

JULY 2021

Herb Letter

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
BATON ROUGE UNIT



Monthly Meeting, July 22, 2021

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

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

**Dr. Elizabeth Floyd: From the Plant to Your Pharmacy:
How National Botanical Research Centers Collaborate to Identify Herbal Medicinal
Properties (see details on p. 2).**

Herb of the Month—Summer Savory

Summer Savory, *Satureja hortensis*

Primarily a culinary herb, North American-native summer savory is also an attractive addition to the landscape and has a history of medicinal use. Learn more about this easy-to-grow annual on p. 4.

Message from the Chair

Rain, rain, go away! The last month has been wetter than a frog's hind feet, keeping us out of our yards and gardens long enough for the vines and tropical foliage to start to take hold! Yet the spirit is strong, and I congratulate those who have weathered the storm, dabbled in dirt, and carried the flag!

Our programs moving forward have been outstanding, with last month's presentation on growing tea in Louisiana by Dr. Yan Chen with the LSU AgCenter, and this month's scheduled presentation by Dr. Beth Floyd of Pennington on the collaborative efforts of research centers to identify the medicinal properties of herbs. Stay tuned for more great talks to educate and tickle our interests in many areas!

As our emphasis remains on sustainable living and native plants, it behooves each of us to learn as much about those areas as possible. With that in mind, we continue to look for knowledgeable presenters in those areas. If you have suggestions, please forward those to Mary Williams, Programs Chair.

Your board met last week and came up with some interesting innovations for the unit moving forward. Be there for the July meeting and find out what is in store! See you all Thursday, 22 July...and don't forget to bring a friend! 🌿

— Art Scarbrough, HSABR Chair

Monthly Meeting

July 22, 2021, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

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

From the Plant to Your Pharmacy: How National Botanical Research Centers Collaborate to Identify Herbal Medicinal Properties

Dr. Elizabeth Floyd, Associate Professor, PBRC

You won't want to miss our July meeting! Dr. Elizabeth Floyd, Associate Professor in Pennington Biomedical Research Center's John S. McIlhenny Botanical Research Laboratory, and one of our most popular speakers, returns to give us an update on the collaborative work being done at Pennington and its partners on the medicinal properties of herbs.

One of Dr. Floyd's research interests is the impact of botanical supplementation on insulin sensitivity. In her investigations, she has explored the effects of extracts from Russian Tarragon and Bitter Melon, plants with a long history of ameliorating the symptoms of type 2 diabetes.

Dr. Floyd is also the Co-Center Director for Pennington's Botanical Dietary Supplements Research Center, one of only three federally funded botanical research centers in the country. The Center is a collaborative effort between the Pennington Biomedical Research Center and the Rutgers University Department of Plant Biology.

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



Dr. Elizabeth Floyd

June Meeting Recap

The June meeting kicked off with an Open House and tour of the herb garden that our unit created and maintains at Burden. It was well-attended, but everyone was happy to get inside and out of the heat to hear our guest speaker.

Dr. Yan Chen, a professor with the LSU AgCenter, gave a fascinating talk on growing tea (yes, real tea, *Camellia sinensis* itself) in Louisiana to over 40 attendees. Did you know there are three commercial tea growers in our state? You do now!

She walked us through the steps of harvesting, drying, curing, and aging tea leaves to produce white, green, and black tea, and even brought samples of tea leaves for us to take home and finish curing!

And like a true professor, Dr. Chen threw a pop quiz at us at the end! But unlike most teachers, she gave prizes—tea plants!—to the first person with the correct answer to each. Lucky (or rather, attentive!) winners were Art Scarbrough, Charbel Harb, and Kevin Folivi, the unit's Garden Intern.

Many thanks to Dr. Chen for a great presentation. 🌿



*Dr. Chen and the lucky winners!
From left, Art Scarbrough, Charbel Harb, Dr. Yan Chen, and Kevin Folivi*

Herb of the Month: Summer Savory, *Satureja hortensis*

From the Herb Society of America:

- Summer savory, a native of northeastern North America, is a full-sun annual that grows in well-drained fertile soil and has pink or white flowers in late summer to early fall.
- A member of the mint family, savory has a peppery taste with a flavor often compared to a blend of marjoram and thyme.
- Historically, summer savory was used for a number of ailments, including stomach issues, joint pain, and other general complaints.
- Summer savory is high in vitamins A, C, and the B-complex group, as well as being an excellent source of calcium, iron, manganese, magnesium, potassium, selenium, and zinc.
- Summer savory blends well with other herbs such as parsley, marjoram, oregano, basil, rosemary, and thyme.
- While this herb compliments fish, meat, poultry, and eggs, it goes especially well with beans, cabbage, corn, citrus, apples, tomatoes, and potatoes.
- Summer savory is best added towards the end of cooking. Winter savory is a stronger flavor than summer savory and can tolerate long cooking times in soups and stews.
- Preserve in herb butters, marinades, and vinegar 🌿



According to the LSU AgCenter, “Two types of savory can be grown in Louisiana: summer savory and winter savory. Summer savory is an annual which may grow to 1-1/2 feet in height. It has erect branching stems and gray-green colored leaves. The winter savory is a shrub-like perennial which grows to be about 1 foot tall. Both plants should be placed in areas receiving plenty of sun and relatively dry soil. Both herbs are grown for their leaves, which should be gathered before blooming begins.”

Fine Gardening notes that both varieties of savory tend to bolt quickly in hot climates and will droop if water-deprived (the latter not usually a big problem in our area!).

And the Herb Society of America’s [blog](#) notes that “Savory is a good addition to a pollinator garden, as bees, flies, bats, butterflies, and moths love its flowers. The Roman poet Virgil (70 BCE) recommended growing savory near beehives because it produced a pleasant tasting honey. It is considered a companion plant for onions because it encourages their growth. It also deters beetles that feast on beans.”

Summer Savory was the International Herb Association’s Herb of the Year for 2015. A book featuring this herb is available [here](#), and the Herb Society of America’s *Essential Guide to Savory* is available to HSA members as a pdf [here](#). 🌿

Recipes

Summer Savory Vinegar

Summer savory
Garlic, whole cloves, optional
White wine or apple cider vinegar

For summer savory vinegar, fill jar $\frac{3}{4}$ full of plant material. Add a clove or two of garlic if you wish.

Fill jar with white wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar. If using a metal lid, place at least two layers of plastic wrap between jar and lid to prevent corrosion of the metal. Place in dark place for 10 days to 2 weeks, shaking occasionally. Taste frequently until desired flavor is obtained.

—Sara Holland, HSA Hill Country Unit

Mustard Marinade with Summer Savory

2 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil
1 tablespoon dried summer savory, crumbled, or 3 tablespoons fresh summer savory, chopped fine
1 tablespoon water

In a bowl, whisk together mustard, vinegar, oil, summer savory, water, and salt and pepper to taste. In a baking dish large enough to hold your meat of choice in one layer, coat meat with marinade and let stand, covered, at room temperature for 15 minutes. Cook on a prepared grill until done. Great on meats such as pork ribs, pork chops, beef steaks, or stronger-flavored fish.

— adapted from a recipe at www.epicurious.com

Herbes de Provence

4 tbsp. dried rosemary
3 tbsp. dried sweet marjoram
2 tbsp. dried thyme
3 tbsp. dried savory
2 tbsp. dried lavender
1 tsp. dried sage

Combine the herbs and place in an airtight container. Store in a cool, dry place up to four months. Use to season vegetables, chicken, and red meat.

And also from the [Herb Society of America Blog](#):

“In addition to using it as flavoring, summer savory can be added to water to reduce odors while cooking strong-smelling vegetables like broccoli and cabbage. Some people on low-salt diets find that it is satisfying as a salt substitute. In Europe, diabetic patients use it to reduce thirst (Kowalchik & Hylton, 1998).”

Help Make Our Meetings Better!

We're looking for members who will volunteer to do a short talk (no more than 10 minutes) at some of our monthly meetings to introduce our audience to different herbs. This doesn't need to be a big, complicated lecture...just a few tips on growing and harvesting the herb, along with some common uses, will be great. It's not required, but handouts and samples of dishes featuring your herb are very welcome! Please contact [Art Scarbrough](#), unit chair, if you'd like to do one of these presentations, so he can get you on the agenda for the meeting!



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 7:00–9:00 a.m., except on the 3rd week of each month, when we meet on Saturday instead of Thursday. Any and all are welcome, even if it's 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.

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 supplements.

Upcoming Events

THURSDAY SENSORY GARDEN MAINTENANCE SESSIONS , 7:00–9:00 A.M.:

July 22

July 29

August 5

August 12

August 26

SATURDAY SENSORY GARDEN MAINTENANCE SESSIONS , 7:00–9:00 A.M.

July 17

August 21

AUGUST 26

MONTHLY MEETING, 6:30–8:00 P.M.

Dr. Kit Chin, Southern University
AgCenter: Catnip as a Niche Crop in Louisiana