

MAY 2023

Herb Letter

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
BATON ROUGE UNIT



Monthly Meeting, May 25, 2023

6:30–8:00 p.m.

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

Kevin Langley, Capital Area Beekeepers Association (see p. 2 for details)

Herb of the Month — German Chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*)

German chamomile is a versatile and beloved flowering herb in the daisy family. It has a long history of medicinal uses for its calming and relaxing properties, but chamomile has many other applications. Its anti-inflammatory and soothing effects on the skin make it widely used in the cosmetic industry. Chamomile can also be used as a natural dye for wool and other fibers to produce a beautiful range of yellow colors. In addition, chamomile is a popular ingredient in teas and baked goods, adding a subtle floral flavor to these items. The pleasant aroma of chamomile makes it a popular ingredient in candles and other home fragrance products as well. More information on p. 7. 🌿

Message from the Chair

Hello!!

The last two months have been a bit off-kilter but extremely busy for HSABR. Our unit hosted the annual Education Conference the last weekend of April. A huge thank you to all of our Baton Rouge members who “worked” the conference. Ed Con was sensationally and exceptionally successful. Members of the Herb Society of America from all over the country attended the event. There were many activities including a pre-conference tour of Houmas House, many educational speakers, a raffle, meeting new friends, and beau coup Louisiana dishes enjoyed by all. See pp. 3–4 for some of the pictures from the event. PHEW!

Continuing our community outreach, Sharon Kleinpeter and I visited Senior Living at The Claiborne in the beginning of April to discuss how easy it is to grow herbs. Residents also planted an herb to grow on their windowsills.

Kevin Folivi and Jennifer Blanchard, former HSABR garden interns, were the featured speakers at Garden Discoveries with the Library at Goodwood on May 13. The event was well attended, everyone got to “pet” and smell many herbs, learned about some of the unusual herbs that can be grown in Baton Rouge, and then toured HSABR’s Sensory Garden with members of the unit (photos on p. 6). Those who toured received some fresh herbs to use and grow.

Our Spring Interns have completed their internships (see p. 5) and the Summer Interns will be stepping in come June as we continue to care for the Sensory Garden and Heritage Garden, through the heat and dodging rainstorms.


Enjoy this issue, it’s jam-packed!

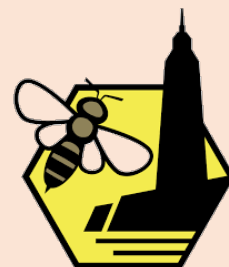
—Sylvia 

Monthly Meeting

May 27, 2023, 6:30–8:00 p.m.

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

Pollination and Pollinators. Kevin Langley with the Capital Area Beekeepers Association will join us again to tell us more about the vital process of pollination and the creatures who perform this service. Rumor has it that he’ll have some of his awesome honey for tasting and purchase! 



EdCon 2023 Photos



Representatives from the office of the Mayor-President of Baton Rouge (left) and the Governor's Office (right) present a commendation and proclamation to Lin Lange, HSA President (photo by Kevin Folivi)



EdCon attendees at one of the presentations (photo by Kevin Folivi)

More EdCon photos



Vendors area at EdCon (photo by Julie Walsh)



Ladybugs and friends at EdCon! From left, Sharon Murphy, Julie Walsh, Wicket the puppy, Virginia Camerlo (Houston), and Claudia Ross

HSABR bees Claudia Ross (left) and Sharon Murphy (right) introducing speaker Gary Bachman, southern gardener and author (photo by Sylvia Lowe) 🍯



Garden Interns' Memoirs

Our Spring Interns have completed their internships and say they have learned a lot. Sharing their experiences, we will feature each of our spring interns in this and the following two newsletters. This month we're featuring Jessica Dufrene. Enjoy her story!

—Sylvia



Jessica Dufrene

January 23, 2023

I was offered a position as an intern to work for the Herb Society of America in Baton Rouge during the spring semester. This opportunity has allowed me to explore interesting topics in the horticulture field as well as getting to know some of the most knowledgeable and kind people. I'd like to extend my thanks and gratitude to Sylvia, Judy, Jennifer, Sharron, Claudia, and Mary for choosing me for this internship and providing opportunities to learn more about different herbs. My time attending meetings, working and maintaining garden beds with the Herb Society of Baton Rouge has been extremely rewarding. Going forward I hope to remain in contact with those involved in this successful chapter and stay updated on our work in the various gardens.

January 26, 2023

Today I was invited by HSABR to attend my first member meeting. At the beginning, Sylvia presented and introduced each intern chosen for the respective semesters. It was nice to see some familiar faces from classes I've taken and also met new, like-minded people who held the same interests as me. Everyone in attendance was very welcoming and eager to accept us as their own. I saw the inner workings of a HSABR meetings with presentations from each committee chair/leader. Art Scarborough, an HSABR member and naturalist, concluded the meeting with a whimsical and informative PowerPoint on Druids and their history connecting to various herbs.

April 15, 2023

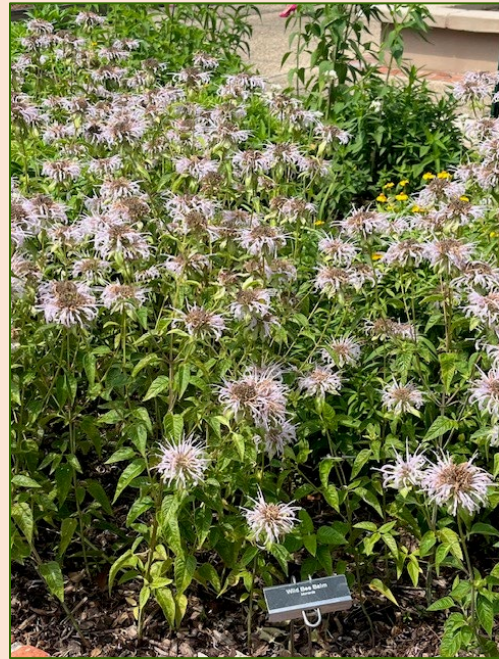
Today, Independence Park's Botanical Garden invited the public to celebrate the annual Plant Sale from 7:30–11:30 a.m. HSABR, alongside other vendors, offered herbs [and we] sold an abundance of [both] culinary and ornamental herbs. I assisted in the sale of plants and discussed many different species and their methods of growth and maintenance. This event was a very rewarding experience and I'm so glad I volunteered!

Best, Jess Dufrene. HSABR 2023 Spring Intern 🌿

Photos from the Garden Discoveries Sensory Garden Tour



Kevin Folivi gives Garden Discoveries participants a tour of HSABR's Sensory Garden at Independence Park



Wild bee balm in the Sensory Garden



The Native Plant Bed at the Sensory Garden



Comfrey, just getting ready to bloom 🌿

Herb of the Month: Chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*)

From the Herb Society of America:

Facts:

- The German chamomile, *Matricaria chamomilla*, also known as *M. recutita*, is native to southern and eastern Europe and western Asia, though it now grows widely through temperate disturbed areas, meadows, and fields.
- The Roman or English chamomile (*Chamaemelum nobile*) is similar looking, though is a shorter-growing plant and tends to have a more bitter taste than the German chamomile. Both are used for medicinal purposes interchangeably.
- Egyptians, Romans, and Greeks used chamomile to treat many conditions. Chamomile's medicinal history is due to its anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial, anti-allergenic, and sedative properties. It has been used around the world to treat digestive issues, rheumatic problems, rashes and other skin conditions, allergies (though it is also a ragweed relative), and to reduce anxiety and insomnia. Preparations include teas, salves, lotions, capsules, compresses, and vapors.
- While chamomile is often recognized as a sleep-promoting herb, it was also known as a sure preventative of nightmares.
- Chamomile oil, though a beautiful blue color, can be added to shampoos to bring out highlights to blonde hair.
- Chamomile flowers can be used to create a yellow-brown fabric dye.
- The cheerful white daisy-like flowers symbolized patience in adversity to the Victorians.
- German chamomile is a reseeding annual, which grows up to 30" tall in full sun.
- Harvest the apple-scented flowers of German chamomile regularly, when the flowers are fully open, for continued bloom production.
- Air-dry the flowers in a single layer, on screens and away from direct sunlight, before storing them in airtight containers. Stems can also be cut, gathered, and hung to dry.
- Chamomile flowers can be used fresh or dried to make tea. This tea is often said to promote relaxation, stress-relief, and sleep.
- The petals are edible and can be used fresh in salads, or the flavor can be infused into other beverages, oatmeal, and syrups, or incorporated into fruit dishes. In addition, the petals are used in sleep pillows, potpourri, bath tea blends, and other cosmetic and craft uses. 🌿



It is the policy of The Herb Society of America, Inc. not to advise or recommend herbs for medicinal or health use. This information is intended for educational purposes only and should not be considered as a recommendation or endorsement of any particular medical or health treatment. Please consult a health care provider before pursuing any herbal treatment

Chamomile Tips

- Use fresh or dried chamomile flowers in recipes.
- Infuse chamomile's green apple flavor into beverages or other foods by steeping the flowers in a hot liquid before proceeding with the recipe.
- Harvest and dry flowers for storage by cutting just the fully opened flower heads, spreading them on a screen in a well-ventilated location away from direct sunlight.
- Store dried flowers in an air-tight, dark colored container away from direct sunlight.
- Dried chamomile flowers retain their flavor for up to 1 year. 🌿

Chamomile Recipes

Chamomile Lemon Tea

1 teaspoon chamomile flowers
1 teaspoon lemon verbena
½ teaspoon fennel

Blend herbs and steep in 1 cup of just-boiled water for 5 to 10 minutes.

Sleep Pillow

Chamomile flowers, dried
Lavender flowers, dried
Hops flowers, dried, optional

Blend one part chamomile flowers to one-half part lavender flowers (and one-half part hops flowers, if desired). Use blend to stuff fabric bags or "sleep pillows."

Relaxing Chamomile Bath Tea

Chamomile flowers, dried
Lemon verbena leaves, dried
Lavender buds, dried
Epsom or sea salt

Blend equal parts of the listed ingredients in a bowl. Store in an air-tight dark container, away from heat and sunlight. To use, place 3 to 4 tablespoons of the mixture in a muslin bag or large tea strainer and steep in bath water. 🌿



Heritage Garden Kaleidoscope!

Did you realize our Heritage Garden at the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden features a fabulous kaleidoscope? Please stop by and give the R.C. Anderson “Atomic” Garden Kaleidoscope a spin! Look through the scope and spin the bowl to watch an array of colors and geometrical shapes created by the flowers and herbs growing in the bowl—it is beautiful!

Now about the bowl, there is a bit of upkeep and watering involved. If you happen to be in the garden, stop by and poke a finger into the soil. If the bowl needs hydration, there is a hose conveniently located and available for use. You are a trusted Herb Society member, and I would like to empower YOU to pick up that hose, turn that water on, and take care of business! It may feel a little strange at first, but you can do it!



REQUEST: Casual Tending To Heritage Garden

Want to be involved but afraid of committing to a big project? Please consider casually tending to the Heritage Garden. Pick one hour or less of one week a month and commit to going to the Heritage Garden and seeing how it is growing. Report your findings via email, text, or call me at jwalsh40@att.net or 225-268-9441. You can also make a point of strolling through the garden before or after our monthly meetings held at the Burden Center, then report what you see. Do we need to replant? Are there pests (ants/wasps)? More mulch? Watering system issues? Let us know! And if you feel the need to weed—go for it! Thank you for your consideration and I hope to hear from you soon!

—Julie Walsh, Heritage Garden Co-Chair 🌿

In Other News...

Bromeliad Show and Sale

The Bromeliad Society of Baton Rouge invites the public to join them for their 48th Annual Bromeliad Show and Sale!

**Baton Rouge Garden Center at Independence Park
7950 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge**

Saturday, June 3, 2023

Sale 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Show 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, June 4, 2023

Sale 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Show 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.



18th Annual Charity Pond and Garden Tour

Sunday, June 18, 2023

841 Pastureview Drive in Oak Hills

9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Benefits Redstick C.A.R.E.S. autism programs

HSABR members Charbel and Ruth Harb are again opening their home garden for a charity tour!



A rare opportunity awaits plant lovers, gardeners, and artists as they tour the lush, tropical private gardens and pond landscape, replete with color and soothing sounds of waterfalls, and a magnificent koi pond at the home of Charbel and Ruth Harb. Live entertainment and food and beverage vendors will also be present.

Tours for public viewing will be from 9:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m. on Sunday, June 18th.

This is the perfect gift for that gardening dad or granddad! Free admission with a \$20 donation. Make your donation for a ticket at [REDSTICK CARES](#).

Redstick C.A.R.E.S. is an organization committed to building a resilient community in greater Baton Rouge and the surrounding nine parishes by improving the community's behavioral, mental and social health through human connection.

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

June 22, 2023

MONTHLY MEETING, 6:30–8:00 P.M.

Art Scarbrough will present a herbal quiz!