

MARCH-APRIL 2023

Herb Letter

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
BATON ROUGE UNIT



Monthly Meeting, April 11, 2023

Note change of date and time! We're still out of synch with Burden for our meeting space, but our normal meeting and newsletter schedule will resume in May.

THIS MONTH'S MEETING IS A PRE-EDCON WORKING MEETING FOR MEMBERS OF HSABR ONLY (see p. 2)

4:00 p.m., Sensory Garden at the Independence Botanical Garden
7950 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806

Sensory Garden Maintenance

We need Worker Bees on **Thursday, April 6, from 8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.** BREC will be dumping the rest of the soil into the remaining beds, and we could use help spreading it. If you can come help, please contact [Sylvia Lowe](#).

Herb of the Month — Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*)


Chives are a popular herb in the Allium family, closely related to onions, garlic, and scallions. They are known for their slender, grass-like leaves and delicate pink or purple flowers that bloom in the spring and summer. Chives have a mild, onion-like flavor and are often used as a garnish or seasoning in a variety of dishes, including soups, salads, and egg dishes. They are also a good source of vitamins A and C, as well as minerals like calcium and potassium. Chives are easy to grow and are a popular choice for herb gardens or container gardens. More information on p. 4. 🌿

Message from the Chair

Life reemerges for humans and Mother Nature in the spring. HSABR was very busy with the annual herb sale in February and the continued planning of the first HSABR Education Conference set for the last weekend of April. This is seed planting anew in many different ways.

The newsletter and monthly meetings are a little out of order, so this is a March/April newsletter. Our monthly meetings are normally on the fourth Thursday of the month and open to the public, but this month only, we're doing things a little differently. The April meeting will be a final planning session for EdCon 2023 and is for HSABR members only. Members, please come to the Sensory Garden at Independence on April 11th from 4:00–6:00 p.m. (bring a chair).

We expect to be back on our normal schedule for May. In the meantime, enjoy some pictures from Herb Day!

— Sylvia 



Big crowds at the plant sale pavilion!



The vendors' area was popular, too!



Kids enjoyed the craft area



And the visible hive at the Capital Area Beekeepers Association table!

Membership Report

We met so many wonderful, happy, smiling gardeners at the Herb Sale and I want to welcome the following to our herbal fold:

Barry and Wendy Cromley

Elizabeth "Beth" Dudley

Sudha Jindia

Carol Howell

Kevin Folivi

— Sylvia Lowe (also Membership Chair!) 🌿

Herb of the Month: Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*)

From the Herb Society of America:

Facts:

- Commonly known as garden chives, *Allium schoenoprasum*, has purple blooms in spring to early summer and leaves that are cylindrical-shaped and hollow. Garlic Chives, *A. tuberosum*, have white flowers in summer and flat, lance-shaped leaves.
- Both the leaves and the flowers of the hardy chive plant are edible.
- Chives have been used since 3000 BC and can be found growing wild in Asia, Europe, Australia, and North America.
- The ancient Romans correlated the strong-tasting chive to physical strength and fed them to racehorses, wrestlers, and workers to make them strong.
- Many people believed that stronger-tasting herbs had greater healing power, so chives were believed to improve appetite, kidney function, and blood pressure. In addition, it was used to relieve sunburn and sore throat pain.
- Chives were also thought to be a poison antidote.
- Marco Polo brought chives to Europe from China in the late 13th century.
- Chives hung from the rafters were said to prevent bad luck.
- An old British tradition suggests using chives to border one's garden or hang over the doorway of the home to prevent evil spirits from entering.
- Dutch settlers in America obtained chive-scented milk for cheese by planting chives in their cow pastures.
- Use chives fresh or add towards the end of the cooking time for the best flavor.
- The edible flowers can be added to salads and other dishes. Select flowers early in the season, before the seeds begin to form.
- Chive blossoms make a beautiful pink, chive-flavored vinegar when steeped for a few weeks in white wine vinegar.
- The delicate onion flavor of chives is often paired with potatoes, eggs, vegetables, and breads. Chives can be the focus of flavored butters and salad dressings.
- An old saying states "The chef whose potato salad lacks chives is a chef who himself lacks soul." 🌿



Chives Tips

- Use fresh to top potatoes, egg dishes, salads, vegetables, or any dish to add a mild onion flavor.
- Add at the end of cooked dishes for the best flavor.
- To freeze, wash and dry leaves in cool water. When dry, chop, and freeze in an airtight container.

- The flavor of air-dried chives is greatly diminished.
- Flavor butter or cream cheese by incorporating chopped chive leaves and flowers.
- Pick flowers soon after opening, before the seeds form, to use in salads and as a garnish.
- Make a pink chive vinegar by steeping the flowers in white wine vinegar for a couple of weeks. 🌿

Chives Recipes

Meyer Lemon Chive Mayo Recipe

Lemon chive mayo is a refreshing condiment that pairs well with seafood. It also makes a delicious dipping sauce for vegetables like French fries and steamed artichoke.

1 egg, room temperature	Pinch of salt
2 tablespoons lemon juice	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup of oil
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard	2 teaspoon chives, sliced thin

Add the egg, lemon juice, mustard, and salt to your food processor. Process for about 10–20 seconds, until it is creamy.

Now we're going to add the oil. Start the food processor and pour the oil in a very slow, steady stream. This is the most important part when making mayo. After all the oil has been incorporated, stop the food processor.

Use a spatula to mix in the sliced chives. Store in the refrigerator in an airtight container until ready to use. Makes approximately 16 1-tablespoon servings.

— Cooking with Janica, cookingwithjanica.com

Beef Antipasto with Chive Salsa

$\frac{3}{4}$ pound grilled steak, done to taste	1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup red wine vinegar	1 shallot, minced fine
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup chives, minced	1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
Salt and freshly ground black pepper	1 tablespoon honey
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil	

Slice the grilled steak into thin strips that are $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick and 3–4 inches long.

Place the steak strips in an airtight container along with the red wine vinegar, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the chives, and salt and pepper to taste. Mix thoroughly and set aside in the refrigerator to marinate for at least 4 hours, preferably overnight. Shake the container periodically to aid the marinating process. When the steak is ready, arrange the strips on a serving plate attractively. Strain the chives from the marinade, reserving the vinegar, and place them in a small bowl. Add the remaining chives, olive oil, parsley, shallot, mustard and honey, and mix thoroughly. Add 3 or 4 tablespoons of the reserved marinade, spooning it over the top of the steak to garnish. Top with salt and pepper to taste. Serve cold or, better yet, at room temperature. Serves 6 as an appetizer

— Adapted from: Rogers, Juliette. 1999. *Growing and Using Chives*. Storey Communications: VT 🌿

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

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 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

SENSORY GARDEN MAINTENANCE SESSIONS

THURSDAYS, 8:00–10:00 A.M.:

April 6

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.