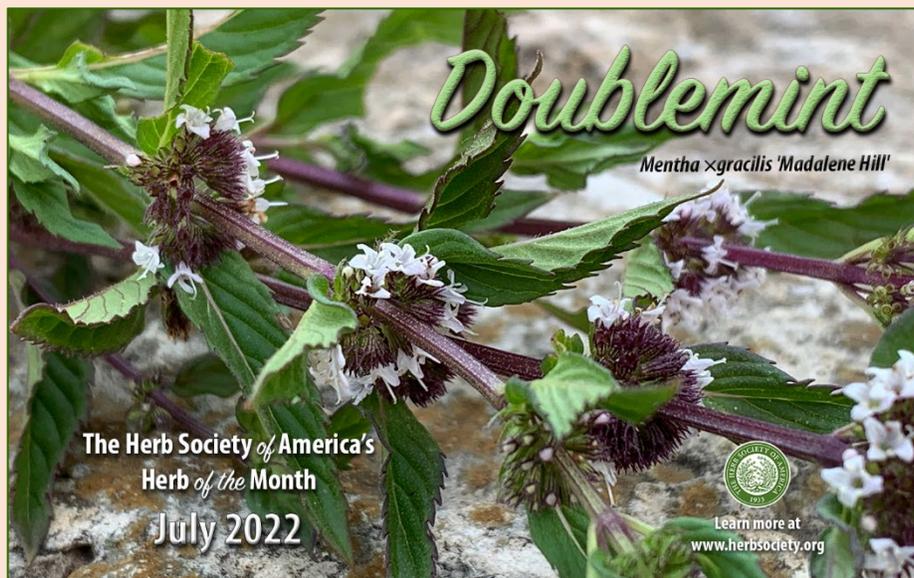


JULY 2022

# Herb Letter

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA  
BATON ROUGE UNIT



## Monthly Meeting, July 28, 2022

6:30–7:30 p.m.

Three Roll Estate Distillery tour (see details on p. 2)

760 St. Philips Street

Baton Rouge, LA 70802

225-615-8044, <https://www.threeroll.com/>

## Herb of the Month — Doublemint (*Mentha × gracilis* cv 'Madalene Hill')

Doublemint is unusual because it has both peppermint and spearmint essential oils, providing a subtle and more complex minty flavor; it is a cross between *Mentha arvensis* and *M. spicata*. The variety is named for Madalene Hill, a pioneering herb grower from Texas, who began growing this culinary mint in the 1950s and worked to increase its cultivation and use. Madalene and husband Jim owned Hilltop Herb Farm near Cleveland, Texas. More info on p. 6. 🌿

## Message from the Chair

July has been a month of record elevated temperatures across the northern hemisphere. Even so, our intrepid garden volunteers have kept the Sensory Garden in fine fashion, and to a significant extent, compensated for the hellish heat through diligence and skill! Please consider joining our team of unpaid professionals who keep our gardens going!

This month our meeting will be a tour of Three Roll Estate, Baton Rouge's own craft rum distillery. This educational outing promises to be a not-to-be-missed event. See further in the newsletter for sign up information!

In August we will be back at the Burden Conference Center for our annual meeting in which we will elect and install, the leadership for the Unit for the coming year. This is our most important meeting of the year so please do set aside the date, Thursday, 26 August. If you are interested in filling one of the officer positions, please contact Julie Walsh, chair of the nominations committee. At the same time, we will be looking at some significant bylaws changes and major plans. Stay tuned for more information, and perhaps even a surprise or two relating to our August meeting! You make the Herb Society of America Baton Rouge Unit the resounding success that it is!

When all is said and done, you are remarkable people, doing remarkable work, for a remarkable future! Well done!

—Art Scarbrough, HSABR Chair 🌿

## Monthly Meeting

July 28, 2022, 6:30–7:30 p.m.

**Three Roll Estate Distillery Tour**

**See, hear, and taste the whole experience of making rum!**

760 St. Philips Street

Baton Rouge, LA 70802

225-615-8044, <https://www.threeroll.com/>



Our July meeting will be something new and different—a tour of Three Roll Estate, Baton Rouge's own Craft Rum Distillery!

At Three Roll Estate, they grow their own sugarcane, process it into sugar, then distill it into rum. During the tour, we'll learn about the history of Louisiana's main agricultural commodity and how their distillers use science and a bit of magic to create their sugarcane-based spirits and rum. After the tour, we'll return to the Tasting Room bar where adults 21 and up can sample their award-winning spirits and other handcrafted cocktails, which use seasonal herbs in a variety of ways.

The tour begins promptly at 6:30 p.m., so please arrive by 6:20 p.m. Everyone must bring their current valid driver's license for admission. If you've not yet registered, please do so ASAP by contacting HSABR intern Kevin Folivi at [kfolivi@lsu.edu](mailto:kfolivi@lsu.edu).

Three Roll Estate charges \$15 for the tour, but the Unit will cover the cost for our members; only guests (who are very welcome!) will pay the tour fee.

There is a parking lot directly adjacent to Three Roll Estate; the word "RUM" is painted on the side of the building for ease in finding. 🌿

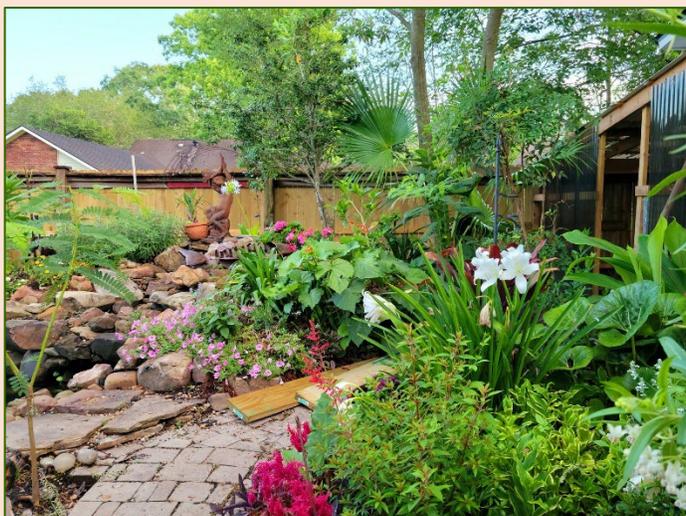
## June Meeting Recap

HSABR Intern Jen Blanchard presented an informative talk on plant identification for our June meeting. Jen had the whole table at the front loaded with plant specimens for everyone to look at and touch. Unfortunately, I don't seem to have received any photos of it for the newsletter, but believe me, it was a big selection of local plants and very helpful! For anyone who missed it, Jen has graciously provided a link to her PowerPoint slides that she spoke from: [Plant Identification](#). Thanks, Jen!

— KH 🌿



## The Harbs' Garden Tour



The garden and pond tour at our home on June 26th was a great success. We also received a lot of good publicity from *The Advocate*, TV Channel 9, and then Fox 44/NBC News came out and filmed the gardens and people milling about.

We had close to 450 visitors admiring and learning about all our tropical and perennial/tropical plants. They enjoyed relaxing on the chairs and seats around the garden, especially the newly air-conditioned outdoor room!

Mighty Moms, the charity we were supporting with this event, is a group that serves meals to children, especially during the summer. They collected \$800 in cash and close to \$1200 worth of food from those attending!

We had several vendors from The Market at the Oasis selling baked goods and hand-crafted items. Charbel also had some plants for sale and his art was on display throughout the space.

Ruth's herb garden was filled with rosemary, mints, sorrel, thymes, oregano, parsley, fennel, bay, and pineapple sage. She also had several pots of succulents growing; their mixed textures and colors really stood out!

Thanks to the Herb Society of Baton Rouge for helping us spread the word on social media and for sending Jen, our intern, to come and experience our unique garden.

— Ruth Harb 🌿

## Sensory Garden Report

The sensory garden is beautiful despite the heat. The herbs are loving the afternoon rain showers and many of the plants are covered with blooms.

Last fall we cleaned out the mint bed and added soil. We left the bed to its own devices and, as expected, it came back in full form. Mints never disappoint!

Below is one of the mountain mint plants that graced us with these huge plants through its self-seeding.

Along with the herbs in the Louisiana cooking bed we planted some okra. As you can see, their blooms are beautiful! Today we planted three roselle hibiscus plants (thanks to BREC for these beautiful plants) as their flowers are a delicious addition to homemade teas with some healthy benefits.

Did you know that all ginger roots are edible? They are easy to propagate and are effortless to grow. Gingers require very little of your time but provide you with beautiful flowers as you can see below.

Several of the herbs—cutting celery, dill, fennel, and parsley—have reached the end of their lives, but we did collect seeds! Those plants been replaced by toothache plant, plantain, ashwagandha, and St. John's wort in the healing garden.



The worker bees will be maintaining the beds Thursday July 21st, Saturday July 30th, and Thursdays August 4th, 11th, and 18th from 7:00–9:00 a.m., should you want to join us. These sessions can provide valuable information on growing and caring for herbs. When you join us at the gardens, please bring your own hand tools and water, and wear a hat!

See you soon!

—Sylvia Lowe 🌿



Mountain Mint



Okra in bloom

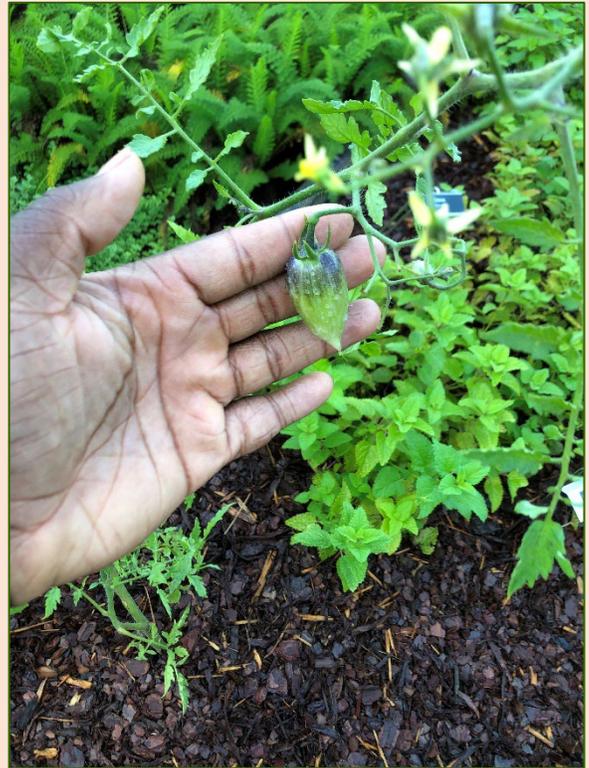


Ginger

## More Sensory Garden Photos from Kevin Folivi



Lemon-scented plants garden



Brad's Atomic Grape Tomato



Asian flavors garden



Hispanic flavors garden

## Herb of the Month: Doublemint (*Mentha × gracilis* cv 'Madalene Hill')

From the Herb Society of America:

### Facts:

- Originally known as red-stemmed apple mint, doublemint has stems that become a vibrant red in cooler growing seasons.
- The leaves of doublemint are opposite and glossy green. It grows to 24 to 30 inches tall.
- As with all mints, the plants spread through underground runners. Control the spread by growing in a pot or limited area.
- Doublemint gum, originally of the Wrigley Company, is named for having double the amount of distilled peppermint oils, not because it is made from this particular mint variety.
- Grows best in full sun with moist, well-drained soil, though it will tolerate some shade. Fertilize sparingly for the best flavor.
- Cutting and using this plant (as with many herbs) will help it retain a bushy, more compact habit.
- The essential oils in mint are the highest when the plant is in full bloom.
- This mint is popular in Vietnamese cooking as well as in fruit salads, with peas, teas, pies and other desserts. 🌿



### What Makes It a “Double” Mint?

One of HSA's “fun facts” about doublemint made the rather cryptic statement that doublemint's having both peppermint (menthol) and spearmint (carvone) essential oils “goes against the genetic rule stating that this is impossible.” Hmmm. What genetic rule is that??

A little digging around turned up an article from the American Botanical Council's *Herb-a-Gram* from Spring 2009 on Madalene Hill's then-recent passing. Dr. Arthur Tucker, Professor Emeritus at Delaware State University, praised her work as a pioneer herb grower in North America and the Deep South and her innovations in the use of herbs “in a restaurant/ greenhouse/nursery business, probably the first of its concept in the US.” And then he explained the “genetic rule”:

According to Dr. Tucker, Hill originally called the mint she found in the now-defunct Plantation Gardens in Rustburg, Virginia, *redstem applemint*. “The mint violates the so-called ‘Reitsema Rule,’ which says that 2-oxygenated and 3-oxygenated monoterpenes cannot be in the same plant because they belong to different, alternative pathways,” said Tucker. “‘Madalene Hill’ (which I named from her cultivated material) has a genetic breakdown because of a high chromosome number of  $2n=96$ , and it combines both spearmint and peppermint odors in the same plant—a true doublemint.”

Now we know! (You can read the entire [excellent!] tribute to Madalene Hill [here](#).) 🌿

## Doublemint Recipes

### Minted Fruit Dressing

¾ cup vegetable oil  
2 tablespoons cider vinegar (if vinegar is strong, add less)  
3 tablespoons lemon or lime juice  
¼ cup orange juice  
2 Tablespoons sugar

½ teaspoon salt  
1/8 teaspoon paprika  
3 Tablespoons fresh, red-stemmed apple mint (doublemint) or spearmint, chopped

Combine all ingredients in blender container. Blend until smooth. Add more mint and sugar if needed. Chill and use for greens or toss with chunked fruit. Yields 1 ¼ cups.

—*Southern Herb Growing* by Madalene Hill and Gwen Barclay

### Festival Hill Rosemary-Mint Jelly

*This recipe was served at many Festival Hill functions.*

5 tablespoons firmly packed rosemary leaves  
5 tablespoons firmly packed doublemint (fresh, red-stemmed apple mint) or spearmint leaves

4 cups pineapple juice  
6 tablespoons lemon juice  
5 cups sugar  
2 pouches liquid pectin

Combine herbs and part of juice. Bring to a boil. Remove from heat and let steep 10-15 minutes. Strain and add remaining juice. If needed, add more juice to make 4 cups total. Place juice in a heavy, large saucepan over high heat; add sugar and bring to a full rolling boil that cannot be stirred down. Add pectin quickly, continue stirring and heat again to full rolling boil. Boil hard for 1 minute. Remove from heat, stir, and skim off foam quickly. Pour jelly immediately into sterilized containers. Seal and process 5 minutes in hot water bath, according to jar manufacturer's instructions. Let cool out of drafts and do not disturb for 24 hours. Yield: approximately 7-8 jars, ½ pint each.

—Madalene Hill and Gwen Barclay

### Sweet Mint Vinegar

1 ½ cup fresh, doublemint leaves and stems; rinsed and crushed  
3 cups white balsamic vinegar

Place both in a quart jar and place plastic wrap over the jar opening and cap with a metal lid. (Plastic wrap prevents the vinegar from coming into contact with the metal lid, so the lid does not corrode.) Let this "steep" for 2-3 weeks. When vinegar is ready, strain it through coffee filters to remove the herbs or combination of herbs. Pour the strained vinegar into a sterilized bottle and cap.

—Billi Parus, HSA Life Member 🌿

## EdCon 2023, April 26–29 2023

Mary Williams wants to remind everyone that we need all hands on deck to make EdCon run smoothly, and now's the time to start getting! You can do as little as making table favors, spending an hour at the registration desk, or spending two hours greeting guests at a reception—or as much as chairing or co-chairing an EdCon 2023 committee such as Goodie Bags or Table Decorations, or many others! Please contact Mary if you can help.

Mary sent along this article she wrote for the WI Unit's newsletter, and it's also going to the HSA's national education chair:

EDCON 2023, APRIL 26-29, 2023

IMMERSE YOURSELF IN BATON ROUGE HISTORY, CULTURE, CUISINE, BEAUTY, WEATHER (?)

When you come to Baton Rouge for EdCon 2023, you will be treated to not just a glimpse, but an immersion, in this historic place. The food and drink will reflect our great culinary heritage; the music will broaden your assumptions beyond what you think it is; and you'll be in deep spring weather, so expect warm sun and gorgeous gardens.

Our preconference tour will be to Houmas House, where you will tour their spectacular gardens, the brand-new Great River Road Museum, the historic riverfront plantation house, have a gourmet lunch in their banqueting hall, and walk among dozens of enormous, beautiful (and huggable) live oak trees. We'll take buses from the Crowne Plaza conference hotel and be gone from morning to late afternoon. And wait till you see their gift shop!

We'll welcome you with receptions where you can reconnect with old friends and easily make new friends in the hospitable setting. We have six outstanding speakers who will teach you about native plants, about our cuisine, about the Acadian healer tradition, about Southern gardens, and several unusual historic experiences. You'll see! Every one of them will expand your knowledge and delight.

There will be lots of music, I promise. There will also be a big Marketplace with local growers, artists, artisans, and vendors.

Your goodie bags will include information on many sites of local interest with maps, so I suggest you allow several extra days to explore the city and the area. Visit the gorgeous Old State Capitol building; go to Magnolia Mound Plantation, the oldest raised Creole cottage plantation house anywhere—built in 1791—and tour the restored house and the historic garden. Go to Independence Park right in the middle of Baton Rouge, where the Baton Rouge Unit maintains a spectacular Sensory Garden as part of the Baton Rouge Botanical Garden. It has nine themed beds, ranging from Healing Plants to Mediterranean Herbs to Louisiana Cookin'. This is where our group of Worker Bees labor on Thursday mornings and some Saturdays. Or you could drive west to Vermilionville in Lafayette to see their historic Cajun village, or go farther to Avery Island, the home of the best hot sauce in the world, where they also have wonderful gardens. Or you could drive east and visit many historic riverfront plantations on the way to New Orleans. Y'all come!

—Mary Bellis Williams, WI unit and Baton Rouge Unit 

## Help Make Our Newsletter Better!

Like to read stories about what our members are doing in their gardens? Like 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 do 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! 🌿

—Kathleen Harrington  
HSABR Newsletter Editor

## 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 week of the monthly meeting, when we meet on Saturday instead of Thursday. Please note that we start an hour earlier when June rolls around! 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). <mailto:info@hsabr.org> 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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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

### THURSDAY SENSORY GARDEN MAINTENANCE SESSIONS:

7:00–9:00 A.M.:

July 21

August 4

August 11

August 18

### SATURDAY SENSORY GARDEN MAINTENANCE SESSIONS:

7:00–9:00 A.M.

July 30

**August 25, 2022**

**ANNUAL MEETING, 6:30–8:00 P.M.**

Election of officers and other stuff!