

JUNE 2021

Herb Letter

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
BATON ROUGE UNIT



Monthly Meeting, June 24, 2021

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

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

Dr. Yan Chen will present a program on growing tea in Louisiana. (See details inside.)

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

Herb of the Month—Green Tea

Green Tea, *Camellia sinensis*

Serendipitously, the HSA's Herb of the Month nicely meshes with our program! More on this beneficial herb inside.

Message from the Chair

Summer brings great things both in our gardens and in our Unit! Our June meeting starts with a bang complete with a guided tour of the heritage garden (with its new kaleidoscope) followed by an in depth talk about growing and using tea in Louisiana! As the summer slows our outside efforts, it offers an excellent opportunity to complete the [LSU Ag Center Home Gardening Course](#) online! While the summer session has started, it is not too late to catch up!

As we move out of our pandemic isolation into a more public format, volunteers are sorely needed both in our gardens and in our other programs. Hone your presentation skills by delivering a talk on your favorite herb at one of our meetings, or get your fingers dirty helping in the Sensory Garden or the Heritage Garden. Practice makes perfect!

Have a marvelous summer and stay tuned for more exciting news from your HSA Baton Rouge Unit! 🌿

— Art Scarbrough, HSABR Chair

Monthly Meeting

For our June meeting, Dr. Yan Chen of the LSU AgCenter will present **Growing Tea in Louisiana**. There are several tea farms nearby, as our climate is well-suited to growing *Camellia sinensis*. Dr. Chen will talk about growing the tea shrubs, harvesting the leaves and processing them, and will be bringing some actual plants. Because of Covid restrictions, she cannot brew and serve us tea for tasting, but will bring samples for our members to take home.

Immediately before the meeting, HSABR members will host a Herbal Happy Hour from 5:00–6:00 p.m. for members and guests to showcase our nearby Heritage Herb Garden. Everyone will have an opportunity to see the fascinating Garden Kaleidoscope that has recently been installed in the Heritage Herb Garden, and our Garden Intern, Kevin Folivi, will be present to lead short tours to introduce the plants and to speak about the purpose of the garden.

So come early to see our garden and then walk the short distance to the Conference Center for the meeting—you'll have a good chance to see the Children's Garden as well as the shady playground as you stroll by. 🌿



Garden kaleidoscope at Burden

May Meeting Recap

Dr. Jeff Kuehny, Resident Director, gave a fascinating overview of the LSU AgCenter's Botanic Gardens at Burden, tracing the property's history from its acquisition by the Burden family in the mid-1800s through the donation to the LSU System in 1966, to its present status as a 440-acre green space in the heart of Baton Rouge.

Dr. Kuehny also highlighted the research and extension projects that the property supports, including soil and environmental sciences, turfgrass, vegetable crops, fruit crops, ornamentals, landscaping, home gardening, and wetlands.

Currently, the Botanic Gardens contain the historic Windrush Gardens, the lone Burden Conference Center, where we hold our meetings, the Steele Burden Memorial Orangerie, where we have had several special events, the Children's Garden, our Heritage Herb Garden, and many other fascinating gardens and features.

After the presentation, HSABR Chair Art Scarbrough presented Dr. Kuehny with a tulsi (holy basil) plant as a token of our appreciation for his excellent talk. 🌿



HSABR Chair Art Scarbrough (left) presents Dr. Jeff Kuehny with a tulsi plant

Herb of the Month: Green Tea Tips from the Herb Society of America

- Green tea, like black, oolong, white tea, and pu-erh tea, comes from the *Camellia sinensis* plant.
- *Camellia sinensis* is a shrub, hardy to zones 7–9, and blooms in the late summer.
- The white, fragrant flower is edible and used to make a beverage as well.
- Most tea is produced in India, Sri Lanka, and China, where the tea plants grow in rich acidic soils.
- Varietals, cultivars, soil, climate conditions, and processing differences contribute to the flavors of the hundreds of thousands of different green teas in the world.
- Tea is the second-most consumed beverage in the world, after water.
- Tea starts with the harvesting of the top two leaves and a bud. The next steps of drying and processing the leaves determines the type of tea.
- Green tea is heated after picking to prevent oxidation. It may be steamed, roasted or pan fried, each yielding a different flavor profile.
- Green tea leaves are then dried, rolled into shapes ranging from tiny pellets (gunpowder) to wiry strands (Sencha) or ground into a powder (Matcha) before completing the drying process.
- A cup of green tea contains about 25% of the caffeine in a cup of coffee.
- Matcha is the type of green tea historically preferred in the tea ceremonies practiced by Zen Buddhists.
- Green tea was originally consumed for health benefits in China, as a preventative.

Iced Green Tea with Ginger, Mint, and Honey

6 cups of water

¼ cup ginger, peeled and sliced

3–6 bags of green tea, depending on how strong you like your tea, or the loose-leaf equivalent

½ cup mint leaves, tightly packed, plus extra to serve

1/3 cup honey

1 lemon, divided

In a medium-sized pot, combine the water and ginger slices. Bring to a boil. Once the water boils, remove from heat and add the tea bags and mint leaves. Cover the pot and steep for about 15 minutes.

Strain the brewed tea, separating the liquid from the mint leaves and tea bags. Mix in the honey and juice from half of the lemon into the tea. Transfer to a pitcher and cool to room temperature before refrigerating.

Slice the second half of the lemon. When ready to serve, add 1 to 2 lemon slices into each glass, along with a few mint leaves and ice cubes. Once the tea has cooled, pour it into the glasses and serve.

Karen Biton-Cohen
TheKitchn, January 29, 2020

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 Scarborough](#), 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

The monthly garden maintenance sessions for the Sensory Garden at the Independence Botanical Garden, 7950 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806, will move from the third Thursday of the month to the third Saturday, and for the remainder of the summer, will be from 7:00–9:00 a.m. If you can help keep the largest herb garden in this area looking its best, please contact [Judy Hines](#). 🌿

Upcoming Events

JUNE 19

Sensory Garden Maintenance Session

JULY 17

Sensory Garden Maintenance Session

JULY 22

MONTHLY MEETING

Dr. Beth Floyd, Pennington Biomedical Research Center: Health Benefits of Herbs

AUGUST 21

Sensory Garden Maintenance Session

AUGUST 26

MONTHLY MEETING

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

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.

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