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month from January through June and August 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.

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. Items must be received by the 10th of each month for inclusion in the next issue of HerbLetter.

Disclaimer: It is the policy of The Herb Society of America, Baton Rouge Unit, not to advise or recommend herbs for medicinal or health use. Information offered in this newsletter is for educational purposes only. Neither the Herb Society of America nor the Baton Rouge Unit (HSABR) makes medical claims or dispenses medical advice. Women who are pregnant or nursing, and persons with known medical conditions, should consult their licensed healthcare provider before taking any herbal product. HSABR neither endorses nor is in any way responsible for the content of links shared here. Readers must do their own research concerning the safety and usage of any herbs or supplement.

Upcoming Events

March 28, 2024

Monthly Meeting, 6:30–8:00 p.m.

KEVIN LANGLEY: PLANTING FOR BEES