



# Gulf Herb Society Coast Newsletter

May  
2025

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

## Rosemary for Remembrance DATES

- **May 27th.** GCHS Meeting at MBG (Social time begins 5:00pm following with the meeting at 5:45pm).
- **June 24th.** GCHS Meeting at MBG (Social time begins 5:00pm following with the meeting at 5:45pm).  
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. Make checks payable to GCHS - \$25.00.

## Did You KNOW

**HERB OF THE MONTH: Oregano: Difference Between Greek and Italian Oregano**  
[heybigsplendor.com](http://heybigsplendor.com)

**Greek Oregano vs Italian Oregano** – Wondering about the difference between Greek and Italian oregano? The first thing you need to know that in the battle of Greek Oregano vs Italian Oregano, they're both winners! And you will be too, once you learn about the differences in oreganos.

**Greek Oregano vs Italian** – Oregano is a member of the prolific mint family and both Greek and Italian oregano share many common characteristics with their mint cousins. Like all mints, oreganos have a strong strong aroma and a distinct flavor that can dominate if not carefully balanced. Greek oregano and Italian oregano are more alike than not but they're NOT interchangeable, in either the garden or the kitchen.

Visual differences between Greek and Italian Oregano – If you're trying to tell the two apart, the quickest way to do so is to look at the leaves. Greek oregano has larger leaves with slightly more prominent veins. In general, Greek oregano will be larger and can be slightly darker in color.

Greek oregano plants are usually larger – both in height and spread. Italian oregano plants a typically smaller and grow in more of a clump. When oregano plants are very young, it's harder to tell them apart visually. But

as they grow, Greek oregano will quickly spread and put on height. How to tell Greek and Italian Oregano apart While the bigger leaves are a great indicator, expect Greek oregano to have a thicker stem.



Greek Oregano

The aroma is also a dead giveaway. Greek oregano has a stronger, more pungent aroma. If you're familiar with any member of the mint family, you already know what I mean – they share an almost skunky, musky scent. While Italian oregano does have the signature mint family perfume, it's much more subtle and you have to crush the leaves to release it.

**What about flavor? Do Greek oregano and Italian oregano taste different?** – Yes they do! The same concentration of flavinoids that gives Greek oregano a more pungent aroma also give it a distinctly different flavor. Expect Greek oregano to have a deeper flavor with heavy notes of camphor. It stands out strongly, even in dishes with other strong flavors. Italian oregano has a lighter flavor that's more grassy than camphor. It almost has light citrus notes and a more complex overall flavor.

**Greek Oregano vs Italian Oregano in the kitchen** In the US, oregano is grown mostly for use in the kitchen, though it does have some wonderful medicinal properties. Here are some of the differences between Greek and Italian oregano.

**Greek Oregano Uses** – The majority of recipes that call for 'oregano' mean Greek oregano. Even classic Italian dishes generally rely on the bold flavor of Greek oregano. Greek oregano is, of course, essential to Greek salad dressing. Most recipes will specify the variety of oregano but if it just says 'oregano', you can likely assume they mean Greek oregano.

**Italian Oregano Uses** – Use Italian oregano if you don't have Greek. The flavors are similar though not interchangeable but Italian oregano will still bring the basic 'oregano note' to the dish.

I often choose Italian oregano if I'm adding the herbs to a dish where they won't be cooked. The lighter flavor blends in better without dominating. I sometimes use it in tomato sauce if I want to keep the overall flavor of the sauce lighter and sweeter.

Italian oregano is lovely when chopped finely and sprinkled over grilled chicken or fish or over a lightly seasoned pasta dish. I also like it as part of a vinaigrette salad dressing if I want to have a hint of oregano flavor but don't want the oregano to steal the show.

If you enjoy the general flavor of oregano but prefer it to be toned down, try subbing Italian oregano or doing a mixture of both.

**Can you use Greek and Italian oregano together?** – Absolutely! In fact, my Herby Couscous Recipe includes both Greek and Italian oregano.

### **Beginner's Guide to Pinching Plants** [kellyorzel.com](http://kellyorzel.com)

Pinching plants, the age-old technique of snipping out the center of your multi-stem, cut-and-come again herbs and flowers is epic. If you're like me and want fuller plants, more stems, blooms and increased stem length, you too will soon be a convert.

Pinching plants redirects the plant to refocus its energy from developing the central stem and bud, into side-shoots, promoting stem and flower production.

Removing that top, tender growth is KEY. After this cut—or pinch—your plants will grow 2+ new stems beneath the slice. Resulting in a bushier, more productive plant.

While pinching isn't required, expect tall, rangy plants with minimal stem and bloom production when pinching isn't practiced.

**My First Cut, Pinching Plants** –The first time I ever pinched a plant I was so nervous. I looked at this happy, vibrant little seedlings and could not believe I was going to cut 3-5" off the top. Sounds insane. However, you're crazy if you aren't taking advantage of this simple, effective process. So, that initial year I was in fact rewarded with lush, sumptuous stems and blooms. The following year I felt the jitters again. I knew in my head that this snip would make a colossal difference in my harvest, but I still felt timid. After I went through with it, low and behold, heaps and heaps of stems and flowers again! And ever after, this pinching practice became an essential garden task I look forward to every spring.  
Are you ready to make your first cut?

#### **How To Pinch Plants:**

1. Wait until the plant is 8-12" tall with 3-5 sets of

leaves.

2. Grab clean, sharp, snips (my favorite, go-to snips can be found [here](#)).

3. Cut 3-5" off the tender top growth. Make sure you make the cut right above a node, or set of leaves.

#### **And voilà! You're ready to repeat!**

Pinching is essential for plentiful crop harvests, whether herb or flower. Whenever I harvest stems, I always cut right above a leaf node, or set of leaves—similar to when pinching young plants—which stimulates more branching.

By harvesting in this manner I am essentially continuing to pinch back and deadheading. This continued cut-back prolongs bloom period for flowering plants, and stem and leaf production for herbs for a summer long—even an entire growing-season long—harvest.

My basil, for example, I'm able to harvest from late spring/early summer, until frost gets them in autumn. One plant can consistently supply me with fragrant, delicious leaves for 3+ months. Every couple weeks, I cut at least one-third of the top growth right above a set of leaves, and this does two things. First, it stops it from going to flower, which signals to the plant it's time to shut down production. And secondly, it encourages bushier growth, meaning more stem and leaf production. Who doesn't want more basil leaves?!

When it comes to flowers, I do the same thing. Harvest blooms regularly, but always cut the stem far back to a node, or set of leaves. Again this acts similarly to deadheading, not allowing the flowers to develop seeds. When flowers, such as sweet peas or dahlias, are not harvested regularly and allowed to stay on the plant, they begin to wither. This decline communicates to the plant it's time to wind down for the season, stop producing blooms and begin seed production. Flowers that are harvested frequently, give no chance for seed development. So they continue branching out, setting buds and blooming until frost or ... you stop harvesting.

#### **The Big Takeaway:**

The more you pinch, the more you get!

When it comes to plant pinching, I am ruthless! Armloads of flowers and herbs is so worth this teeny-tiny extra step in spring. Not only does it shape the plant and make it more productive, you will have plenty to share with family and friends. Isn't that one of the great joys of having a garden? The sharing.

In case you have any unanswered questions on pinching, here's couple FAQ's.

#### **Pinching FAQ's.**

Q. Must you use flower snips?

A. Clean, sharp snips, pruners or scissors are best. While I have been known to use my fingernails in a

pinch (don't you just love a pun?!), fingers and dull pruners can tear the stem tissue opening young plants up to disease if you're not careful.

Q. What plants do you pinch?

A. Multi-stemmed, cut-and-come again crops. Herb-wise, think basil, sage, rosemary, tarragon, lavender, thyme\*, oregano\* and scented geraniums (pelargoniums). \*Thyme and oregano perform best when pinched back by half, and again after flowering. Dahlias and most annual flowers including: zinnias, sweet peas, rudbeckia, marigolds, calendula, amaranth, branching sunflowers, cosmos, celosia, marigolds, impatiens, most snapdragons, salvia, and petunias, just to name a few, provide more generous harvests when pinched.

Even woody perennials like Russian sage, phlox and asters respond well to pinching—or cutting back—by a third in early spring!

**Plants NOT to pinch:** Dill, single-stemmed sunflowers, single-stemmed snaps, larkspur, delphinium, cockscomb, columbine, stock, columbine, coral bells, iris, foxglove and dianthus.

Q. When do you pinch?

A. Early spring ideally, before the plant sets its first bud. Look for when your seedlings or young plants is 8-12" tall and has 3-5 sets of leaves.

#### Reality Flash:

There have been times I've been busy in spring and neglected pinching until the plants were larger. After my pinching, flowering was delayed a couple weeks, but I'd rather have a bushy plant with an abundance of stems and blooms following a slight lag, than a spindly plant that blooms on time.

Q. Where do you pinch?

A. Snip off the top 3-4" off the plant just above a set of leaves.

Q. What about pinching woody-stemmed plants?

A. Woody-stemmed plants should be cut back, but by no more than on-third.

I hope this answers all your plant pinching related questions!

Happy Pinching!

## Myrtle's MUSINGS

• In our garden we found this cluster of eggs on our golden oregano. Does anyone know whatkind of bug this belongs to? We weren't going to let them hatch and find out!

- Qjuana and Richard Cooney



## “DILL”-ICIOUS Greek-Inspired Burgers with Herb-Feta Sauce ~ [eatingwell.com](http://eatingwell.com)

- |  |                                      |   |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| • 1 cup nonfat plain Greek yogurt              | • 2 teaspoons lemon juice            | • ½ teaspoon ground pepper                      |
| • ¼ cup crumbled feta cheese                   | • ¾ teaspoon salt, divided           | • 2 whole-wheat pitas, halved, split and warmed |
| • 3 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano, divided | • 1 small red onion                  | • 1 cup sliced cucumber                         |
| • ¼ teaspoon lemon zest                        | • 1 pound ground lamb or ground beef | • 1 plum tomato, sliced                         |

1.Preheat grill to medium-high or preheat broiler to high.

serves: 4 burgers

2.Mix yogurt, feta, 1 tablespoon oregano, lemon zest, lemon juice and 1/4 teaspoon salt in a small bowl.

3.Cut 1/4-inch-thick slices of onion to make 1/4 cup. Finely chop more onion to make 1/4 cup. (Reserve any remaining onion for another use.) Mix the chopped onion and meat in a large bowl with the remaining 2 tablespoons oregano and 1/2 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Form into 4 oval patties, about 4 inches by 3 inches.

4.Grill or broil the burgers, turning once, until an instant-read thermometer registers 160 degrees F, 4 to 6 minutes per side. Serve in pita halves, with the sauce, onion slices, cucumber and tomato.

## GCHS Officers 2024 – 2025

President ~ Beth Poates • President-Elect ~ Joy Harrison • Membership ~ Lydia Criswell  
Hospitality ~ Priscilla Gold Darby • Treasurer ~Annie Daniels • Historian ~ Vacant • Ways & Means ~ Alicia Davis  
• Newsletter Editor ~ Qjuana & Richard Cooney

## **GULF COAST HERB SOCIETY Calendar of Activities 2025**

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- **May 27th.** GCHS Meeting at MBG (Social time begins 5:00pm following with the meeting at 5:45pm).
  - **June 24th.** GCHS Meeting at MBG (Social time begins 5:00pm following with the meeting at 5:45pm).
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## **MOBILE BOTANICAL GARDENS Calendar for 2025**

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

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

***Preschool Storytime: Tales and Trails in the Gardens.*** Thursdays 10:30am - 11:30am until May 22nd. Tales and Trails in the Gardens Preschool Storytime Returns! Tales and Trails preschool storytime returns to Mobile Botanical Gardens thanks to the generous support of the Lilian S. Woolford Charitable

***Botanical Art: A Drawing Class for Beginners Only.*** Fridays from 10am- 1pm until May 23rd. BOTANICAL ART: A DRAWING CLASS FOR BEGINNERS ONLY Instructor: Derek Norman

***Sketch Club in the Gardens.*** Fridays, 2-4pm. The Larkins Classroom OR at Magnolia Hill Studio. A casual sketch club experience with oversight from Derek Norman, botanical arts instructor. Cost: FREE for MBG Members, regular admission for nonmembers.

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

### **GCHS Food Team Duties**

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| • Make sure kitchen tables and counters are clean | • Clean spills from floor   | • 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             |
| • No food left in fridge                          | • Take out garbage & place new - bags in cans bags are on to fridge |   | • Thermostats must be left as you found them |
| • Pick any trash off floor                        |   |   |  |



# Remembering Katy Lovitt

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*It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of long time Herb Society member, Kathy Lovitt.*

*Kathy served the Herb Society as President and Treasurer and was past chair of our Herb Day and Tomato Tango fundraisers.*

*She recently held several Holiday Market work parties in her home.*

*She was a gracious hostess and brought a creative energy to the Society. She will be sorely missed.*





# 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 and mail % Annie Daniels, 1355 Carson Rd W, Mobile, AL 36695**

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.

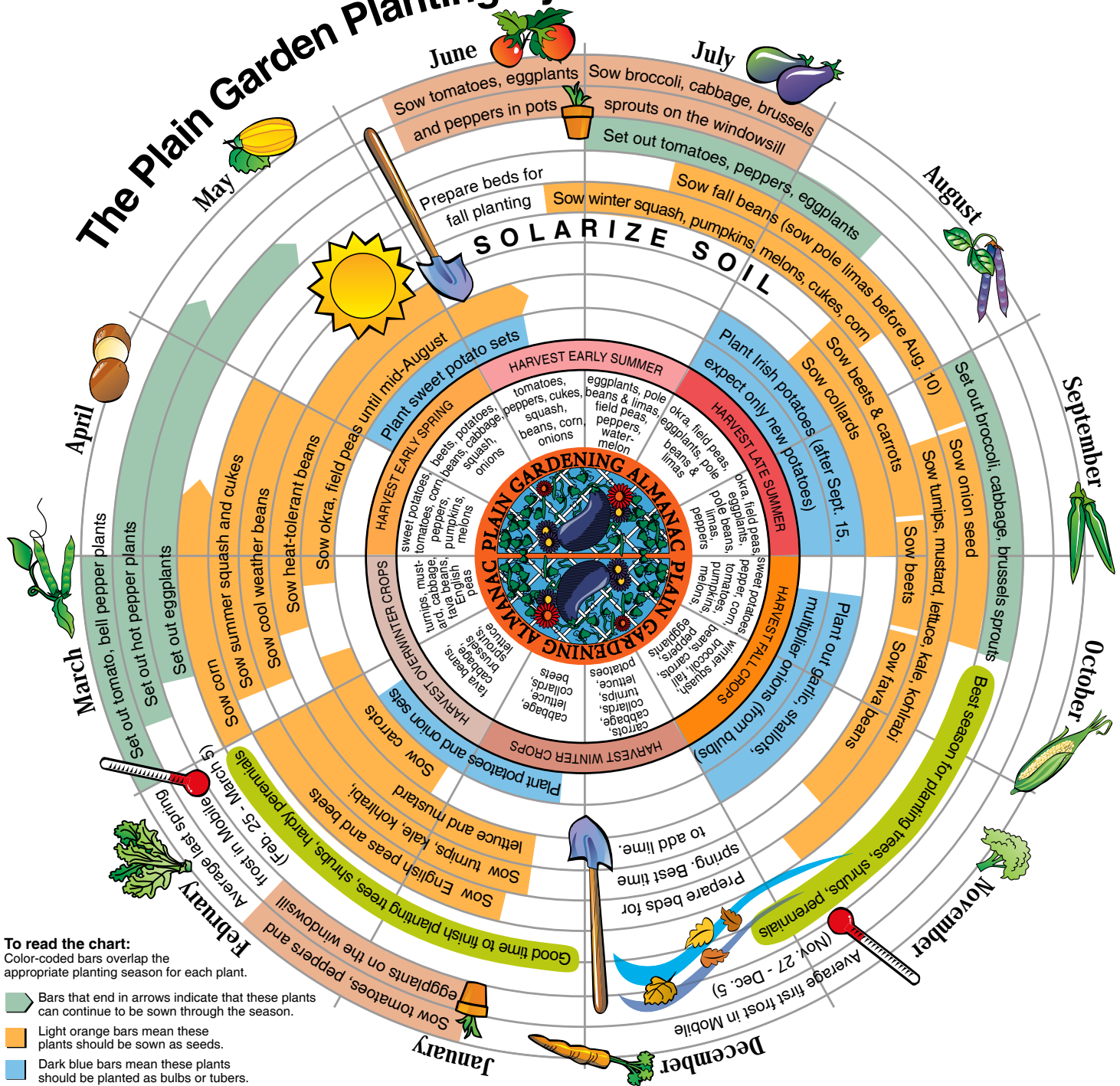
Meetings start at 5:30p.m., program will follow, work days in Herb Garden TBA

Questions? Email Beth Poates at [poates57@gmail.com](mailto:poates57@gmail.com) or

Annie Daniels, at [mbdmobile@aol.com](mailto:mbdmobile@aol.com).

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

# The Plain Garden Planting Cycle



## To read the chart:

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.