



Gulf Herb Society Coast Newsletter

March
2018

P. O. Box 81817 • Mobile, AL 36689 • www.gulfcoastherbsociety.org

Rosemary for Remembrance DATES

Regular Meetings are held at the [Mobile Botanical Gardens](#).

- **Festival of Flowers, March 22-25, 2018:** The Largest Outdoor Flower Show in the Southeast. Providence Hospital Campus, Mobile, AL. We will have a display!
- **March 27, 5:30pm:** Regular Meeting at MBG
- **April 24, 5:30pm:** Regular Meeting at MBG. Presentation by the former president of the Herb Society of North America.
- **May 22, 5:30pm:** Regular Meeting at MBG

Thymely NOTES

[Click Here to find us on Facebook!](#) Read herb tips, recipes, and see pictures from our latest events.

- Please **volunteer** in the herb garden Saturdays after the monthly meetings or whenever you can. Contact MBG Curator [Amanda Wilkins](#) for info.
- We need volunteers and a Chairperson for **Tomato Tango 2018**. Easy, breezy, and lots of fun. If you're interested, call Kathy at 251-680-7979.

Message from the PRESIDENT

1. Plans are underway for a bus trip in May (previously scheduled for April) to Petals From the Past. [Click Here!](#) Lots of room to bring back plants. More will be discussed at meeting.
2. Festival of Flowers – GCHS will have an opportunity to host a table to help distribute information about the Herb Society.
3. Mark Your Calendar - March GCHS Monthly meeting - Tuesday, 27th 5:30 Bring your favorite Spring Dish.
4. Thank you to everyone who came out to help in February in the gardens, lots cleaned up.
5. Dues are now half price at \$12.50 until August.

Thanks,
Kathy

Did You KNOW

Herbs That Attract Pollinating Insects
vegetablegardener.com

When it comes to vegetable and fruit production pollinating insects are the very lifeblood of the garden. For the majority of food plants they're 100%

necessary, so it's important to make pollinators at home in the garden and encourage them to stay.

This is yet another reason that my heart belongs to herbs -- they're incredible performers on so many levels. In the kitchen as food, seasonings, and garnishes. They're found in everyday beauty products and their natural health benefits have been proven time and time again.



French Thyme

As if all of those things weren't enough, many herbs produce flowers that are completely irresistible to pollinating insects, as well as an unlimited number of wildlife species including native bee species, honey bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. Complement your vegetable garden some pollinator-seducing herbs.

Herbs That Attract Butterflies – Butterflies are the happiest in sipping on flowers planted in areas with good sun and little or no wind. Chives, Thyme, Marjoram, Catmint, Mint, Chives, Yarrow, Parsley

Herbs That Attract Bees – Bees prefer single-petaled flowers as they make it easier to get to sweet nectar. Try planting: Basil, Lemon balm, Lavender, Anise hyssop, Hyssop, Borage, Germander, Sage, Savory, Chamomile, Rosemary, Dill, Betony, Lamb's ears, Thyme, Dandelion

Herbs That Attract Hummingbirds – Hummingbirds are pollinators, too! Tubular blossoms are the main course for hummers. Plant herbs such as: Bee balm, Lavender, Pineapple sage, Hyssop, Mint, Rosemary, Catnip, Comfrey, Mallow, Globe Thistle

Don't forget to place a shallow bowl or saucer of water in your garden for hard-working pollinators!

*Quick Note: If you're interested in attracting pollinating insects, you'll have to sacrifice a few

leaves (sometimes whole plants) to desirable caterpillars. After all they're juvenile pollinators. So always identify the caterpillars in your garden before you eliminate them.

Oregano: Mediterranean and Mexican thekitchn.com

When a friend brought us a jar of intensely fragrant oregano from travels to Portugal, we became curious about the different varieties of this herb. What's the distinction between Greek, Italian, Turkish, and Mexican oregano? Do you know which kind you have in your spice cupboard or herb garden?

Oregano is generally classified in two categories: Mediterranean and Mexican. Despite the shared name and similar flavors, these are two completely different species.

- **Mediterranean oregano:** A member of the mint family, Mediterranean oregano grows throughout the region, from Greece to Italy, Spain, Turkey, Egypt, and Morocco. It's also known as wild marjoram. Oregano from these areas is robust in flavor, though different varieties may be more bitter, sweet, or peppery than others. Greek oregano tends to be the most savory and earthy, while Italian is milder and Turkish is more pungent. Used fresh or dry, Mediterranean oregano is the choice for dishes from this region, tomato sauces, pizzas, grilled meats, and other dishes with strong flavors.
- **Mexican oregano:** Mexican oregano is a relative of lemon verbena. Native to Mexico, it also grows in Central and South America and is sometimes referred to as Puerto Rican oregano. Although this herb shares the basic pungent flavor of Mediterranean oregano, it also has notes of citrus and mild licorice. Used fresh or dry, Mexican oregano pairs well with chile peppers, cumin, and paprika. Add it to Latin American dishes, Tex-Mex chili, and salsa.

In all cases, it is really worth it to grow your own varieties or seek out good quality dried oregano. As we learned when we tasted the oregano our friend found on his travels, an herb that sometimes seems rather common and mundane can actually be quite complex and extraordinary!

HIERBAS DE OLOR saveur.com

Just as that wrapped bundle of aromatic herbs called the bouquet garni is a staple of French cooking, so hierbas de olor is essential for flavoring Mexican sauces.

Simply wrap black peppercorns, whole allspice berries, Mexican oregano, and canela (true cinnamon) into a cheesecloth packet, and use whenever you want to impart a deep yet subtle sweetness to your dish.

Swallowtails texasbutterflyranch.com

First of all a Monarch caterpillar would not be found eating dill, since it only hosts on milkweed species. Host plants—the plant a caterpillar eats and lays eggs on—are often the best clue to what kind of caterpillar is visiting your garden.

In their caterpillar stages, Eastern Swallowtails and Monarchs are often confused with each other. That's no surprise, since later in their development, both sport stylish green, yellow, cream and black-striped suits.

These two very different butterflies—Monarchs and Swallowtails—grace our Central and South Texas skies regularly. The migrating Monarch appears in spring and fall during its annual migration. The Eastern Swallowtail seems to be present just about year-round, except in extreme cold.

As butterflies, you can't mistake these beauties for each other. The Monarch, *Danaus plexippus*, exhibits orange-and-black markings that resemble a stained glass window.

The dark blue-and-black Swallowtail, *Papilio polyxenes*, boasts elegant cream, gold and orange dots. Both are large, lovely and can be drawn to your gardens with the right plants.

Yet as caterpillars, the Monarch and Swallowtail are often confused with each other, as the email that opens this post suggests. Here's a few tips that should help you pass the "caterpillar quiz" in distinguishing the Monarch and Swallowtail caterpillars from each other.

1. Note the plant the caterpillars are eating. Checking out the plant a caterpillar is eating generally is the easiest way to tell what kind of caterpillar you're watching.

Monarchs only lay their eggs on and eat milkweed, members of the *Asclepias* family. Swallowtails will host on members of the *Apiaceae* family, which includes parsley, Queen Anne's Lace, carrot, celery, fennel and dill.

Swallowtails will also host on plants in the citrus (*Rutaceae*) family, including rue bushes and lemon,

lime and orange trees. If you find a green-striped caterpillar noshing on fennel, it's a Swallowtail; a stripe-suited chomper chowing down on your Antelope Horns is a Monarch.

2. Check the tentacles/antennae.– Monarch caterpillars have tentacles on either end of their bodies. The ones in front are technically antennae and have special sensory cells, while the ones on the back are “just for show”–to throw off predators.

Swallowtails, on the other hand, don't always show their antennae. When bothered or poked, yellow tentacles pop out of their head and emit a distinctive, sickly sweet odor. Kids are always impressed when you provoke the Swallowtail's tentacles.

3. Note the body shape.– Monarch caterpillars' body type is consistent in its breadth, while Swallowtail caterpillars are thicker in general, and mass into a “hooded” shape at the head.

In answer to Jennifer's question about what to do about a lack of dill, I suggest planting plenty of it–some for yourself, and some for the caterpillars. Dill tends to die as summer heats up, so you can also try some of the other Swallowtail host plants. Rue and fennel have worked well for me, thriving even in our Texas heat.

An emergency run to a local nursery might also be in the cards to pick up some caterpillar food. Just make sure it hasn't been sprayed with any systemic pesticides.

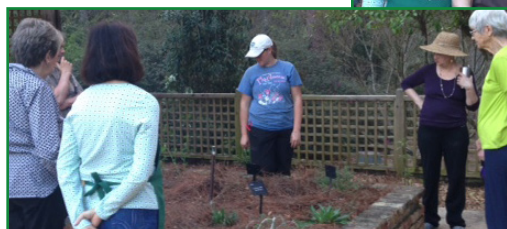
Myrtle's MUSINGS

- **Festival of Flowers** March 22-25. Thurs-Sat: 9-5. Sun:11-5. Providence Hospital. Theme: “A Celebration Promenade.” We will have a table! For more info [CLICK HERE!](#)

- **Old Dauphin Way Plant Swap** April 7, 10-12pm. Dauphin Way United Methodist Church Our last swap got rained out big time and we still had 35 die hard plant people.It was the first time ever that the rain was that intense. We had over 500 plants to swap and most were gone by the end of the soggy event. Trade plants for plants, no money exchanged. It is fun, quick and efficient. For More info [CLICK HERE!](#)

- **Market in the Park for Spring** Cathedral Square, 300 Conti St. April 28 to July 28. Saturdays - 7:30 a.m. to noon. The City of Mobile's Certified Alabama Farmers Market! For more info [CLICK HERE!](#)

- **February Clean Up!** We worked in the garden and removed lots. Pat Ivey has agreed to help coordinate volunteers.
-Kathy



“DILL”-ICIOUS Red-Lentil Soup with Sage and Bacon ~ marthastewart.com *Serves 4*

- 5 slices (4 ounces) leaves, minced, bacon, cut into plus more for 1/4-inch dice garnish
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 4 medium carrots, cut into 1/4-inch dice
- 6 fresh sage
- 1 1/2 cups red lentils
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 5 cups homemade or low-sodium canned chicken stock

1. In a large saucepan over medium-high heat, cook the bacon until crisp, about 3 minutes. Transfer the bacon to a piece of paper towel, and set aside. Discard all but 1 tablespoon bacon drippings from pan.
2. Add the garlic, onion, and carrots to saucepan. Cook vegetable mixture over medium heat until tender, about 5 minutes. Add the minced sage, and cook 1 minute more.
3. Add the lentils, cumin, and chicken stock; stir to combine. Simmer until lentils are cooked and falling apart, 20 to 25 minutes.
4. To serve, divide the hot soup among four soup plates, and garnish with the reserved bacon and additional sage.

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