

FEBRUARY 2023

Herb Letter

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
BATON ROUGE UNIT



Monthly Meeting, February 23, 2023

6:30–8:00 p.m.

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

Pre-Herb Day Meeting (see p. 2 for details)

Herb of the Month — Cumin (*Cuminum cyminum*)

Cumin is a versatile spice that adds a unique flavor and aroma to many dishes and is an important ingredient in many different cuisines around the world, particularly in Indian, Middle Eastern, and Mexican cooking. It is derived from the seeds of the *Cuminum cyminum* plant and is known for its strong, earthy, and slightly bitter flavor. Cumin seeds can be used whole or ground, and are commonly added to curries, stews, soups, and spice blends. They can also be toasted to enhance their flavor before use. Apart from its culinary uses, cumin has long been valued for its medicinal properties. It is believed to aid digestion, improve immunity, and have anti-inflammatory effects. More information on p. 5. 🌿

Message from the Chair

My first meeting as a member was January of 2020. Claudia Ross was the membership chair and she welcomed me with open arms. I sat timidly (can ya believe that?) in the meeting and listened. I heard about Herb Day and that the meeting in February would be a working meeting. I attended that meeting but was still so confused listening to all the plans, directions, assignments, etc. I showed up on the Friday before to help set out plants and met more members. The only name I could remember was Claudia's. That Herb Day Sale was a whirlwind and very successful. On Saturday I showed up and just floundered my way around helping wherever I was needed. Mary Williams was the greeter at the entrance of the sale, Claudia was the runner and money woman, everyone else was just a blur to me. Julie Walsh was the Chair of HSABR then, but I really didn't meet her. Julie was very busy. I just kept hearing her name, over and over. Haha

Well, fast-forward through 2021 and 2022 where we had to pare down the event due to COVID (I hate having to reference that) and were still very successful. I've learned so much in this organization and am still learning. Now I'm chair of Herb Day and I could not do this without all the wonderful people who are helping me row this boat (and even towing me in). THIS IS GOING TO BE A BANNER YEAR!!! I FEEL IT IN MY BONES!!! Thanks to all those members who are working so diligently to make this event as successful as possible.

HSABR is going all out again this year! We have many wonderful vendors, food trucks, speakers, crafts for the kiddos, and a tearoom. Oh, I forgot to mention the guests of honor...THE HERBS!! There will be hundreds of beautiful and fragrant herbs.

So, members, this month's meeting is on February 23rd. Please plan on coming to get your assignments and help on Friday and Saturday. And spread the word on your social media and to all your friends!

I am so excited!!!

— Sylvia 🌿

Monthly Meeting

January 26, 2022, 6:30–8:00 p.m.

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

This is the all-hands-on-deck meeting because Herb Day is two days away! We'll be doing last minute prep prior to setting up Friday evening, getting everyone their assignments, and trying to tie up all the loose ends!

There's no program this month, but visitors and guests are welcome if you'd like to come see what happens "backstage" before Herb Day and maybe take on a role for yourself! Because it's a working meeting, we'll waive the \$5 fee for visitors this month. 🌿

It's Time for Herb Day!

Please join us on Saturday, February 25, 2023, from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden for the biggest Herb Day we've had in three years!

The herb plants are being delivered and they look great! Ruth Harb, along with Carol Roshto and Carol's friends Mike and Debbie, were on hand on Friday to unload the first shipment at Burden. We'll have all sizes, from the little 4" square pots and round pulp pots, to 4.5" round white pots, vegetables in 4-packs, lavender, artemisia, and aloe vera in quarts, gallons of bay, blackberries, and mosquito plants, and more!



Ruth Harb and Carol Roshto with the first shipment of herbs!

And of course, we can't forget the classes! Art Scarbrough will kick off the presentations in the Conference Center at 9:00 a.m. with an overview of herbs and their history in "The Herbal Adventure. Jen Blanchard, a former HSABR Garden Intern, will follow at 10:00 with "Native Louisiana Medicinal Plants," and Ruby Homayssi will wrap things up at 11:00 with "Container Gardening," where she'll show the fantastic results she gets from growing her herbs in containers.

Julie Walsh has lined up a really nice selection of vendors, too—they'll be set up in and in front of the Orangerie. Look for these great local businesses!

Art by Bella Haydel (beeswax wraps and skin care)

[Turquoise Lily Designs Jewelry](#)

[Paul Taylor Photography](#)

All Jammed Up (pepper jelly preserves)

[Lauren Summers Art](#)

Bird Houses & Louisiana Themed Yard Art

[Pottery by Susan Rodrigue](#)

[Blue Lotus Vision Art](#)

[My Friend Kelly](#) (floral preservation, collage, and resin art)

[Loveday Funck Art](#)

[Delia V Soaps](#)

[Ryan's Kitchen](#) (small batch preserves)

Lil Soaps 4 U

And don't forget, HSABR will have an herbal tea bar in the Orangerie, where you can sample and purchase some wonderful tisanes!

Sharon Kleinpeter has arranged for some food trucks to come and keep us from starving while we work and shop! Check out the trucks from [Capital Seafood](#), [That's a Wrap](#), [City Gelato](#), [Grammy's Kettle Corn](#), and [Prime Time Seafood](#)!

Herb Day is our biggest community outreach event and biggest fundraiser of the year, with proceeds going to support our mission and internship program. In 2021, our group established an annual Garden Internship Program to enable a college intern to receive professional experience in two public gardens in Baton Rouge that are under the care and keeping of the HSA Baton Rouge Unit. More on the interns in our next newsletter!

Our community events provide opportunities for members of HSABR to engage in hands-on outreach in the horticulture of herbs by meeting and engaging with the public, conducting garden tours, and giving presentations to interested groups. Herb Day is an excellent opportunity for creating a community that is more connected and sustainable. Please help us by sharing this event and thank you for your support! 🌿

HSA EdCon 2023 Update

Herbal Friends, we're into the home stretch with EdCon2023, the big national educational Herb Society of America conference here in Baton Rouge April 26–29. It'll be at the Crowne Plaza hotel.

We need several things from you:

1. Really good donations of arts, crafts, antiques, garden-related things for the raffle. These should have a value of at least \$25 (for instance, I am making an herbal-themed quilt for the raffle). Talk with your local merchants and ask them to donate nice items. Download a copy of the [letter soliciting donations](#) and the [receipt for you to give donors](#). We will list all donors as Sponsors, so keep track of the donations you solicit.
2. Can you volunteer to staff the registration table or the raffle tables for an hour or two? Can you be a friendly greeter for our out-of-town guests at the Welcome Reception on Thursday, April 27 starting at 5:00 p.m.? Can you be a friendly face for our guests at meals?
3. If you want to volunteer a couple of hours, contact me at 414-526-3016 or druid-mary1809@gmail.com and we'll find a time that suits you.

I'll be at the meeting on the 23rd just before Herb Day if you want to talk about this.

Be sure to register for EdCon! We have a wonderful program of speakers and presenters that spotlight South Louisiana. If you have friends who are interested, non-members can register for EdCon, program, meals, entertainment, etc. Registration information is on the [Herb Society of America](#) website.

— Mary Williams, co-chair of EdCon2023 🌿

Herb of the Month: Cumin (*Cuminum cyminum*)

From the Herb Society of America:

Facts:

- The cumin plant produces small white or pink flowers on umbels, which then produce the small seeds with longitudinal ridges.
- The aromatic and flavorful seeds (which are technically the fruits) of the cumin plant have been cultivated since around 2200–1400 B.C.E.
- Evidence of cumin use has been discovered in ancient Egypt and Syria. And known to be significant spice for the Minoans in ancient Crete. It is known to have been used as both a seasoning and a preserving spice in mummification.
- Many cultures use cumin to flavor their food, including those in Europe, North Africa, Middle East, South Asia, and Mexico.
- Ancient Greeks and Romans had containers of cumin on their tables and used it in place of black pepper. They also made a paste of it to spread on bread, much like peanut butter.
- During the Middle Ages, Europeans believed cumin would keep lovers faithful. Cumin cakes were given by girls to their lovers before they left for a long journey, both to keep them faithful and to ensure their safe return.
- Cumin's popularity in Europe was replaced by caraway.
- Cumin was introduced to the Americas by the Spanish and Portuguese settlers. Now it is used to flavor many diverse dishes such as curries, meats, pickles, cheeses, sausages, soups, chilies, and stews around the world.
- The essential oil of cumin has both antibacterial and antioxidant properties. Cumin has many traditional medicinal uses ranging from reducing inflammation, treating gastrointestinal issues to skin sores.
- Today, research is being conducted on traditional uses, including antibacterial effects, cancer prevention, cholesterol and diabetes management, digestion and weight control.
- Cumin requires 120 frost-free days to produce seeds for harvest.
- India produces about 70 percent of the world's cumin.
- *Cuminum nigrum* is a dark-seeded variety called black, or bitter cumin (not to be confused with the Middle Eastern black cumin, which is an entirely different plant, *Nigella sativa*). 🌿



Cumin Tips

- Store as whole seeds and grind just before using as the flavor degrades rapidly after grinding.
- Both the powdered and whole forms of cumin seeds are used in recipes.
- Dry-roasting the seeds before grinding or adding to recipes to enhances the flavor.
- Use in dry spice rubs for grilling.
- Add to chili, stew, egg dishes, vegetables, cheeses and breads. 🌿

Cumin Recipes

Garfield Elementary's Learning Garden Salsa

This kid-friendly salsa uses cumin rather than jalapeños to spice it up without the heat!

3 cups chopped fresh tomatoes	2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
½ cup chopped green pepper	½ teaspoon cumin
½ cup chopped sweet onion	½ teaspoon salt
¼ cup minced fresh cilantro	½ teaspoon pepper

Stir together and serve with tortilla chips. Enjoy!

— Mentor Public Schools Nutrition Services, Mentor OH

White Chili

2 medium onions, chopped	1 (15-ounce can white shoepeg corn
2 large cloves garlic, chopped	2 whole chicken breasts, cooked and cut in small pieces
1 teaspoon ground cumin	2 cubes chicken bouillon
1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano	2 can undrained green chiles
½ cup chopped cilantro	1 cup Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
1 (15-ounce) can garbanzo beans	
1 (15-ounce) can cannellini beans	

Combine all ingredients in a greased casserole. Bake for 1 ½ hours. Serve with Monterey Jack cheese.

— Elaine Livingston, HSA New England Unit

The Herb Society of America's Essential Guide to Growing and Cooking with Herbs, edited by Katherine K. Schlosser 🌿

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'll appreciate it greatly! 🌿

—Kathleen Harrington
HSABR Newsletter Editor

Sensory Garden Maintenance

When maintenance sessions for the Sensory Garden at the Independence Botanical Garden, 7950 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806, resume, we'll start posting the schedule. Remember, if you can help keep the largest herb garden in this area looking its best, please contact [Judy Hines](#) and she'll get you on the Worker Bees mailing list! 🌿

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.

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

February 25, 2023
Herb Day

March 2023 (date TBA; check newsletter next month)
MONTHLY MEETING, 6:30–8:00 P.M.
Louisiana Native Herbs, by Jen Blanchard

April 2023 (date TBA)
MONTHLY MEETING, 6:30–8:00 P.M.
Seed Savers, by Sylvia Lowe

April 27–30, 2023
EDCON BATON ROUGE

May 25, 2023
MONTHLY MEETING, 6:30–8:00 P.M.
Kevin Langley, with the Capital Area Beekeepers, will speak