



Gulf Herb Society Coast Newsletter

January
2020

Mailing Only: 109 Grand Blvd • Mobile, AL 36607 • www.gulfcoastherbsociety.org

Rosemary for Remembrance DATES

Regular Meetings are mostly held at the [Mobile Botanical Gardens](#), but are subject to change.

- **January 28, 5:30pm:** Regular Meeting at MBG
- **February 18, 5:30pm (Fat Tuesday):** We will meet for dinner at the Half Shell Oyster Restaurant on Airport Boulevard at I-65.
- **March 24, 5:30pm:** Regular Meeting at MBG
- **April 25 9am - Noon:** HERB DAY! at MBG

See calendar page at the end of the newsletter for complete details.

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 whenever you can. Contact Pat Ivie peivie@comcast.net, 334-315-5874 for info.

Did You KNOW

4 Indoor Herb Combinations From Around The World
rodalorganiclife.com

Put global flavors at your fingertips with these beautiful container gardening ideas.

Bypass the supermarket's wilted, plastic-entombed herbs and do this instead: Grow your own. It's easy, and a container garden not only allows you the flexibility to provide plants with optimal growing conditions but also puts fresh versions of your favorite flavors right at hand (new to this? Check out our Container Gardening 101). Plus, it lets you try out harder-to-find herbs like papalo, fresh bay leaves, and borage for seasoning global dishes. Best of all? You're in control of your plants' care and feeding, so you know your harvest will always be chemical-free. Try these four culinary mixes.

Southeast Asian – Crispy spring rolls, herb-laced papaya salads, and succulent curries are all better homemade with super-fresh ingredients. Plant lemongrass (*Cymbopogon citratus*), whose thick stalks should be harvested close to the root, and rau ram (*Polygonum odoratum*), also known as Vietnamese coriander, together. Move their container

to a bright place inside when temperatures dip toward freezing—neither likes even a hint of frost.

Both grow best in moist soil and plenty of sun. Flatleaf garlic chives (*Allium tuberosum*) and spearmint (*Mentha spicata*) will survive winter outdoors in areas where minimum temperatures stay above 10 degrees. Lemon basil (*Ocimum x citriodorum*), an annual, should be replaced each growing season. Give all three loamy soil, even moisture, good drainage, and full sun.

English Cottage –

The buds of English lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) make an unexpectedly lovely addition to lemonade, cookies, and even roast potatoes, or dry them and stuff a sachet. Plant lavender alongside blue-flowered borage (*Borago officinalis*), whose tender leaves add color and a mild, cucumber-like flavor to cocktails and can be chopped for salads or sautéed



Lavendar

like spinach. Complete the trio with chamomile (*Chamaemelum nobile*), whose flowers you can dry and steep for tea. These herbs prefer deep, moist soil and an extra-sunny spot. Give rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), which lends woody depth to roast chicken and vegetables, its own pot; it's finicky about water. Use quick-draining potting soil, because too much moisture is nearly always fatal. Perch the container in a sunny location. And if you live north of the Mason-Dixon Line, move your rosemary indoors over winter.

Golden variegated sage (*Salvia officinalis* 'Icterina') and lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*) are both great for flavoring cooked meats and veggies, too. Pot them with parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*), a versatile herb you can chop for garnishes, sauces, and warm salads. Use moist—not sopping—soil, and, for the sake of the sage, full sun.

Mediterranean – If you're a fan of dishes like grilled fish and new potatoes strewn with fresh thyme, roasted eggplant laced with oregano, and seafood stew flavored with a bay-rich bouquet garni, then this is your mix. A bay laurel tree (*Laurus nobilis*) grows no taller than a kindergartner when raised in a container. Prune its leafy branches a foot or two above the surface of the pot so ample light can reach plantings of thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*) and Greek oregano (*Origanum heracleoticum*). All of these herbs like full sun and even moisture but are moderately drought-tolerant, so they'll survive the family vacation without a watering. If you live somewhere consistently warm, like the Deep South or California, keep the pot outdoors year-round. Otherwise, move it inside for the winter.

Latin American – Heat-loving herbs from Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean thrive in sunny conditions and consistently moist soil (to test, poke your finger about an inch into the potting mix; it should always be damp). Use sweet-smelling chopped marjoram (*Origanum majorana*) to flavor stews, pickles, or a summer salad of corn and tomatoes. Add peppery papalo (*Porophyllum ruderale*) to fresh salsa and serve alongside roasted meat. Cilantro (*Coriandrum sativum*) adds pungency to guacamole as well as tacos and sandwiches. Floral Cuban oregano (*Plectranthus amboinicus*) punches up grilled chicken or simmered beans.



Cuban Oregano

Move the container to a sunny spot indoors over the winter—frost-sensitive marjoram and Cuban oregano will appreciate it.

Container Watercress Herbs: How Do You Grow Watercress In Pots

gardeningknowhow.com

Watercress is a sun-loving perennial that grows along running waterways, such as streams. It has a peppery taste that is delicious in salad mixes and is especially popular in Europe. Watercress is high in iron, calcium and folic acid and is also rich in vitamins A and C. If you love the flavor of this green,

you may be wondering if you can grow container watercress herbs and, if so, how do you grow watercress in pots?

How Do You Grow Watercress in Pots? – If you have a water feature in the garden, it is a great place for growing watercress in containers, as you are able to mimic the native watery conditions in which cress thrives. You may also grow container watercress herbs in a bucket with 2 to 3 inches of water, allowing the soil to stay saturated. The key is to keep the roots submerged under water. The water should be changed once or twice a week.

While watercress will do well in a variety of soil conditions, its ideal range is between a pH of 6.5-7.5. Potted watercress plants should use a soilless mix containing perlite or vermiculite combined with peat. Use a saucer beneath the plant and keep it filled with water to provide constant moisture.

Watercress can be propagated via stem cuttings or sown from seeds. Sow the seed just below the surface, about ¼ inch, three weeks before the last frost-free date in your region. It is important to keep the soil of potted watercress plants moist or the plant will not germinate. Seeds can be germinated inside or out in cool, 50 to 60 F. (10 to 16 C.), and wet conditions. Space the plants 8 inches apart when transplanting and place in a sunny outdoor area.

Some recommended varieties of watercress are:
Garden cress,
Curly cress and Peppergrass (annuals)
Winter cress (biennial)
Big Leaf cress (perennial)

Care of Potted Watercress – Care of potted watercress is fairly simple, provided the plant is kept wet. Watercress doesn't have high nutrient needs, although it may become deficient in phosphorus, potassium or iron. Phosphate deficiencies appear as stunted and dark colored foliage while potassium deficiencies create scorching on older leaves. Yellowing, often in winter, may indicate an iron deficiency. To combat these, mix a water soluble fertilizer in with the water according to the recommended rates.

A few pests such as whitefly, spider mites, and snails may assault your potted watercress plants. Insecticidal soap can control whitefly and natural predators such as lady beetles, predatory mites and thrips can control spider mites. Snails can be trapped or picked off by hand.

The tiny, dime-sized leaves of the watercress can be harvested throughout the year. The flavor is best during the cooler months of the year and lessens in flavor once the plant has flowered or temps rise above 85 F (30 C.). Harvest watercress by cutting the plant back to 4 inches and then allow it to re-grow. The leaves can be refrigerated for about a week but are best used fresh for culinary or medicinal purposes.

Myrtle's MUSINGS

- First, the Gulf Coast Herb Society tried something different for its annual December holiday gathering - - - a Cookie Swap! Members attended with home baked (or purchased) holiday treats which we enthusiastically sampled during the festive gathering, and then shared for everyone to take home to family and friends for further holiday merriment. So much fun, the consensus was we should do it again next year!

Second, the Gulf Coast Herb Society is proud that one of its members, Joan McCracken, is the new president of the local Master Gardeners organization. This is a big year for the group as the statewide Alabama Master Gardeners Conference is being held in Mobile, and the local Master Gardeners have already been hard at work to make this event a success. More information about this event, which will be held March 30-April 1, 2020, will be available soon. Members of the Herb Society are invited to the conference. Congratulations, Joan!

-Pat Ivie, President

- **HERB DAY!!** 9:00am to Noon: Presentations from Dr. Gary Bachman and Dr. Christine Coker from Mississippi State Extension Service "Herb Gardening in the Gulf South." Volunteer or get your tickets in advance.

"DILL"-ICIOUS Hungarian Mushroom Soup with Fresh Dill ~ platingsandpairings.com

prep time: 10 minutes, cook time: 30 minutes, total time: 40 minutes, servings: 6 people

- 4 Tablespoons butter
- 1 large onion diced
- 1 pound mushrooms sliced white, crimini and/or a mix of wild mushrooms like chanterelles
- 3 Tablespoons flour
- 1 Tablespoon paprika
- 3 cups vegetable stock chicken stock or bone broth
- 3 Tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 cup 2% milk
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 Tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 Tablespoon chopped fresh dill or 2 tsp. dried dill
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
- Salt and pepper to taste

1. Melt the butter in a large saucepan over medium heat, add the onions and mushrooms and cook until the mushrooms have released their liquids and it has evaporated, about 10-15 minutes.
2. Mix in the flour and paprika and let it cook for 2-3 minutes.
3. Add the stock, soy sauce and milk, bring to a gentle boil, reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Remove from heat and mix in the sour cream, lemon juice, dill and parsley. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

GCHS Officers 2019 - 2020

President ~ Pat Ivie • President-Elect ~ Annie Daniels • Recording Secretary ~ Martha Adams

Treasurer ~ Kathy Lovitt • Historian ~ Jennifer Williams • Ways & Means ~ Kathy Lovitt

Parliamentarian ~ Julie Castle • Weeders & Planters ~ Sybil Burnett & Nita Crandall • Newsletter Editor ~ Ojuana Cooney

GULF COAST HERB SOCIETY **Calendar of Activities – January - April 2020**

January 28 - 5:30pm Regular meeting at the Botanical Gardens with a presentation by our very own Nita Crandall on "Dirt, As Gardeners See It"

February 18 - 5:30pm Due to our regular meeting day being on Mardi Gras Day, we will meet for dinner at the Half Shell Oyster Restaurant on Airport Boulevard at I-65.

March 24 - 5:30pm Regular meeting at the Gardens. We will have a Picnic and Social in the Herb Garden. (We should look at making this an annual event?)

April 25 - HERB DAY!! 9:00am to Noon Presentations from Dr. Gary Bachman and Dr. Christine Coker from Mississippi State Extension Service "Herb Gardening in the Gulf South"

NOTE: The above listed plans may change, or additional events and meetings may be added, so please check back frequently

MOBILE BOTANICAL GARDENS **Calendar for 2019 – 2020**

EVENTS/ SOCIAL (for more info [CLICK HERE!](#))

- **Friday Blue Plate Lunches at the Gardens.** April 12, 2019 - February 29, 2020. Time: Fridays 11:30a - 1:30p Location: MBG, Friday Blue Plate Lunches at the Gardens

CLASSES (for more info [CLICK HERE!](#))

- **Friday Garden Sketch Club.** November 9, 2018 - April 5, 2020. Fridays, 2-4pm. Fridays, 2-4pm. MBG Larkins Classroom. General Admission (\$5) for non-members

PRESENTATIONS (for more info [CLICK HERE!](#))

***GCHS* Food Team Duties**

- Make sure kitchen tables and counters are clean
- No food left in fridge
- Pick any trash off floor
- Clean spills from floor
- Take out garbage & place new - bags in cans bags are on to fridge
- If table and chairs are to be put up we will let you know - if not they can be left out
- Make sure all doors are locked
- Thermostats must be left as you found them



GULF COAST HERB SOCIETY

2019/2020 MEMBERSHIP

New Member? Y N

Name: _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Email _____ (to receive our Newsletter and updates)

Committees I am interested in: _____ Herb Garden _____ Membership _____ Herb Day

Yearly dues are \$25 and payable in August. Make checks payable to GCHS.

Date _____ Amount \$ _____ Paid by Cash _____ or Check # _____

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

Welcome to the Gulf Coast Herb Society! We meet at the Mobile Botanical Gardens from 5:30 to 7:00pm the fourth Tuesday of the month, unless otherwise announced in our newsletter and emails.

Refreshments are served at each meeting, it's optional to bring something to share.

Meetings start at 5:30p.m., program will follow, work days in Herb Garden TBA

Questions? Email Patricia Ivie, at peivie@comcast.net or

Annie Daniels, at mbdmobile@aol.com.

Please make checks payable to GCHS and mail to 109 Grand Blvd, Mobile, AL 36607

Or bring your check or cash to one of our meetings

Check out our website www.gulfcoastherbsociety.org Like us on Facebook!