



POTOMAC POTPOURRI

The Newsletter of THE HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA. POTOMAC UNIT
Vol. XLIII No.03 May-June, 2019

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I have been potting plants for our sale and my potting bench is between a lilac and a Viburnum Judii. They have been in full bloom this week so the smell is delicious. This has happened before and it is such a pleasure.

Tommy and I spent 12 days in Florida in late March and early April. It was lovely in Florida and we visited the Miami area, the Keys and the Everglades. We had visited my brother in Sarasota, but South Florida was new to us. We particularly enjoyed the Everglades where I happened on an alligator crunching on a turtle. We did not see any pythons that are taking over the place. All was very lush and beautiful.

We returned to see the Cherry trees blooming at the tidal basin on our way home from the airport. The city was ablaze and still is with flowering trees. My daffodils are now phasing out, but not the weeds. Have I mentioned I have never seen more weeds? We attempted to get all the winter cress out of the rose garden and the theme beds at the National Herb Garden (NHG) before they went to seed, but there were still a lot of them in the grassy area in the middle of the theme beds. Mary Lou moved on to Dandelions when the cress started spitting seed at her. Walking recently, I passed a lawn that was all winter cress in seed, and the bunny in that garden was not eating it. We will see it again.

One of the big draws to the plant sale is that the hillside with the azaleas is in full bloom that weekend. They are starting early this year, but should still be in great form for the sale. I think the

tulips in the NHG will be gone by the sale too, but it will still be beautiful.

After many years of service, Madeline Wajda is turning over the editorship of the Potpourri to Laura Anthony & Cyndie Rinek. When I first joined the Unit, Madeline was editor and published a paper copy every month. After a few years in "retirement" and several editors she came back, and has done a great job. She is also a delight to have at our meetings. We thank her for all her years of service and doing a terrific job..

We have some changes upcoming in our unit. Our nominating committee has found a new chairperson, Peggy Riccio, who will be introduced later in this issue. I appreciate her willingness to take on the responsibility. Change is good for organizations. I have enjoyed my opportunity to be chairperson but am happy to pass on the responsibility.

Some things change some stay the same. Many thanks to the nominating committee headed by Jim Adams and supported by Susan Belsinger and Edna Mancias. The committee has nominated Peggy Riccio as incoming chairperson, Pat Kenny as vice-chairperson, Barry Eigen as treasurer, Renee Johnson as corresponding secretary and Mary Beth Mahoney and Laura Anthony as recording secretary(ies). We appreciate the hard work of the committee. We will vote on the slate at our annual meeting and picnic on June 2 at the Eigen's home and garden.

See you there and in the Herb Garden.

Penni

National Herb Garden Activities

May 17 - NHG Committee work day. All welcome

May 18 - Multi-Unit Under the Arbor Program:
Herbal Teas

June 22 - Philadelphia Unit Tussie Mussies

June 29 - Lavender

September 7 - South Jersey Lemon Herbs

September 21 - Botanical Brews

October 12 - Chile Celebration

Natural Dyeing with Indigo and Kitchen Compost (Herban Lifestyles program series)

May 18, 2019, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

US National Arboretum Visitor Center auditorium

From indigo, to avocados, to onion skins—nature can yield a wide range of beautiful, colorful dyes. Using locally sourced plants, kitchen compost, and other plant based materials, you will have the opportunity to experiment with various hues and learn about the ways to prepare fabric for dyeing in this hands-on workshop. With a focus on three primary colors, you will be able to accomplish a full spectrum of color during this session. A brief history of the practice of natural dyeing as well as the origins of some materials and colors will be discussed. The science behind the process, mordants, and modifiers will also be covered. Each participant will take home two bandana sized pieces, dyed in the colors of your choice. Fee: \$65 (\$52 FONA members). **Registration required.** Go to

<https://campscui.active.com/orgs/NationalArboretumUSDA#/selectSessions/2631208>

Our Next Meeting is the Potomac Unit's Annual Picnic - Sunday, June 2nd from 11:00 am. to 2:00 pm

We will enjoy Rosemary and Barry Eigen's magnificent homestead in the suburbs of Ellicott City – 12205 Mount Albert Road, Ellicott City, Maryland 21042-1336 (410.531.5463). We go all out with herbal drinks, a fabulous potluck meal of several courses, and a huge raffle. We are, therefore, very cheerful and relaxed at our Unit annual meeting where the officers report on past happenings and future goings on, the Plant Sale is celebrated, and the Vice-chairperson tells of speakers and locations planned for the coming school year (2019-2020). This year Penni St. Hilaire will pass the gavel on to a new chairperson

and new officers will be welcomed.

The raffle consists of White Elephant-type things that we members would like to exchange with each other while we pay small amounts of money for tickets, the total of which goes to the Unit's coffers for expenses such as hospitality supplies, etc. Our Membership Chairperson, Karen Kilday makes it fun.

At the year-end Annual Picnic and Meeting there has been a relaxed tradition of bringing special plants to give, first-come-first-serve, for the members to take for their home gardens.

Incidentally, I plan to have four kinds of The Herb of the Year 2019 because they are too special for the Plant Sale (actually they are still growing in the plug tray/even though sown over heat & under lights February 25th, aren't grown out enough): *Agastache foeniculum*, straight species, from my plants, *A. f.* 'Snow Spike' seed from Richters, *Agastache rugosa*, seed from Baker Creek purchased at their store in Missouri during a field trip as a part of the International Herb Association Conference September 2018, and *Agastache rugosa* 'Golden Jubilee', seed ordered from Territorial Seeds.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE HERB GARDEN EVENTS

Monday, June 10, the garden will have open house from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Pat Kenny

PLANT SALE, US National Arboretum Saturday & Sunday, April 27 and 28

Everyone is excited about our upcoming plant sale. Plants, crafts, rose beads and membership tables will be featured. As of today (4/16) we have all our plants contracted (a little over 3,000 plants) and ready to be delivered on Friday April 26 as well as over 1,000 donated plants from fellow members. We will be featuring something new this year - free recipes on 27 different herbs. Each specific herb will have a special label with a star on it directing customers to the membership table for a free recipe should they so desire.

We will have the same size tent this year as last,

and will be located in the same spot as last year (on the east Terrace), but we will have less tables and chairs. We are not allowed to use any space outside the tent.

If you have any last minute questions or concerns feel free to contact me. If you are coming remember to bring a sun hat, water to drink and a snack. Also - if you have box lids or gift bags to contribute please bring them. Let us have great weather and a busy tent.

HSA EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

Our own Jo Sellers will be receiving the Helen de Conway Little Medal of Honor award at a special awards dinner at the conference being held in Madison, Wisconsin on June 14 and 15. This is the highest award given by the Society for outstanding service and dedication to The Society or the world of horticulture.

The award is given to someone for "real service" to The Herb Society of America or for "outstanding ability" in the field of herbs. It is also meant to create a challenge to achievement for members of The Society. Helen de Conway Little was a member of the HSA awards committee and in 1956 proposed that a bronze medal of honor be struck to give to outstanding members. The original Medal of Honor Award was renamed for Mrs. Little in 1966 because of her many years of devoted service as awards committee chair. Other members of the Potomac Unit who have received this prestigious award include: Betty Crisp Rea 1979, Ruth Smith, 2012 and Pat Kenny, 2015.

Follow this link for conference details:
<https://www.herbsociety.org/grow/hsa-conference-information/>

Congratulations to our 2019 HSA Rosemary Pin Recipients: Laura Anthony & Jim Adams.

Thinking about nominating someone for an HSA award? Do not hesitate, the deadline is September and the summer break is almost here. If you wish to nominate a Potomac Unit member for an award, please start that proverbial 'ball rolling' and contact Kim Labash.

Mid Atlantic DISTRICT GATHERING

September 27 & 28 Hershey Pennsylvania

Hoping you are planning to join us for the Mid-Atlantic District Gathering in Hershey, Pennsylvania. We will have our very own Chrissy Moore as one of the speakers. More information forthcoming.

UPCOMING HSA WEBINARS

May 14 1:00-2:00 p.m. HSA Webinar
How to Grow and Use Luffa

June 20 1:00-2:00 p.m. HSA Webinar
A Taste for Herbs

RECIPE

At the most recent Potomac Unit Board Meeting we were discussing Hibiscus sabdariffa and I shared a recipe I had picked up from the blog of CaryTownTeas in Richmond. I learned of this company through their tea blender who had presented a very interesting talk on tea to the Colonial Triangle Unit. The recipe is as follows:

Summer Hibiscus Sparkler Recipe

INGREDIENTS:

Hibiscus Tea Simple Syrup:

1/2 cup agave or honey

1 cup water

4 heaping teaspoons Sabdariffa Hibiscus

Summer Hibiscus Sparkler:

2 tablespoons Hibiscus Tea Simple Syrup

4 oz chilled champagne or sparkling wine

Raspberries or lemon twist, if desired

DIRECTIONS:

1. To make Hibiscus Tea Simple Syrup, mix agave and water in 1-quart saucepan. Heat to almost boiling over medium heat, stirring until agave dissolves. Remove from heat. Add Hibiscus; steep 10 minutes. Remove Hibiscus (using a tea infuser or filtering into a separate vessel); set aside 1 hour to cool. Transfer to a storage container. Cover container, and refrigerate up to 1 week. Makes 1 1/2 cups.
2. To make cocktail, add 2 tablespoons simple syrup to a champagne flute. Top with champagne. Garnish with raspberries or lemon twist.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS -

May 10 & 11 Mother's Day Tea at Blooming Hill

May 11 & 12 Plant Sale at Blandy Farms, Virginia State Arboretum

May 18 & 19 Loudoun County Spring Farm Tour. Blooming Hill will be one of the featured farms on tour and will be serving drop in teas courtesy of Loudoun Valley Herbs both days.

May 24 & 25 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Greenhouse Extravaganza at Loudoun Valley Herb farm.

Kim Labash

Wisconsin beckons!

As a Wisconsin homeowner transplanted to the D.C. area, I was elated to hear that the annual meeting/educational conference was being hosted by the Milwaukee Unit in Madison Wisconsin, home of the beautiful Olbrich Botanical Gardens. My first encounter with the HSA happened at an herb fair held at Olbrich. I enticed my husband to join me with promises of fresh baked goods on a lovely Saturday morning. After the herb fair, I promptly joined the Milwaukee unit. This year's HSA conference is June 13-15.

So let me share some insider tips. Wisconsin is a fabulous corner of the planet. It has become a great intersection of some interesting movements.

- **Many cutting edge growing developments** - With research out of both the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Olbrich Botanical Gardens, the entire nation benefits from learning about new growing techniques and new resistant hybrids and cultivars.
- **Excellence in cheese** - Wisconsin is known as the Dairy State, but since I was a child, they have taken cheese to an entirely new level. In 2018, Wisconsin won nearly 6,000 cheese awards. That is more than any other state or country! This article outlines a few cheese you will want to try while you are there. >>>

<https://www.wuwm.com/post/award-winning-wisconsin-cheeses-try#stream/0>

- **The culinary farm-to-table movement** - With some of the best agricultural products being sourced within 100 miles of Madison, the farm-to-table movement has exploded providing ever more creative and flavorful options. This article outlines everything from food carts to fine dining restaurants that feature "farm to fork" experiences in Madison >>>
<https://www.travelwisconsin.com/article/local-foods/from-farm-to-fork-eating-locally-in-madison>
- **Microbreweries and distilleries** - Wisconsinites have long been known for their affinity for beer, but lately distilleries have hit the scene as well. And frequently in restaurants, they will offer interesting local pairings along with their locally grown food. Here are FOUR renowned microbreweries in Madison, with a fifth within striking distance (more on that one, see New Glarus below). >>>
<https://www.hopculture.com/best-craft-beer-breweries-madison-wisconsin/>

If that is not enough to entice you, here are some other fun things to do in the area.

In Madison, there are many free venues:

- **The Chazen** - Located on the UW-Madison campus, this art museum has a broad permanent collection and features innovative temporary exhibitions. In June, the museum director has curated an exhibition on the artist's studio. Also, on Sundays the Cinemathique at the Chazen screens historically significant films at 2:00 PM. Events are free; seating is first-come first-serve. No admittance once the film has started.
- **Saturday morning Farmer's Market.** If you want to blend with the locals, browse counterclockwise. You will find herbs, smoked venison, honey. All products must be grown or made in Wisconsin. It is best to arrive early (6:30-8:00 AM) to snatch up the best offerings. It is also

easier to talk to vendors early when they aren't so busy with customers and transactions.

- For retail, the **boutiques along State Street** offer plenty of interesting craft and artisanal products (free to look, souvenirs to bring home of course are extra).

To the west (within 45-minute drive):

- **Taliesen** - The home, studio, school, and 800-acre estate of Frank Lloyd Wright. There are multiple tours available. Tours often sell out, so book in advance.

>>> <https://www.taliesinpreservation.org>

- **American Players Theatre (APT)** - A classical theater — think performances of Shakespeare, Ibsen, George Bernard Shaw, and Tennessee Williams. The APT has two stages. The oldest is a huge outdoor amphitheater, which seats over 1,000 called “The Hill,” and a second indoor theater called the “Touchstone” which seats 200. The Touchstone provides an intimate complementary space to experiment with new genres. APT is located across the highway from Frank Lloyd Wright's studio Taliesin. Performances sell out early in the season, so book now if you want to take in a performance. >>> <https://americanplayers.org/events/calendar>

- **New Glarus brewery** - The city of New Glarus is called “America's Little Switzerland” and charm abounds. The New Glarus Brewing Company has been named one of the top ten breweries in the world. If you cannot make it to the brewery, I recommend their beer named *Two Women*. You can get it in Madison at many restaurants or the Whole Foods store. More on New Glarus here >>> <https://www.travelwisconsin.com/article/places-to-stay/new-glarus-americas-little-switzerland>

- **Epic Center** - This is the campus of a medical software company that routinely

brings in \$1.7 billion in revenue annually. It has been called “a city from a fantasy novel” and “Epic” says it all. There is a life size Grand Central Station complete with walk-in train cars, an Indiana Jones themed hallway, a Harry Potter-esque room, a moat with medieval drawbridges that spans between two modern glass buildings, a working farm with a 4-story barn, a red treehouse that serves as a conference room, the Blues Brothers in wax. The list goes on and on. It is located in Verona, WI just eleven miles south of Madison. The campus is open on weekdays from 3:00 - 5:00 PM for self-guided tours for groups of seven or less. Weekends from 10 AM - 3 PM for any size group. They recommend calling ahead. >>> <https://www.epic.com/visiting>

- **House on the Rock** - What began as a dream home built atop a chimney of rock to create a lofty retreat with awe-inspiring views has expanded over the years and become a spectacular attraction known as The House on the Rock. >>> <https://www.thehouseontherock.com>

To the east (with a little more than a one-hour drive):

- **Milwaukee Art Museum (MAM)** - boasts a world-class collection along with the famous Calatrava architecture. It has been dubbed the sexiest building on the planet as the wings of the museum literally unfold and open in sync with the museum opening. If you don't believe me, here is an 8-second accelerated video of the wings opening. >>> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUIcS2mwun0>

In June, the MAM will have a high-end Wisconsin furniture maker on view. His works are part of the Smithsonian collection. The retrospective **Charles Radtke: Contained** features the artist's cabinets, tables, and chairs which reflect his meticulous attention to detail. Several pieces have interiors that are more intricately designed than the exteriors, or have hidden compartments in which Radtke has placed something personally meaningful. Radtke lives in Cedarburg (just north

of Milwaukee), and I assure you, you won't be disappointed by his work.

>>> <https://mam.org/exhibitions/details/charles-radtke-contained.php>

- **Lynden Sculpture Garden** - The private home and grounds of MAM benefactors (Peg and Harry Bradley) turned into an intimate museum space and an expansive outdoor sculpture garden. One of the few places where it is permissible to touch the outdoor sculptures. There is nothing like being able to actually touch the mane of a Deborah Butterfield horse. >>> <https://www.lyndensculpturegarden.org/col/lection/hara>

Incidentally, Harry Bradley was an amateur botanist and intended for the grounds to serve as an arboretum. Many of the trees and shrubs are fine specimens and are marked. Their property has one of the oldest American Elms still standing. When Peg married Harry, the grounds became the home for some of the world's finest sculptures.

For directions and more information on the sculpture garden,

>>> <https://www.lyndensculpturegarden.org>

- **Oriental Theater** - an art deco historical movie palace that is maintained and operated by the Milwaukee Film Festival organization. For current events, >>> <https://mkefilm.org/oriental-theatre>

So if you haven't registered yet, click here to see a complete list of speakers >>> https://herbsociety.org.presencehost.net/file_download/inline/9006f22e-ac4e-4354-b15a-aa9d3b01d651

Then register >>>

<https://www.herbsociety.org/grow/register.html>

And plan to go early in order to fully embrace some of these great Wisconsin experiences.

Mary Beth Mahoney

Meet Our Incoming Chairperson Peggy Riccio

I live in Alexandria and work full-time in a

communications office for a public health agency in Rockville. I am married with twins who will begin college this fall. I garden whenever I can; my herbs are intertwined with my other plants. My garden is more like a test garden because I like to try so many different types of plants. I have a B.S. in horticulture and have been involved in horticultural communications for more than 20 years. In the past, I wrote articles for gardening magazines and now I write for my own website, pegplant.com, and for the Herb Society of America's blog. I am a member of GardenComm, which is a professional organization for garden communicators. I am very interested in culinary herbs and enjoy giving presentations and workshops at local gardening clubs and nurseries. Some of you may remember that years ago I used to write the "Spotlight" column for the Potomac Potpourri newsletter. For each issue, I would research a specific herb and compile the members' recommendations on how to grow or use that herb. This year, I look forward to serving as chairperson and working with all of you as we plan our herbal activities and events.

Botanical Bookshelf: Recently published books related to herb gardening.

From Garden to Glass: 80 Botanical Beverages Made from the Finest Fruits, Cordials and Infusions by David Hurst, Universe

The Herbal Kitchen: Bringing Lasting Health to You and Your Family with 50 Easy-to-Find Common Herbs and Over 250 Recipes by Kami McBride, Conari Press

Master Recipes from the Herbal Apothecary: 375 Tinctures, Salves, Teas, Capsules, Oils, and Washes for Whole-body Health and Wellness by JJ Pursell and Photographs by Shawn Linehan, Timber Press

A Taste for Herbs: Your Guide to Seasonings, Mixes and Blends from the Herb Lover's Garden by Sue Goetz, St. Lynns' Press

Herbal Handbook for the Homesteaders: Farmed and Foraged Herbal Remedies and Recipes by Abby Artemisia, Voyageur Press

The Herbal Recipe Keeper: My Collection of Healing Plant Remedies and Essential Oil

Blends by Françoise Weeks, Timber Press

Peggy Riccio

Herbal Beads

It feels like it is time to schedule a bead workshop, but my calendar says "no way"! I have a glut of personal commitments over the next couple of months that make it much more feasible to schedule a workshop once spring is behind us. In the meantime we'll focus on selling some of the necklaces we've made, first at our Herb Sale at the Arboretum on April 27-28, and then at members Cyndie and Peter Rinek's Blooming Hill Lavender Festival on June 14-15.

The latter coincides with the dates of the HSA Educational Conference in Madison, WI. Many Unit members will be attending, including some who have helped at Blooming Hill in past years, leaving us shorthanded. If you will be in town that weekend, please consider helping out for a full day or a half-day. I will be there, both days if need be, but it is always more pleasant to have a couple people operating the table than to sit there by oneself. The festival itself is delightful. The setting amidst the lavender beds is lovely. The weather is reliably pleasant at that time of year. Other vendors present make for fun shopping. If you do not usually participate in rose bead workshops, not to worry. I can give you a rundown of how beads are made that will answer the questions people usually ask.

Blooming Hill's address is 19929 Telegraph Springs Road, Purcellville, VA, 20132. To volunteer, or if you have any questions, feel free to contact me. mlbwinder@gmail.com; 301-384-2566.

Mary Lou Winder Herbal Beads Remembrances

We received some sad news from Celeste Houser-Jackson, Ann Schramm's daughter.

Ann B. Schramm, a longtime member of the Potomac Unit passed away on Sunday, March 24th in Bethesda, Maryland. She had been suffering the effects of a major stroke since 2013, and, despite the fact, she'd celebrated her 89th birthday two days before surrounded by family, her condition worsened within two days and she

died peacefully at Carriage Hill Nursing Community.

The memorial service will take place on Saturday, May 18th, at 11 am at the Geneva Presbyterian Church, 11931 Seven Locks Rd, Potomac, MD 20854 (301) 424-4346. Parking is available in the lot surrounding the church. There will be a light lunch served in the church Fellowship Hall directly after the service.

Later in the Fall, Ann's ashes will be interred with her husband at Arlington National Cemetery.

The Herb Society was a huge and sustaining part of Mom's life, especially after Dad passed away in 1994. She formed so many lasting friendships there surrounded by people who shared her passion for gardening and creativity. She was always making rose beads, wreaths, and tussy mussies. My daughter has many fond memories as a child of helping Grandma and Grandpa set up for the Spring plant sale in the Arboretum.

I can be contacted via this email address, celeste.a.houser.jackson@gmail.com by cell phone (301) 351-6549, or as follows if anyone has any questions: Celeste Houser-Jackson, 11609 Greenlane Drive, Potomac, MD 20854

Sincerely, Celeste Houser-Jackson

Many of us who knew Ann Schramm remember what a skilled craftsperson she was and the beautiful and varied artistic projects she made. But I have another set of memories from the year she was part of a team who raised most of the annuals we sold at our Potomac Unit plant sale. Sometime in the late 1990's (I cannot remember the precise year) former Potomac Unit Chair Gladys Horton told us that Gaithersburg Middle School, near her home, had a greenhouse that was no longer being used. She got permission for us to use it to raise plants for our plant sale and we took on the challenge. We started with a fist full of seeds packets and a manageable number of seed trays, but things rapidly expanded. As the seeds germinated, we worked to transplant them into pots and into a vastly larger number of trays. They proceeded to flourish, which was wonderful, but it quickly became clear that they needed watering regularly

and often. Ann was part of the crew who came into the greenhouse in shifts to plant, transplant and water and water and water for the couple of months we nurtured the plants before the sale. It was a big job, though enormously satisfying, and it could not have happened without the steadfast efforts of the group. I will always remember Ann with appreciation and gratitude for her part in a real team effort.

Mary Lou Winder

HERB STUDY PROGRAM UPDATE

Hello Herbsters!

Our Herb Studies will resume in late summer, topic: Sassafras and other “root beer” plants. Volunteers are solicited to host that meeting and the next (autumn: Vacciniums including cranberries and blueberries). Stay tuned.

On Sunday, April 14 we met at Jo Sellers’s home and studied plants of the genus **Rubus**, 2020’s Herb of the Year. Part of the vast Rose Family, Rubus’s distinct species and subspecies number in the many hundreds worldwide in addition to hybrids and horticultural selections. Particularly thriving in temperate areas, they are mainly represented by raspberries, blackberries and dewberries. Cultivated red raspberries (*R. idaeus*) are native to Europe but have close North American and Japanese relatives. Very many blackberry species are native to eastern North America. The *Digital Atlas of Virginia Flora* (<http://vaplantatlas.org/index.php?do=start>) lists 15 species of Rubus native or naturalized in Virginia, including *R. allegheniensis* (common blackberry) and *R. pensilvanicus*, blackberries which are common locally in Annandale, Virginia (Piedmont Uplands) and elsewhere in the area. Taxonomy of the entire genus is unsettled, especially that of the blackberries, and even respected authors misidentify plants. This area bears further research. Perhaps it will be addressed in the International Herb Society’s Herb of the Year booklet. Generally, plants may be woody, with upright or arching canes (often lasting only two years), or trailing or low growing. The latter, including dewberries and small arctic, subarctic and alpine plants are not typically called “brambles.” Raspberry fruits pull cleanly from the plant; blackberries do not. Plants may have few,

or many and vicious prickles, especially blackberries.

Other plants of note include the dewberry, an often-tasty low growing group closely related to the blackberries, and *Rubus odoratus*, a lovely rosy purple wildflower of ravines and moist places.

According to each species’ needs, members of the Rubus genus tolerate various habitats including open fields and forest margins. Cultivation is relatively easy, although the bushes must be maintained. Rust may afflict some raspberries and blackberries. There are many varieties, adapted to different climates, and care should be taken to plant locally suited cultivars recommended by the extension service. The suggestion was well received that we arrange for an expert in berry cultivation to present to the public next year, perhaps at an Under the Arbor event at the National Arboretum. While promoting our Herb of the Year, this could also draw in members of the public and familiarize them with our organization.

Rubus was known to the ancient Greeks and seeds have been found in very early European settlements, evidencing its use as a food. It was associated with the goddess Brigid and god Thor. Large numbers of seeds have been found in a pre-Columbian North American settlement (Crawford Lake). Largely, Europeans more often used the red raspberry for herbal medicine while Native Americans used the blackberry. Uses are similar for the two groups.

Traditional medicinal uses are many and varied but the main folk medicinal uses for Rubus have been digestive, respiratory and women’s reproduction. Among Native Americans, leaves, but also sometimes roots and bark have been used. The plants abound in tannins, which explains its frequent application as a digestive herb to control diarrhea. A compound infusion of the root was ingested for hemorrhoids, and a bark infusion for urinary troubles. A tea of the leaves or other parts has been used as a gargle for sore throats, and was used to treat tuberculosis. Most famously, in European folk medicine as well as Native American, Rubus leaf tea has been taken by pregnant women to “tone the uterus” and provide a smooth delivery. It has also been used to halt threatened miscarriages, reduce morning

sickness and tame menstrual cramps.

Historically, other herbal medicine uses run the gamut from drying baby navels and applications for burns and skin ailments, to headache remedies, to veterinary medicine ... to witchcraft. While a respected herbalist (Varro Tyler's 1993 edition of *The Honest Herbal* originally published 1982) recognized the astringent properties of leaves of *R. idaeus*, *R. strigosus* and *R. fruticosus*, he found "we lack sufficient evidence to support any outstanding therapeutic evidence of raspberry." Meanwhile, the German Commission E studied the herb (1990). It recognized leaves of the European blackberry *Rubus fruticosus* as a remedy for acute diarrhea and mild inflammation of the mucosa of the oral cavity and throat, notably not for any gynecological applications. Further study would be "fruitful."

The French claim that raspberries were mostly used for beverages and folk medicine until commercial cultivation and shipping became feasible in the 1990's. In America, brambles have long enjoyed an element of popularity in home gardens but year around availability is likewise recent.

Which brings us to our refreshments. These included ice cream with berries, berry crisp, tasty artisanal whole grain bread, and to cleanse our palate, Jo's delicious and lightly tart blackberry salad with raspberry vinaigrette. Berry-flavored teas at Jo's charmingly spring-themed table accompanied all. After an afternoon of engaging discussion and a relaxing tea, we closed the meeting at 5 p.m.

Mary Schwegler Herb Study

BERRY CRISP

Based on *Joy of Cooking* (1964) "Quick Cherry Crunch"

Other fruit combinations may be substituted

2 (two) 10 or 12 oz. packages of frozen unsweetened raspberries, thawed
¾ to scant 1 cup water

About 3 tablespoons cornstarch, dissolved in a few ounces of water

Sugar to taste, not too much (start with ¼ or ½

cup)

1 cup butter

2 cups packed brown sugar

2 cups flour

2 cups oatmeal

½ teaspoon each baking powder, salt, and soda
Cinnamon or other seasoning like a little vanilla
(all optional)

2 small (half-pint) packages fresh blackberries, rinsed

Butter (optional) to grease a shallow 3 quart (11x8.5 inch oval) casserole, or large rectangular cake pan

^^^^^^^^

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Butter dish if desired.

Add the raspberries, sugar, and water to a saucepan, and heat. Add cornstarch slurry, gently stirring, until mixture begins to thicken, adjusting sugar to taste. Once mixture is clear and thick, turn off heat. Raspberries will probably come apart, that is all right. Gently add blackberries.

Melt butter and mix with brown sugar, flour, oatmeal and baking powder/salt/soda and seasoning if any. Mix all well then put half this mixture in bottom of dish or pan. Press it a little.

Pour thickened berry mixture on top of bottom oatmeal-butter mixture. Spread around to edges of pan.

Cover the thickened berry layer with remaining oatmeal-butter mixture. May top with cinnamon if desired and not used before.

Bake 35 minutes or more, until top is toasty brown and berry crisp smells good.

If desired, cool somewhat before serving. Good topped with vanilla ice cream or cream, or served with just a cold glass of milk.

Annual Renewal of Dues

It's that time again - DUES are due no later than July 1st. The membership form is at the end of this issue. I am happy to accept your form and

payment at the annual picnic and meeting.

Wishing a Happy Birthday to the following members in May and June:

Kim Labash
Barry Eigen
Christine Moore
Renee Johnson
Ida Wallenmeyer
Elizabeth Reece
Mary Schwegler

Karen Kilday - Membership

Other News

I've been working on a wet habitat pollinator garden in the Mamie L. Lee Community garden near Ft. Totten. We are located in this extension of Rock Creek Park, as are all the Civil War Forts. Last year, we converted an unusable swamp plot into pollinator habitat, with great success. It is planted with a mix of herbs and native plants. Ask me about mildew proof Monarda! We followed Mt. Cuba Center's recommendations.

This year's project is developing a permanent herb garden in an unused space.

Christina Scheltma

Phyllis Sidorsky's New Buddy



Here with new rescue doggie "Tobey". "No one wanted him because he was 8 years old - age discrimination! Terrible! He's the opposite of greyhound Bert: short, fat, and he barks!"

ENDNOTE

We encourage all our members to help get the word out to all plant interested friends and colleagues that the Potomac Unit is 'here and happening' and eagerly awaiting new people with a similar interest. We now have a variety of membership levels - \$15 (for the Unit newsletter). \$25.00 for an interim (trial) one year Unit membership as well as the traditional \$ 60.00 HSA membership. We also have over half of our Unit meetings scheduled on an evening or weekend day time to better accommodate those with a customary 9-5 work schedule.

Opinions expressed in the Potpourri are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Herb Society of America (HSA) or the HSA Potomac Unit. Responsibility for the safe use of any herb or herb product lies with the reader.

POTOMAC POTPOURRI is published September, November, January, March, May and July by the Potomac Unit of The Herb Society of America, Penni St. Hilaire, Chairperson; Laura Anthony, Editor Spring & Summer and Cyndie Rinek, Editor Fall and Winter. Material appearing in the *Potomac Potpourri* may be reproduced. *Potomac Potpourri* should be credited as the source.

Non-member subscriptions to the *Potomac Potpourri* are \$15.00 per year. Send check made out to Potomac Unit, H.S.A and mail to: P.O Box 1055 Springfield, VA 22151

The content deadline for the next issue of the Potpourri is June 20, 2019.

News of member and civic or nonprofit horticulturally themed events is welcome. Publication is at the sole discretion of the editor, who reserves the right to edit for brevity or any other reason. Neither the Potomac Unit nor the Herb Society of America endorses any product or event unless the product or event is specifically sponsored by the Unit or Society.

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**The Herb Society of America
Potomac Unit
Annual Membership Dues
Due by July 1**

Please Print All Information: Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____ Check here if new email address

Birthday: _____ Optional. Do not include year.

Please Check Membership status:

| Category | Dues |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$60 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Joint | \$87.50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business | \$95 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HSA Life Membership | \$2,000 |
| [Additional Annual Potomac Unit Dues] | \$5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Joint HSA Life Membership | \$3,000 |
| [Additional Annual Potomac Unit Dues] | \$7.50 |
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| [Available to prospective members and does not include affiliation with the Herb Society of America] | |

Make your membership dues check payable to Potomac Unit, HSA and mail to:

Karen Kilday, 2118 Marlboro Dr., Alexandria, VA 22304

Members who submit their dues and form by July 1 will be included in the annual membership directory.

Thank you for your support of the Potomac Unit of The Herb Society of America, Inc.