



# Gulf Herb Society Coast Newsletter

July  
2025

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

## Rosemary for Remembrance DATES

- **July 22nd.** GCHS Meeting at MBG (Social time begins 5:00pm following with the meeting at 5:45pm).
- **August.** No Meeting  
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: What is Sumac? It's the Secret to Bold and Bright Mediterranean Flavor!**  
[themediterraneandish.com](http://themediterraneandish.com)

Sumac spice is often compared to lemon zest, but it's so much more than that! With layers of smoky, sweet, earthy, and tangy flavor, sumac will elevate everything from salad dressings to meat marinades. Learn all about this vibrant Mediterranean spice and how to use it in this essential guide.

Growing up in Egypt, sumac was just another one of the vibrant Mediterranean spices my mom kept stashed in a drawer in our kitchen. But since coming to the states, I've come to appreciate how much life this crimson red spice can breathe into simple recipes. I've since made introducing TMD readers to the wonders of sumac one of my missions!

Place a pinch of sumac on your tongue and you'll experience its depth immediately: it's tannic like a dry red wine and acidic like lemon zest. Keep digging and you'll find subtle layers of sweetness and smoky, earthy notes.

If you're familiar with Middle Eastern flavors, you may recognize the pucker of Musakhan, or the way it balances the savory notes in Fatayer. If you're less familiar with classic Middle Eastern dishes, I hope this article will make you feel more equipped to incorporate sumac into your cooking.

Though complex, its lemony flavor is surprisingly approachable. I trust you'll be adding it to everything from grilled chicken to summer salads to sprinkling a touch of it on avocado toast or popcorn in no time!



Sumac

**What is Sumac?**– Sumac spice comes from the Arabic "summaq," which means "dark red." It's made from the berry fruit of the Rhus Coriaria shrub, which were originally grown in parts of the Mediterranean basin before spreading to Europe.

The berries are dried, then ground and sifted to get rid of the bitter inner seed. The coarse crimson-colored powder is then bottled and sold, or mixed into blends like za'atar.

This type of sumac is also known as "Sicilian sumac" or "Tanner's sumac." And it might surprise you to learn that it's actually a member of the cashew family, anacardiaceae!

**What is the Best Sumac Substitute?**– Though it won't have the same tannic qualities and layered flavor, I often recommend using lemon zest in as a substitute for sumac. Keep in mind that lemon zest can burn over high heat, so you may want to save it for the garnish, depending on the recipe. Or you can find the finest all natural, authentic sumac spice at our shop!

**How to Use Sumac Spice** – You don't need a recipe to use sumac—use it to bring a tart flavor just like you would lemon zest. Sprinkle your morning toast, soup for lunch, or even blend it into juice. Some more ideas:

**Salads:** Add to just about any salad dressing for extra zing, or sprinkle on traditional recipes like Fattoush.

**Dips:** Use as a finishing touch on a variety of savory dips, including classics like hummus. You get a contrast between the nutty hummus and the sour spice, adding depth of flavor with no effort at all.

**Meat:** Make an eye-catching centerpiece with Turkish-style Kofta Kebab, or keep it simple—and flavorful—

for weeknight dinner with Mediterranean Chicken Nachos.

**Fish:** Sumac will complement lemon juice, adding another layer of the tart zing that's a fish recipe's best friend. Try it on everything from Baked Halibut to bagels and lox.

**Even Dessert!** A pinch over your ice-cream, sorbet, or fruit, like the macerated strawberries in our strawberry shortcake recipe.

**Where to Buy Sumac** – You can find sumac spice at our shop, specialty grocery stores, and Middle Eastern markets. It should be in the spice section, sometimes categorized alphabetically and sometimes alongside other Middle Eastern pantry staples like za'atar.

### Gardening "To Do" Tips by Month for Mobile, AL - July [almanac.com](http://almanac.com)

- If you get frost, calculate your planting date to see if you have time for more crops. Count back the number of days to maturity plus 18 days for the harvest of the crop.
- Check your plants for any diseases and pests and treat when necessary.
- Prepare soil for fall plantings. Clean up all debris. Mix in compost or fertilizer.
- Plant herb transplants: rosemary, ginger, laurel, Mexican tarragon.
- Prepare your perennial flower beds now; you can start flowers for next spring soon.
- Stake any tall-growing plants to help prevent any damage.
- Be sure to divide and replant any crowded plants. It is important to increase the air circulation between plants so that the plants can dry out between rain showers.

### How to care for heat-damaged plants [extension.oregonstate.edu](http://extension.oregonstate.edu)

There's no denying the damage is severe, said Heather Stoven, OSU Extension horticulturist. Some plants died and others were fried by the record-breaking temperatures. Even some that look extremely bad, like rhododendrons and hydrangeas, can bounce back. Burned leaves don't necessarily equal a dead plant, so patience and observation is needed.

**Here are some recommendations from Stoven and other experts:** Go ahead and cut off dead flowers, but try to resist the urge to remove partially dead leaves, and especially don't do any hard pruning. Leaves, dead or alive, will shade foliage that wasn't burned and those with some green remaining will continue to photosynthesis. Pruning forces new growth that will be damaged if there is another heat event and creates

a place where diseases and pests can enter the plant. Also, keep in mind, if you cut back spring-blooming plants like rhododendrons, you'll be cutting off buds that will be flowers next year. Foliage will grow back unless the plant is too far gone.

Water deeply. Use drip or soaker hoses for more efficient water use; water is lost to evaporation when using an overhead sprinkler. Roots extend beyond the plant, so be sure to cover an area wider than just under the plant. Don't overwater, however. Stressed plants are more susceptible to pests and diseases and root rot could become a problem. To test the moisture, stick a screwdriver in the soil. It will penetrate easily if the soil is moist. The best time is early morning so plants can use the water through the day when they need it and residual water will evaporate before night.

Berries can be pruned lightly, but wait until the usual pruning time to remove this year's fruiting canes. Apply mulch 2 to 3 inches deep. Any organic matter will help retain soil moisture and even out the temperature of the soil.

A word about hydrangeas: There are multiple species of hydrangeas, some of which are more tolerant of heat and sun. The coveted bigleaf hydrangeas, with their large blue to pink blooms, are spectacular in the garden, however, they are going to be less tolerant of extreme drought and heat. Other species such as panicle (*Hydrangea paniculata*) and oak leaf hydrangeas (*H. quercifolia*) can be grown in sun and tolerate drier soil. While these should not be considered drought-tolerant plants, they may be better suited for our climate and also have breathtaking blooms.

### Moths: The Good, the Bad, and the Reality of These Garden Pollinators [plantersplace.com](http://plantersplace.com)

Moths elicit varied responses from people. Sometimes they are so beautiful, like the enormous Sphinx (or Hawk) moth, that they are a joy to see. Other times, such as when they're dive-bombing you as soon as you turn on a light, they're a bother. Since people seem to love them or hate them, I thought it makes sense to discuss the good, the bad, and the reality of moths.

Moths come in all shapes and sizes. From minute species like the pygmy that is a mere 2.5 mm to the enormous Atlas moth with a 10-inch wingspan, it's obvious you can't assume they are all the average 1-inch length. Most of the dull browns and grays. But, there are some vividly adorned species that mimic other insects or are so-called to discourage predators.

**Benefits** – Many people don't realize that moths

are important pollinators. When they are keeping us awake at night, it's hard to remember that many species play a critical role in the garden just as much as the beloved butterflies. Sphinx or Hawk moths are best seen at night when they visit evening-blooming flowers. And while they will pollinate any flowers that are open at night, some gardeners enjoy purposefully planting a "moon garden" to encourage these after-hours pollinators. A few plants moths particularly like since they often find their food source by smell include nicotiana, evening scented stock, moonflower, evening primrose, and heliotrope.

They're also more adapted than we might think. Since bats consume a lot of moths, some of the species make a squeaking sound to throw off their echolocation. Others take evasive action and basically outfly their hungry pursuers.

**Harms** – But moths can be a pest. The Death's-head Hawk Moth (remember The Silence of the Lambs? ) has a fascinating characteristic of being able to mimic the scent of the bees in the colony making it virtually invisible. It's believed to emit a squeaking sound that resembles the hive's queen. Between these talents, and a resistance to bee venom, this particular moth is known to simply waltz in and steal honey. And if honey-thieving wasn't enough, on top of having an ominous appearance, even the caterpillar can be a bit of a nuisance notoriously feeding upon potato plants.

Some moths have a reputation of eating clothing or other fiber. The reality is most species feed on the nectar of the plants. They need the high carbohydrates to complete their lifecycle. They also cause the most damage when they are in their larval form of a caterpillar. Gypsy moth larvae, an

introduced, non-native species are responsible for the defoliation of many trees. Anyone with broccoli or other Brassicas knows it's a constant battle to stay ahead of the cabbage moth. And even though the sphinx moth is one of my favorites to watch in the garden, its larvae is the tomato hornworm, a significant pest in many regions of the country.

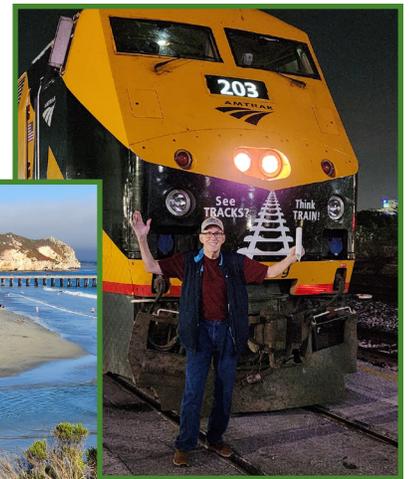
Like so many creatures, there's give and take when it comes to moths. They are excellent pollinators as adults, yet their larval stage is nearly always problematic for gardeners. We just have to accept them as they are. Shoo the moth out the door at night, and pick off the larvae from your cabbage leaves in the morning.

## Myrtle's MUSINGS

- Member Larry Liles is on a four week, 7500+ mile, Amtrak Railpass adventure from New Orleans to LA, Seattle to Chicago then DC, and finally Hattiesburg, to home. Visiting friends and family.



Avila Beach, CA



Train delayed in San Antonio.

## "DILL"-ICIOUS Easy Grilled Shrimp ~ [maureenabood.com](http://maureenabood.com)

Serves: 6

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil</li> <li>• 1/4 cup lemon juice</li> <li>• 2 cloves garlic, minced</li> <li>• 1 tablespoon sumac, plus more for finishing</li> <li>• 1 teaspoon kosher salt</li> <li>• Few grinds black pepper</li> <li>• 1 1/2 pounds large or jumbo shrimp, peeled and deveined with tail on</li> <li>• Lemon wedges, for serving</li> </ul> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In a medium nonreactive (non-metallic) bowl, combine the olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, sumac, salt and pepper.</li> <li>2. Add the shrimp and coat each one well with the marinade. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes.</li> <li>3. Heat the grill to medium high.</li> <li>4. Thread the shrimp on skewers, about 5 per skewer. Discard remaining marinade.</li> <li>5. Coat the grill grates with a bit of oil,</li> </ol> | <p>using tongs and a folded paper towel. Lay the shrimp skewers on the coated grates and cook for 2-3 minutes. Turn and grill the other side of the shrimp skewers for 2-3 minutes, or until the shrimp are opaque and light pink.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Remove the skewers from the grill and brush the hot shrimp generously with olive oil. Dust them with more sumac, then push the shrimp off of the skewers to serve. Serve with lemon wedges, if you like.</li> </ol> |
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### 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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- **July 22nd.** GCHS Meeting at MBG (Social time begins 5:00pm following with the meeting at 5:45pm).
- **August.** No Meeting

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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. 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

**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!](#))

**1st Friday Presentation: "The Secrets of Organic Farming: The Legacy of Dr. Nettles Farm".** Friday, August 1st. 10-11:30am The Larkins Classroom. Join us for an inspiring presentation by Dr. Dana Nettles on the principles and secrets of sustainable, organic farming, with a focus on how traditional knowledge, natural methods, and scientific insight can work together to promote both physical and mental health, environmental stewardship, and community well-being. Discover how natural agricultural practices, rooted in generations of experience, offers a path to healing, education and environmental harmony.

There is no cost to attend the presentation but please RSVP by emailing [Aeriell 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 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.

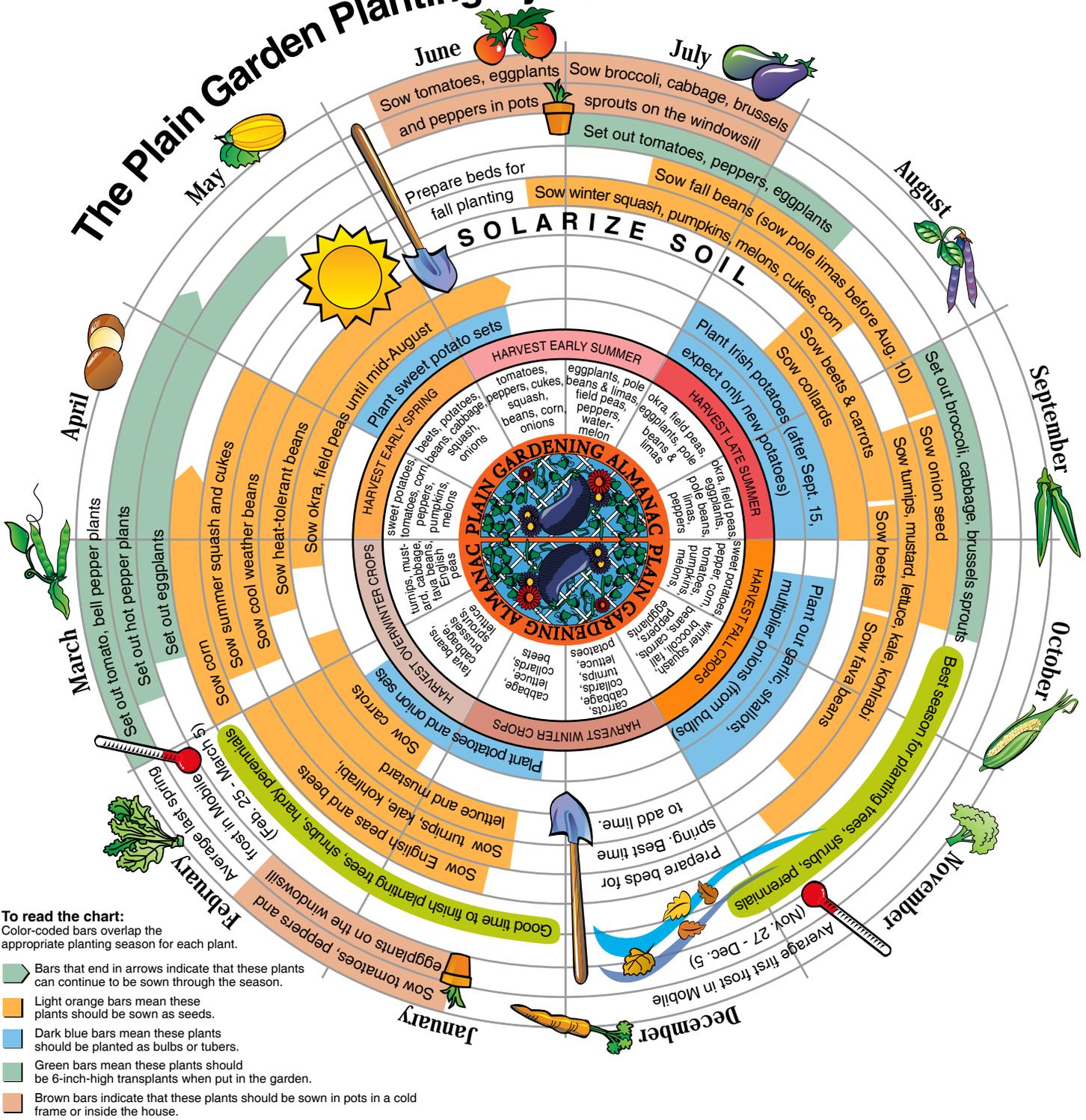
Meetings start at 5:30p.m., program will follow, work days in Herb Garden TBA

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.