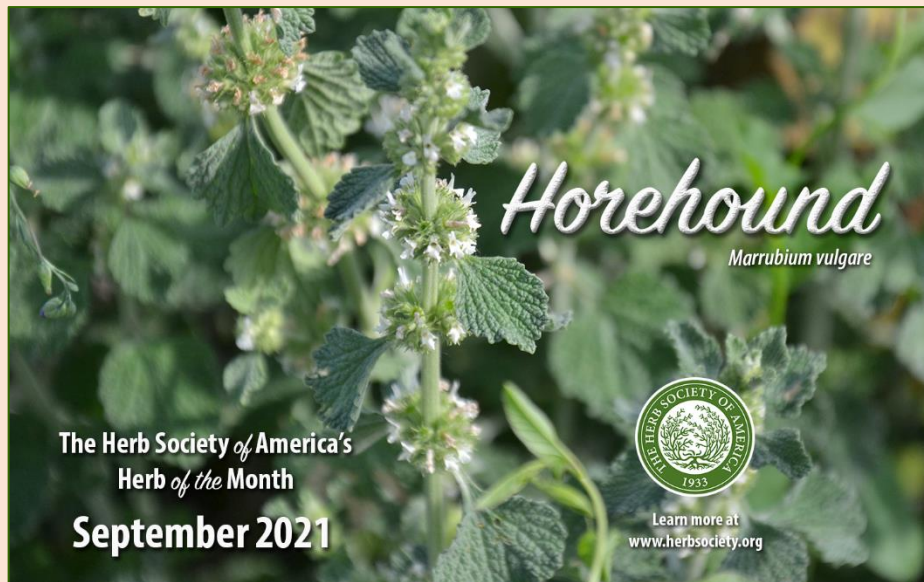


SEPTEMBER 2021

Herb Letter

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA
BATON ROUGE UNIT



Monthly Meeting, September 23, 2021

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

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

Judy Hines and Sylvia Lowe, Sensory Garden Co-chairs: Using the Herbal Harvest (see details on p. 2).

Herb of the Month—Horehound

Horehound, *Marrubium vulgare*

The plant commonly known as horehound or white horehound is a perennial herb in the mint family. Native to Europe, Asia, and northern Africa, it has naturalized especially in disturbed sites in North America. It has a growth habit similar to mints and is often grown contained to prevent unwanted spreading. It grows well in sunny locations with dry sandy soil and tolerates poor fertility. More info on p. 4.

Message from the Chair

Pandemic, Ida, Nicholas...the list goes on of challenges facing our members and the unit overall. It has been a strange few months but even so, we've hosted some of the most enlightening and interesting programs ever, from an update on the Pennington botanical research efforts, to the amazing world of tea in Louisiana, and even a fascinating program focusing on catnip as not only a valuable herb in the home garden, but also a potential commercial crop for Louisiana.

Fortunately, the world around us is easing a bit, with COVID numbers for Louisiana looking better each day. The end of the hurricane season is in sight, and a wealth of new opportunities await our members!

The Heritage Garden and Sensory Garden continue to bring great credit to the unit and to the dedicated worker bees who maintain and keep the spit and polish on those two patches. Once again we are a fully functioning member of the Baton Rouge Botanic Gardens and continue to be key contributors to the Burden landscape scheme. We are doing well!

Yet, we do need to do better. The continued success of this unit and our community contributions depends on the dedicated efforts of every member. While you may not be up for a work day in the garden, there is a vast array of volunteer opportunities ready to utilize whatever time and talent you have to contribute.

Please join us for our meeting on Thursday, 23 September, and learn more about the magic and mystery of herbs, our plans for the future, and the opportunities open to you!

Looking forward to seeing you there! 🌿

— Art Scarbrough, HSABR Chair

Monthly Meeting

September 23, 2021, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

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

Using the Herbal Harvest

This month's meeting is our annual meeting and we're dedicating it to one of our most valued founding members, Sarah Liberta. Sarah wrote HSABR's application to become a unit of the Herb Society of America back in 1991, and in 2017 she received the HSA's prestigious Helen De Conway Little Medal of Honor for her outstanding contributions to The Herb Society of America or to the world of horticulture in general.

In keeping with Sarah's passion for growing and using herbs, Judy Hines and Sylvia Lowe, Sensory Garden co-chairs, will present the program this month on picking, using, and preserving the herbs we grow in our gardens.

Because of the ongoing challenges with COVID-19, we ask that our attendees be vaccinated unless they are unable to take the vaccine. Please wear face coverings and practice 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. 🌿

August Meeting Recap

Dr. Yadong Qi, professor in urban forestry at Southern University, filled in for our scheduled speaker, Dr. Kit Chin, and presented their research on growing catnip in Louisiana. Although technical difficulties with Burden's new laptop prevented Dr. Qi from showing the slides, she gave us a good overview of this useful herb and provided a lot of great information. A paper they published, Biological Characteristics, Nutritional and Medicinal Value of Catnip, *Nepeta cataria*, is available for free download [here](#). 🌿

Samull Classroom Herb Garden Grants

From the Herb Society of America:

We are excited to share that the application period for the 2021–22 Samull Classroom Herb Garden Grants is now open!

These grants ensure that teaching students about herbs continues for years to come, a program Mr. Samull, an elementary school teacher, used in his classroom to engage his 3rd–6th grade students.

Ten grants in the amount of \$300 each are available. Elementary classrooms grades 3–6 with fifteen students or more may apply for a grant to establish an herb garden. The application deadline is October 1, 2021.

Click [here](#) to submit an application. 🌿



Herb of the Month: Horehound, *Marrubium vulgare*

From the Herb Society of America:

- The plant commonly known as horehound or white horehound is a perennial herb in the mint family. It has a similar growth habit to mints and is often grown contained to prevent unwanted spreading.
- It is native to Europe, Asia, and northern Africa and has naturalized especially in disturbed sites in North America. It grows well in sunny locations with dry sandy soil and tolerates poor fertility.
- Horehound has downy leaves and clusters of white flowers that appear in a whorl around the stem, just above a set of leaves.
- The history of using horehound medicinally dates back to the first century and it is still used today. Uses include cold and flu symptoms, coughs, upper respiratory issues, as well as digestive issues like stimulating digestion and loss of appetite.
- It has a very bitter taste so is often prepared with honey or other sweeteners.
- Commercially it is included in herbal cough drops such as the Ricola brand, as well as others. It is also available in powdered form or capsules, made into tinctures, syrups, cough drops, or hard candy.
- Teas and other products can be made from fresh or dried leaves.
- Horehound has been used to make cordials. In Australia, a nonalcoholic beer was made with horehound and other herbs by Bundaberg Brewed Drinks. It was used in an ale in England.
- In the Victorian language of flowers, horehound means wishes for good health.
- Horehound is planted as a barrier plant to repel grasshoppers and locusts. 🌿



From the [Herb Society of America Blog](#):

“The fuzzy, light gray, deeply-wrinkled leaves of horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*) offer a nice contrast to other colors and textures in the garden... Horehound is a perennial herb that grows from one to two feet tall, and can spread in the garden. It prefers dry sandy soil and a sunny location, tolerates poor soil, and is hardy in USDA Zones 4–8. It may be started from seed in the spring, although germination is slow and sometimes not reliable. Cuttings can be taken from a mature plant or the established plant can be divided. Its leaves have a very bitter taste. Horehound produces whorls of small white flowers at the top of the stalk in the second year. The flowers are very attractive to bees, which makes for a tasty honey. The barbed seeds attach to grazing animals and clothing, enabling their spread to other locations.

Horehound is in the mint family. It has the same square stem and prolific growth habit as other mints. It is native to southern Europe, central and western Asia, and North Africa. It has naturalized in North America, Australia, and New Zealand. Horehound will

reseed itself naturally to the point that it has become invasive in some areas. It is considered invasive in parts of Australia and New Zealand.” 🌿

Recipes

Horehound Cough Drops

1 cup fresh horehound leaves
1 cup water
2 cups sugar
2 tablespoons honey
Granulated or powdered sugar, to coat



1. Put horehound in a small nonreactive saucepan and add water. Bring to a boil and simmer, covered, for 20 minutes. Allow to cool, then remove horehound and squeeze out liquid. Add sugar and honey to pan, stir with a wooden spoon while bringing to a boil, then turn heat down to a gentle simmer. If bubbles threaten to overflow the pan, reduce heat slightly and stir.
2. Boil to hard-crack stage (330 degrees), but even if you use a candy thermometer, test often toward the end of cooking to get the hardness right. Keep a shallow cup of cold water nearby. Stir the liquid occasionally and watch how it falls from the spoon. When it forms a thread, begin testing for hardness by allowing a drop of the mixture to fall into the cup of cold water. Don't trust your fingers to examine the now-hardened drop in the cup: bite it. If it's at all gooey or sticks to your teeth, keep cooking. When it's hard enough to crack when you bite it, remove pan from heat immediately.
3. If the mixture crystallizes, just add a cup of water and an extra tablespoon of honey to the pan, scrape the crystalline chunks into it and begin again.
4. Lightly butter a candy mold, cookie sheet or other heatproof baking pan, and pour in the hot mixture. If you're using a flat-bottomed pan, score the surface of the candy after it has cooled enough to become firm. This will help in breaking it apart, which should be done as soon as the candy can be handled.
5. After individual drops are formed, sift granulated or powdered sugar over them to keep homemade cough drops from sticking together. Store horehound cough drops in a moisture-proof container.

— [Mother Earth Living](#) 🌿

Rock and Rye Whiskey

- 1 (750-milliliter) bottle of rye whiskey
- 1 (6-inch) string rock candy
- 1 whole clove
- 1 teaspoon horehound (dried)
- 2 orange slices
- 2 lemon slices
- 1 dried apricot
- 1 cinnamon stick



In a large container, add the whiskey, rock candy, clove, and horehound. Allow the mixture to infuse in a cool, dark place for about three days. Add the remaining ingredients and steep for an additional one to two days (or longer), to taste. Once the whiskey has reached the desired flavor, strain out the fruits and spices and then bottle the whiskey. Serve and enjoy.

Tips:

- Using a good rye whiskey is essential, but it doesn't have to be the absolute best. There are many mid-range rye whiskies available that work perfectly.
- The longer the rock candy sits in the whiskey, the more the flavors will meld. It is important to test the infusion periodically until it gets to your desired flavor intensity.
- The finished rock and rye should be bottled under a tight seal. The original whiskey bottle works well, as does a Mason jar or any glass bottle that seals out air.
- Once strained and bottled, rock and rye keeps well for up to two months in the refrigerator.

Recipe Variations:

- Use orange slices instead of lemon or a combination of the two citrus fruits.
- A few pineapple chunks are a good alternative to the apricot.
- Rather than rock candy, many modern rock and rye recipes use honey, simple syrup, or a flavored syrup (syrup from a jar of high-end cherries is popular). Use 2 to 3 tablespoons and stir it into the whiskey.

— Lance Mayhew, [Thespruceeats.com](https://thespruceeats.com), 1/22/21 🍃

According to [Liquor.com](https://liquor.com), “Rock & Rye was all the rage in the 19th century, when straight rye whiskey mixed with rock candy, sugar and citrus. Any barman worth his salt, er, sugar would use these ingredients to soften the raw edge of then-popular straight rye, a fermented, distilled grain abundant and well-used by Revolutionary soldiers.” 🍃

GreenBridges™ Initiative

It's been a while since we promoted GreenBridges™, so let's do it now!

The Herb Society of America's GreenBridges™ program helps to create opportunities for the safe passage of plants and pollinators and to avoid habitat fragmentation. Each GreenBridges™ garden is a link in the chain across the nation, providing safe movement for the plants and pollinators that help maintain healthy ecosystems.



Get involved in creating GreenBridges™ and you will...

- Learn best practices from a network of GreenBridges™ gardeners
- Grow the native herbs unique to your own region
- Share information with other GreenBridges™ gardeners
- Work toward a more sustainable gardening style

[GreenBridges™ Brochure](#) (PDF)

[Alternative to Invasives](#) (PDF)

[GreenBridges™ Certification Application](#) (PDF) 🌿

Did you know...

...that the Herb Society of America also designates a Notable Native Herb each year and publishes a fact sheet on it?

The Notable Native for 2021 is bloodroot, *Sanguinaria canadensis*. A member of the poppy family, bloodroot is a herbaceous perennial flowering woodland plant and beloved North American spring ephemeral. The genus *Sanguinaria* is from the Latin word for blood, *sanguis*. The species name *canadensis* means "of Canada," where the first documented specimen was observed growing. Both the scientific and common names of this plant refer to the orange-red sap contained in the plant's thick underground stems or rhizomes.



[Click photo for information on growing bloodroot](#)

Its native range is from Canada to northern Florida, and from the East Coast to the Dakotas to Texas. This historic favorite spring flower of poets, botanists, educators, and nature lovers alike is still abundant in its range, but is considered at risk because of over-collection by its admirers.

The downloadable Notable Natives Fact Sheets are another of the benefits you'll gain when you join the Herb Society of America! See our [website](#) for more information. 🌿

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 , 7:00–9:00 A.M.:

September 30

October 7

October 14

October 21

SATURDAY SENSORY GARDEN MAINTENANCE SESSIONS , 7:00–9:00 A.M.

September 25

October 30

OCTOBER 25

MONTHLY MEETING, 6:30–8:00 P.M.

Ruby Homayssi: Companion Planting and Creating Bucket Gardens