

NOVEMBER—DECEMBER 2021

Herb Letter

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
BATON ROUGE UNIT



No meeting in December because of the holidays

Monthly Meeting, January 27, 2022

6:30–8:00 p.m.

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

Dr. Charlie Johnson: Growing Fruit Trees in Baton Rouge (see details on p. 2)

Herb of the Month—Cloves

Cloves, *Syzygium aromaticum*

Cloves are the fragrant unopened flower buds of a tree native to the Maluku Islands (the Spice Islands) in Indonesia, though they are now grown for commercial cultivation in Zanzibar, Sri Lanka, Madagascar, the West Indies, India, Pemba Island, and Brazil. Cloves have a fruity, hot taste with a warm aroma and undertones of camphor and pepper; their assertive, characteristic flavor derives from the essential oil eugenol. They go well with savory and sweet foods but must be used sparingly so as not to overwhelm other flavors. More info on p. 4. 🍷

Message from the Chair

The winter comes and with it the prospect of a new year complete with new ideas, and new beginnings. With the ever-present pandemic now coming more under control, it often feels as though we are just peeking out from our shelters ready for some sunshine and mischievous madness!

HSABR stands on the precipice of not only a new year, but also of a new vision of things both green and wonderful. We stand as recipients of a heritage of excellence in the application and enjoyment of plants, and as full participants in the stewardship of the natural world around us. We have work to do!

For this holiday season, you might want to dabble with basil, for it is said to ward off ill tidings and helps protect folks who grow and consume it. Add to that a touch of rosemary for memory and cleansing, coupled with a bit of lavender for happiness. Then of course, we must have a bit of pine for healing and that irreplaceable smell of home and winter warmth. Do not forget a sprig or two of mistletoe hanging in the hallway for over-all good happenings! Our holidays are colored and scented with herbs!

2022 is the year to make a difference! As we investigate ways to contribute to a sustainable habitat the place occupied by beneficial plants is vitally important, and you are important to making it all happen.

We kick off the year with a program on fruit trees, some surprising revelations about our unit of the Herb Society of America, and some ideas about how each of us can be a catalyst for change in our community, and our own lives! Be there...and bring a friend!

May your home be filled with the scents and blessings of the natural world this holiday season. We look forward to a New Year blessed with limitless opportunities! 🌿

— Art Scarbrough, HSABR Chair

Monthly Meeting

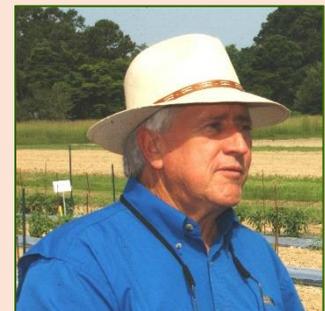
January 27, 2022, 6:30–8:00 p.m.

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

Growing Fruit Trees in Baton Rouge. Dr. Charlie Johnson, LSU AgCenter Professor Emeritus and an expert on fruit trees, will speak on how to grow fruit trees successfully in our gardens in Baton Rouge.

Because of the ongoing challenges with COVID-19, we ask that our attendees be vaccinated unless they are medically unable to take the vaccine. We encourage wearing face coverings and practicing social distancing while at the meeting.

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



October Meeting Recap

Ruby Homayssi, HSABR Policy and Procedures Chair, presented a program on making simple bucket gardens and how planting companion plants can enhance the growth and output of your plants. We learned a lot, and the photos she showed of her bucket gardens in her backyard were delightful! Cathy Scarbrough brought printouts of the Companion Planting Chart for vegetables and fruits, which is downloadable from Win-dowbox.com. 🌿



HSABR members at the October meeting pose with Ruby's buckets! From left, Michael Williams, Sylvia Lowe, Mary Williams, Cathy Scarbrough, Ruby Homayssi, Judy Hines, Kathleen Harrington, Lynn Dubois, and Kevin Folivi. (Art Scarbrough was behind the camera!)

Magnolia Mound Creole Christmas

This year's Creole Christmas event was held at Magnolia Mound on Sunday, November 28, and HSABR was there with an informational booth and herbal petting "zoo"!

According to Unit Chair Art Scarbrough, "Our presence at this annual event gave the unit some great publicity and netted us a bunch of new names for our newsletter mailing list! Judy Hines deserves a special round of applause for putting the petting zoo together and arranging our table. Mary Williams is to be thanked for our perfect placement along the walkway. Traffic was quite good, and the weather was perfect! Thanks also to Kevin Folivi and Kay Martin for helping make the day a success!" 🌿



Judy Hines welcomes visitors to the Herbal Petting "Zoo"

Herb of the Month: Cloves, *Syzygium aromaticum*

From the Herb Society of America:

Facts:

- The harvested clove consists of the unopened flower bud, ripened to a red color, that sits on four sepals just above the long calyx.
- The intensely fragrant clove is dried until it is hard and brown. It resembles a small nail or tack.
- The fragrance of cloves can be described as sweet and spicy with hot and fruity qualities. The fragrance was used to improve eyesight. Modern aromatherapy includes cloves to lift spirits, provide comfort, stimulate the mind and boost memory.
- Cloves were used in herb mixtures and pomanders (oranges studded with cloves) to protect folks from the street odors as well as to ward off the plague and other air-borne diseases in the Middle Ages. Pomanders were also used to discourage moths and other insects when hung in a closet or tucked inside drawers.
- Cloves are said to have been part of Four Thieves Vinegar which was used to protect grave robbers during the 14th century plague.
- Cloves were used medicinally in early civilizations including Chinese, Indian, and Roman healers.
- Today, clove oil is known to have antibacterial, antiviral, and anti-inflammatory properties.
- Used in cuisines around the world, including these spice blends: Chinese five spice, *garam masala* from India, *ras el hanout* from Morocco, *quatre epices* from France, and blended with cinnamon and cumin in Mexico.
- Culinary uses include beverages, sweet, and savory dishes.
- Courtiers in 200 B.C.E. China would put cloves in their mouths to freshen their breath before addressing the emperor so as not to offend him.



Tips:

- Use whole in mulling spices for wine, wassail and hot apple cider.
- Use whole to stud a ham prior to baking or an orange to make a pomander.
- Used whole in pickling spices.
- Blends well with a variety of other spices and flavors including: allspice, basil, cinnamon, citrus, cumin, garlic, onion, peppercorn, star anise, and vanilla.
- The flavor is strong so use in small quantities. 🌿

Recipes

Homemade Chinese Five Spice Powder

- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon crushed anise seed or 1 star anise, ground
- ¼ teaspoon crushed fennel seed
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper (or ¼ teaspoon Szechuan pepper)
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves



Mix all ingredients together. Store in a covered container. Makes about 3 teaspoons.

PACNW1, 2019, Epicurious.com

Wassail

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| 8 cups apple cider | 12 whole cloves |
| 2 cups orange juice | 4 whole cinnamon sticks |
| ½ cup lemon juice | Brandy or cognac, for spike (optional) |
| ¼ teaspoon ground ginger, plus more for garnish | Apple slices or orange wheels, for garnish |
| ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg, plus more for garnish | |

In a medium pot, set over medium heat, add the apple cider, orange juice, lemon juice, ginger, nutmeg, cloves and cinnamon sticks. Bring to a simmer and cook for 20 minutes. Ladle the wassail into mugs spiked with brandy or cognac (if desired), and garnish with apple or orange wheels. Yield 8–10 servings.

Sarah Zorn Foodnetwork.com

Rosemary Fruit

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| 1 cup sugar | 3 whole juniper berries |
| ½ cup water | 3 sprigs fresh rosemary |
| 3 sticks cinnamon | 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice |
| 5 whole cloves | 3 cups fresh fruit |

In a small saucepan, combine all ingredients except the fruit. Simmer, stirring frequently, for 3 minutes or until the sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat and cool. When cool, pour over prepared fruit in a deep bowl, stirring gently to coat. Cover and marinate overnight in the refrigerator. Before serving, remove the cinnamon sticks, cloves, juniper berries, and rosemary. Garnish with fresh rosemary sprigs. Yields 6 servings.

A combination of sectioned oranges, fresh pineapple chunks, unpeeled apple slices, pears, and pomegranate seeds works well for the fresh fruit.

Alma de la Guardia, HSA Nashville Unit

The Herb Society of America's Essential Guide to Growing and Cooking with Herbs

Edited by Kathy K. Schlosaser 🍷

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 week of the monthly meeting, when we meet on Saturday instead of Thursday. 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.

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

THURSDAY SENSORY GARDEN MAINTENANCE SESSIONS, 8:00–10:00 A.M.

December 9 (weather permitting)

December 16 (tentative)

Normal schedules resume in January

FEBRUARY 24, 2022

MONTHLY MEETING, 6:30–8:00 P.M.

This month will be a pre-Herb Day meeting, so no outside speaker

February 26, 2022

Herb Day! Watch for details!

March 24, 2022

MONTHLY MEETING, 6:30–8:00 P.M.

Kevin Folivi: Distilling Herbal Oils