



# Gulf Herb Society Coast Newsletter

July  
2022

Mailing Only: 109 Grand Blvd • Mobile, AL 36607 • [www.gulfcoastherbsociety.org](http://www.gulfcoastherbsociety.org)

## Rosemary for Remembrance DATES

- **July 26, 5:30 pm.** GCHS Meeting at MBG
- **August 23, 5:30 pm.** GCHS Meeting at MBG
- **September 27, 5:30 pm.** GCHS Meeting 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](mailto:peivie@comcast.net), 334-315-5874 for info.
- A Membership form is at the end of the Newsletter. Mail to or drop off: c/o Kathy Lovitt, 109 Grand Blvd, Mobile, AL 36607. Make checks payable to GCHS \$25.00. Questions? Call Kathy Lovitt at 251-680-7979.

## Did You KNOW

### The 11 Best Mint Companion Plants [seedsandgrain.com](http://seedsandgrain.com)

Mint can be a great addition to your herb garden, and it's an interesting plant in its own right. Because it's considered invasive, it can be a much more challenging companion plant to stay on top of.

Mint can grow from one small plant to a traveling vine if not controlled properly. So it's important to know which plants do well with mint, and which you should keep it away from. As long as they're watered properly, Mint plants are happy in full sun, but they also do well in partial shade.

### Common Problems & Pests That Impact Mint

Before we decide what to plant with mint, let's take a look at the common problems mint encounters.

**Spider Mites** – Spider mites are a common problem with mint and other herbs. They start off small and hard to detect, but by the time you notice the problem they've created a whole ecosystem and your plant might not make it.

Spider mites are tiny little bugs that eat away at your plants. You'll know you have them when the plant leaves start to look like they have cobwebs all over. The leaves might start showing signs of curling or turning brown, eventually the plant can die if these aren't remedied.

While neem oil can help with a lot of pests, companion

planting some mint nearby can also be effective.

**Mint Rust and Powdery Mildew** – Mint rust is a fungus that causes the your mint leaves to turn yellow. They'll also fall off if left untreated, leaving bare stems and branches behind. You can control mint rust by watering and spraying your mint regularly with an anti-fungal spray like neem oil or grapefruit seed extract.



Banana Mint

### The Best Mint Companion Plants

While you might just be thinking about how to have a bountiful mint harvest, don't forget that companion planting works both ways!

**Beans** – Beans, as well as bush beans are great mint companions. Mice, voles, and other garden rodents love snacking on beans and peas. The scent of mint helps deter some of these critters from getting a full meal in.

**Cabbage & Broccoli** – Cabbage and broccoli are great companions for mint. The peppermint scent can help keep away cabbage moths and flea beetles.

Cabbage moths are particularly tricky for brassicas like broccoli and cauliflower, as they lay eggs on the underside of the leaves which are hard for humans to see.

Before you know it, there are giant holes in your cabbage leaves and the plant is struggling to survive.

**Brussels Sprouts** – Similar to others on this list, the aromatic scent of mint can help keep pesky beetles and other insects that feed on Brussels Sprouts away.

**Carrots** – Mint is considered a great companion plant for carrots because they help deter the carrot root fly. Carrot flies can be disastrous to your carrot crop, so having some mint close by can help.

**Cauliflower** – Similar to cabbage and broccoli, interspersing some mint plants near cauliflower can help with flea beetles. The beetles will chew holes into your cauliflower heads which can shock the plant if not remedied.

**Eggplant** – Eggplant can suffer from aphid attacks, and mint does a great job at keeping them at bay. Growing mint between your eggplant and tomatoes can help both varieties.  
**Kale** – Grow mint near kale to help keep beetles and other

insects from each your beautiful green kale leaves.

**Onions** – The strong smell of mint can also help deter onion flies from wreaking havoc on your onion crop. While onions have a strong smell, the mint can counteract this and help keep flies away.

**Peas** – Peas and mint are good companion plants. The mint plant helps control pests and rodents because of its scent. If you can plant mint around your pea plants, you'll be able to bring more fresh pods out from the garden.

**Bell Peppers** – You can plant mint with bell peppers, as it will help repel aphids. I found a ton of aphids on my pepper plants this past season, so I'll definitely be adding some mint nearby to keep them at bay.

**Tomatoes** – Tomatoes do well planted next to mint as the peppermint smell can help deter aphids. Aside from tomato hornworms, aphids can be one of the biggest pest issues your tomato crops might encounter.

If you let some mint go to seed and grow flowers, those mint flowers attracts beneficial insects like bees, parasitic wasps, and more.

### **What NOT to Plant Near Mint**

While a lot of plants benefit from being planted nearby mint, other crops don't play well together.

Mint likes water, like a LOT of water, and moist soil, so it will likely steal the water these others herbs would need to survive. Lavender, Rosemary, Sage, Thyme.

Since mint grows as an invasive plant, it can take over other garden plants (i.e. choke out other plants) if you're not careful. Being a hardy perennial and vigorous grower also means mint is a great ground cover between taller plants in the garden.

If you're growing herbs in pots or containers, keep mint in its separate pot. Just like older kids, they like to have their own room or else things get weird.

Companion planting mint can be a great way to help your other plants thrive, while also getting a more bountiful mint harvest out of your growing season.

Mint is an interesting plant in its own right. Because it's considered invasive, it can be a much more challenging companion plant to stay on top of.

Mint is happy in full sun as long as it's watered properly but often will prefer partial shade as well.

## **The Easy Way to Loosen Compacted Soil in Houseplants**

[apottedlifeblog.com](http://apottedlifeblog.com)

If you've ever noticed that when watering your plant, it seems to pool on the surface of the soil instead of soaking in? Or that the soil appears hard and dense? It's time to

give your plant a little love. Compacted soil is a common issues among potted indoor plants, where small creatures found in outside dirt (bugs, worms, micro-organisms etc.) don't usually tend to live.

Over time, the isolated soil inside your plant's pot will become dense without the natural aeration provided by these organisms. It's up to us to make sure our houseplants are getting the proper levels of nutrients, water, and oxygen from the soil. First of all, it's important to understand why soil becomes compacted, so you can take the proper steps to correct the problem.

### **Why plant soil becomes compacted**

The soil in your plant's pot can be compacted for various reasons. The most common include:

1. Soil that is too old. Your houseplant's soil may be free from bugs or mold, but that doesn't mean it's healthy for your plant. The limited amount of soil inside a pot isn't meant to last forever—and neither are the fertilizer and aerating materials found in potting mix. Generally, fast-growing plants should have soil changed annually, while slow-growing plants like the Snake Plant can hold out for longer.
2. Soil is the wrong type. It shouldn't come as a surprise that using topsoil or dirt from the backyard is bad for your indoor plants. These types of soil are for different purposes than for providing a proper ratio of nutrients and aeration for a potted plant. Potting mix is available for many different types of houseplants and succulents to ensure the best growing environment for them.
3. Soil is overwatered. Sometimes, compacted soil is the result of a plant receiving too much water too often. Top watering a plant can create hard, dense soil by flushing out needed aerating materials. With only soil left, each new watering will settle it lower and lower in the pot. Bottom watering is an effective way to relieve this issue while providing plants with a more thorough watering.

The problems associated with compacted soil

It may now be a little more obvious how compacted soil can affect your potted plants. The effect of dense soil can have a significant impact on your plant and increase the risk of it becoming unhealthy or even dying. Primarily, soil compaction can lead to a lack of water flow. If it seems like you're watering your plants often, and yet they still look parched or yellowed, it's because this water can't travel properly through the soil to the roots.

Similarly, overwatering can quickly saturate your plant, and cause any pockets between clumps of soil to become filled with water. This saturated soil makes it difficult for your plant's roots to get the oxygen they need. And with each new watering, the soil becomes heavier and more compact.

Limited nutrients are also a common effect of soil compaction. Nutrients and fertilizer found in fresh potting mix won't last more than a few months after an initial repotting. They may be flushed out with every watering

and lose potency. Or, if fertilizer is added to the top of the soil, it may not be able to travel down to the plant's roots because the soil is too compacted.

Poor root growth is also a result of compacted soil. Plants prefer to stretch their roots as they grow, but this becomes difficult when the soil is too dense to move through. A combination of compacted and saturated soil also makes it difficult for air to dry out the soil and provide oxygen for the roots. This often results in root rot!

How to loosen compacted soil and improve soil aeration  
You can help loosen dense soil with two simple techniques—and thankfully, neither take much work!

Technique 1: Use a chopstick to gently poke holes in your plant's soil. Try to create a tunnel down to where you think the greatest number of roots live. There may be some resistance, depending on how dense the roots are, so try not to force a hole. Once you've created several holes in the soil, water your plant, paying attention to watering over the holes. Creating this space will help water and air get to where it needs to go!

Technique 2: Create a new combination of potting mix, aerating materials (such as peat moss, vermiculite, or perlite), and even sand, depending on the type of plants you own. This new mixture will not only have the proper nutrients from the fresh soil but the proper aeration from the added materials. Remove all the old soil from your plant, then repot it into this new soil mixture and water thoroughly! You should see a noticeable change in the color and growth of your plant.

## Myrtle's MUSINGS

- Joan Hoffman will be teaching a class on different forms of propagation of plants on August 27th at MBG at 10:00.
- Reminder **Dues are Due** \$25.00.
- Our July Herb of the Month will feature Mint. Pat Ivey will be covering this versatile herb at the July meeting. As a nice treat for the meeting, I thought it would be a good

idea to sample different types of mint at the meeting. I do know we have a couple types of mint in the herb garden already.

If anyone has a unique mint growing in their garden, would you be able to bring some of it to the July meeting? For example, Joan brought in some Orange Mint to the June meeting to share. If you have apple mint, chocolate mint, or any other unique mint, please let me know! If you would like to pot some up to share with the group, that would be great, too! If anyone has any ideas on how to "sample" the mint, please do not hesitate to share. We could maybe just sample the leaves, or possibly make tea?

-Nicole Owler

Also, bringing a dish prepared using mint would be welcomed.

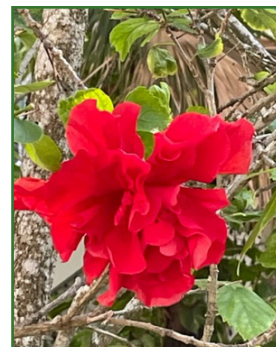
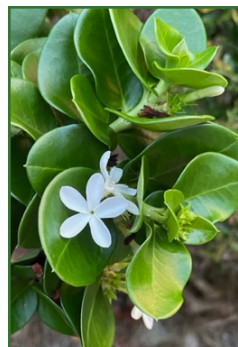
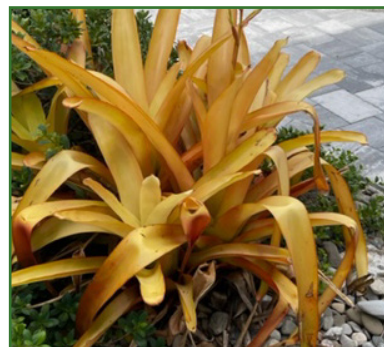
-Pat Ivie

- These are plants I saw on our vacation at Manasota sketch, FL. It is home to the Canopy Trail and is a major sea turtle nesting ground.

New plants for me were the clustering fish tail palm (appropriate name), and a giant bromeliad type plant. The small white flower is

a Natal plum and has a wonderful aroma but is very toxic according to Picture This. The red flower is a Chinese hibiscus, it reminded me of Rose of Sharon. I saw so many interesting and different plants there!

-Annie Daniels



## "DILL"-ICIOUS Refreshing Summertime Sun Tea ~ [cambridgenaturals.com](http://cambridgenaturals.com)

This tea is wonderfully cooling, refreshing and hydrating on hot summer days.

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 4 tablespoons dried hibiscus</li><li>• 2 tablespoons dried rose petals</li><li>• 1/2 - 1 tablespoon dried spearmint</li></ul> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Add all herbs to a quart-sized glass jar and cover completely with cold water. Give it a stir and then cap tightly. Place the jar in a sunny window and let it infuse for 3 to 6 hours until the desired flavor is reached. Strain out the herbs and enjoy! (The remaining herbs can be steeped again, but will be weaker the second time around.)</li></ol> <p>NOTES: Use with caution in people with heartburn as the sour taste may be aggravating. Also, hibiscus is sometimes intercropped with peanuts so use with caution in people with nut allergies.</p> |
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### GCHS Officers 2022 – 2023

**President ~ Beth Poates • Outgoing President ~ Annie Daniels • President-Elect ~ Vacant • Recording Secretary ~ Larry Liles**  
**Programs/Photograph ~ Nicole Owler • Treasurer ~ Annie Daniels • Historian ~ Vacant • Ways & Means ~ Alicia Davis**  
**Parliamentarian ~ Martha Fuller • Weeders & Planters ~ Sybil Burnett & Nita Crandall • Newsletter Editor ~ Qjuana Cooney**

## **GULF COAST HERB SOCIETY Calendar of Activities 2022 – 2023**

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**July 26th, 5:30pm:** GCHS Meeting at the Mobile Botanical Gardens

**August 23th, 5:30pm:** GCHS Meeting at the Mobile Botanical Gardens

**September 27th, 5:30pm:** GCHS Meeting at the Mobile Botanical Gardens

**HERB DAY** Postponed. Date to be determined.

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

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## **MOBILE BOTANICAL GARDENS Calendar for 2022 – 2023**

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

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

**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



# MINUTES OF GULF COAST HERB SOCIETY MEETING

JUNE 28, 2022

- The meeting was called to order by President Beth Poates. The first order of business was to discuss officers for the coming year. Efforts to get a candidate for president and vice president had not been successful. Beth agreed to continue as president for one more year, and Annie Daniels agreed to be Treasurer (replacing Kathy Lovitt, who has asked to step down after multiple years of service). It was proposed that Larry Liles continue on as Secretary if he is willing (Larry was not present). Susan Abrams moved to nominate the slate of officers as: Beth Poates (President), Larry Liles (Secretary), and Annie Daniels (Treasurer). Joan Hoffman seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

All agreed that it is very important that willing candidates be identified to serve as officers (including Vice President) in future years. It was also agreed at this meeting that Alicia Davis would serve as Ways and Means chair, and Nicole Owler will chair programs and social media for the organization. The assistance of each member will be needed.

- Beth reminded everyone that annual membership dues of \$25 should be paid in August. Members are encouraged to begin giving Annie dues payments starting in July.
- Beth thanked everyone for the successful “Herb Day” that the GCHS held in the herb garden back in April 2022. The contributions by Abloom and Zimlich’s were much appreciated, and thank you notes have been sent to both businesses. Members are encouraged to support those nurseries with your business and express your appreciation to them. There was discussion of an idea to have an “Herb Day” of this type in both the spring and fall, and those present were supportive of the idea.
- Beth said that GCHS is signed up for Holiday Market again this year, which will be held December 4, 2022. Sybil Burnett again volunteered to make her wonderful, much sought after cookies, for sale at the Holiday Market. Further plans should be initiated shortly.
- It was suggested that the purchase of magnetized name tag for members be considered. It would be especially helpful for our public events.
- Jane Finley was welcomed and introduced as our newest member. We are all pleased that she has joined us.
- Alicia Davis and Nicole Owler then gave excellent presentations for our monthly program. Alicia discussed the herb Dill, and Nicole gave a presentation on growing and using the various kinds of basil. Both presentations were much appreciated, and members got to take home harvested seeds to start their own plants. Joan shared a basil that she rooted.
- Announcements included a reminder of the First Friday event being held at Mobile Botanical Gardens on July 1. Pat spoke briefly about the Herb Society of America conference she attended recently, and promised to provide more information about next year’s HSA conference to be held in April 2023 in Baton Rouge.

Minutes prepared by Pat Ivie

# The Plain Garden Planting Cycle

**May**

Sow winter crops

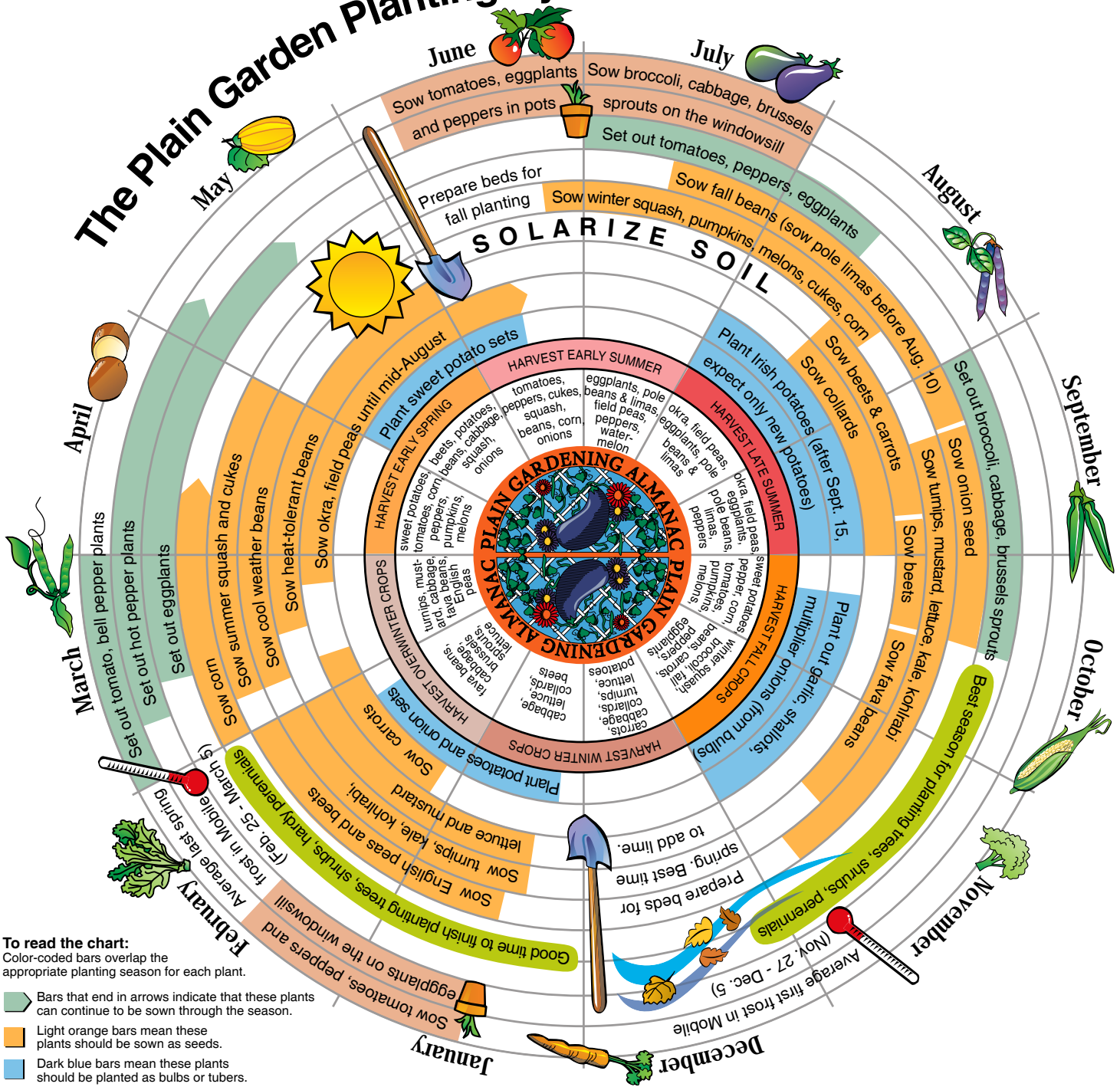
**June**

Sow tomatoes, eggplants and peppers in pots






Prepare beds for fall planting

Sow winter crops

**SOLAR I**



Color-coded bars overlap the appropriate planting season for each plant.

-  Bars that end in arrows indicate that these plants can continue to be sown through the season.
-  Light orange bars mean these plants should be sown as seeds.
-  Dark blue bars mean these plants should be planted as bulbs or tubers.
-  Green bars mean these plants should be 6-inch-high transplants when put in the garden.
-  Brown bars indicate that these plants should be sown in pots in a cold frame or inside the house.



# GULF COAST HERB SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

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.**

**Please make check payable to GCHS  
mail % Kathy Lovitt, 109 Grand Blvd. Mobile, AL 36607  
Or bring your check or cash to one of our meetings**

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, emails and Facebook.**

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?

Check out our website [www.gulfcoastherbsociety.org](http://www.gulfcoastherbsociety.org) Like us on Facebook!