

The Northeast Wisconsin Unit of the Herb Society of America



the Herbal Thymes



November 2008

www.newhsa.org

Year 9

Post Office Box 277 - Seymour WI 54165

HERB OF THE YEAR 2008 Calendula officinalis Trivia



Calendula germinates in 5 - 15 days - it's still blooming in Wisconsin now!

Many herbalists feel the deep orange flower have the best medicinal quality.

Use petals fresh - they degrade in storage.

Seed also degrades in long storage - use as soon as possible to do so.

NORTHEAST WISCONSIN UNIT OFFICERS & CHAIRS

Co-Chairman: Yvonne Haworth 920-336-0664
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Secretary GB: Jackie Johnson 920-246-7377
Treasurer: Jackie Johnson 920-246-7377

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Jeri James 608-658-4064
Tracy Forbes 920-435-1766
Kristin Urban 920-863-8253
Cindy Hermsen - 920-434-6866

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Historian: Kristin Urban
Crafts Chair: Yvonne Haworth/Mary Vvalther

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Herb Day 08: Jackie/Lynn/Yvonne/Sandy
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GBBG Gardens: Sandy Jacques 465-3487
Fairy Fest: Tracy Forbes 435-1766
New Member Tea: Kristin/Yvonne
Education Outreach: Jackie Johnson 246-7377

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GFC Gardens: Mary Learman/Jackie Johnson

Vice Chair FC: Kristi Sawyer 920-915-6878
Past Chair: Jackie Johnson 920-246-7377

Fox City Updates

The Divas didn't have a dry eye in the place after the October meeting that included making horse radish - dug from the herb garden, cleaned, peeled, ground and mixed. Everyone got to take home a jar!

The Divas will have a Spa Night at the November meeting lead by Melissa Hauk. Please bring a basin (for your feet) and a towel and a wash cloth. Mel will figure out the cost and we'll pay her for materials. We'll have a salt scrub, and a rosehip facial.

The Divas voted to separate from Green Bay and request affiliation to the organization of their choice with GB's blessings. They want to continue to be sister clubs and work together on large projects. As a result, this will be the last joint newsletter. The new officers as of January 1 will be: Chair, Terri Walker, Vice Chair - Kristi Sawyer, Secretary - Shirley Martin and Treasurer - Mary Learman.

Our December meeting will be a potluck at the garden. Please bring a wrapped "white elephant" gift for the exchange (not to exceed \$10).

Kathy W. will be setting up a January tea tasting at a new tea shop near the Timber Rattlers for our January meeting. Members can also choose to go to dinner before at a place near the tea shop.

In March we will be planting seeds - save your egg cartons. We'll also learn how to make pots out of newspaper to be put right in the ground (so not to disturb the roots).

We will work with the Gardens of the Fox Cities in their Heirloom Plant Sale during the Blooms on May 16th so mark your calendars. This year the GFC will be offering a two-part cultural festival, the first part in May with various ethnic groups planting gardens with ethnic foods. It will be followed up with a festival in September or October with each group showing what they grew, how to prepare the food, and even offering samples. The medicinal and culinary gardens we will be working on will be part of these events.

Green Bay Update

Green Bay discussed changing their meeting night due to the conflict with the Garden Club. Starting with the January meeting, we will be meeting on the SECOND TUESDAY of each month in the lower level at GBBG at 7:00.

Due to family commitments, Cori resigned as Chair of the group. According to our bylaws, the vice president assumes the Chair position;

therefore Yvonne is our new chair until the end of Cori's term (May 2010). This will require some additional changes in the club, but the officers will get together and make a plan to present to the Board and the Club at the November meeting.

Book next book is Mistletoe Man by Susan Wittag Alberts. We will take some time off

during the Holiday rush to meet at 11:00 a.m. at Barnes and Noble on Sunday 21st. (THIS IS A CHANGE - PLEASE MAKE NOTE)

Crafts update: Jackie will host our (now) annual making syrups and cough drops in January. In early spring we'll get together and make hypertufa and concrete leaves again.

Sandy reported on Heritage Hill decorating. November 15th is the day we will be getting together at Dixie's home † 1:30 on the east side to decide and make what extras we need. There is a lot left over from previous years, so

this will be easy! On Saturday, November 29th at 10:00 a.m. we will meet to decorate Tank Cottage. Dates for taking down the decorations will be decided later.

We voted to give our blessing to the Appleton group and wish them well with the stipulation that the two groups work together on HerbFest no matter where it is held. (One year in GB, one year in Appleton.)

Thanks to Dixie for the marjoram she passed on to everyone!

Herb & Yogurt Bread Recipe

1 c. white flour
½ tsp baking soda
2 lg. beaten eggs
1 tsp. dried dill
½ tsp dried basil

1 c. whole wheat flour
½ tsp salt
1 c. plain yogurt
1/2 tsp. dried oregano
½ tsp. dried tarragon

1 tsp baking powder
4 T melted butter
1/3 c. honey
½ tsp. dried thyme
1 T fresh minced parsley

Sift together the first 5 ingredients into a bowl; make a well in the center of the bowl. In a separate bowl, beat together the next 4 ingredients until frothy, add herbs and beat well.

Pour the liquid herb mixture into the well in the center of the dry ingredients and mix thoroughly. Pour into two buttered and floured loaf pans and bake at 350 degrees for 40-50 minutes.

*** 1 T. of minced fresh herbs can be substituted for the dried herbs.

FRONTIER ORDERS

Frontier orders are due to Jackie
(scentedgardens@msn.com) by November 6th.
This is a change so please make note of the date.

Dues Reduction Program

HerbFest4 Setup: Jackie/J, Tracy, Cori, Hilaire
HerbFest 4: Cori -2, Jackie/J-2, Hilaire -2, Tracy-2, Dixie, Bernie, Jim, Sandy -2, Jeri -2, Melissa, Kristi -2, Linda S., Mary C., Barb S., Kathy W., Mary H.
HerbEdDay: Yvonne, Sandy, Jackie, Hilaire, Lynn
GFC GardenFest: Kristi, Cori, Kathy W., Barb, Jackie/J
Garden 1 (3 out of 5): Sandy, Yvonne, Hilaire
Garden 2: Tracy, Yvonne, Sandy, Jeri, Jackie, Cori, Mary V, Hilaire, Bernie, Nancy
Garden 3: Bernie(2), Hilaire(2), Jeri, Cori, Nancy
Garden 4:Yvonne
Garden5: Nancy,
FairyFest: Tracy, Cori, Jackie, Mary C., Erin, Cindy, Jess
HerbDay (10/4):Jackie, Lynn, Yvonne, Sandy,
Newsletter Articles (need 6):
GBBG Event:
GFC Event: Kristin, Jackie/J, Terri, Cori, KathyW.
Bubolz Romp: Cori, Erin, Judy S., Kristin, Sandy, Yvonne, Jackie/J, June K., Terri, Kathy W., Emily,

Navarino Nature Center Event:
Make decorations for Heritage Hill:
Decorate for Heritage Hill:
Take down decorations:
Perfect Attendance:
Misc Donations:
HerbFest 5 Vendors:
Recruit a new member:
Special Donation:
Education Outreach Coordinator: Jackie
Events Coordinator: Jeri
PR Coordinator: Rodney
Historian: Yvonne
Crafts Chair: Mary V.
Membership: Bernie
Website: Tracy
Frontier: Cori
Newsletter: Jackie
New Member Function GB: Kristin, Yvonne
Fundraiser Chair: Open

Note: If your name is missed and you worked an event, etc. please let Jackie know, and don't forget to sign the book!



Arca Max Gardening Tips

Cleaning rusty garden tools: The paint is there to form a protective layer against moisture, so either repaint them or simply keep them well-oiled. Prevention is half the battle, and it is usually recommended that you clean dirt off your tools regularly and store them under cover in a dry place. Many gardeners will clean them and then run them into a bucket of sand and a bit of oil to recoat them after use. Pruners and other blades do best with frequent sharpening and a bit of oil on the hinges. If the tools are severely rusted they may not hold up to more use safely; if they are slightly rusted you might try a bit of steel wool or perhaps a dab of "naval jelly" type rust remover (check the label directions to see if it is appropriate for the metal in question). Another option is to brush off the rust as well as you can and then use a rust inhibiting primer and paint according to the label instructions.

Too late to plant bulbs? The optimal time to plant rhizomes and bulbs would have been mid-October. However, many gardeners put off planting until well past the "recommended" time. As long as the ground isn't frozen, go ahead and plant. It's no use waiting until spring, because the rhizomes and bulbs will dry out too much. Keep in mind that planting now will result in a later blooming period and possibly reduced bloom.

Herb of the Month Nigella - Love in the Mist

Latin Name: Nigella damascna
Zone: Annual in Wisconsin
Family: Buttercup - Ranunculaceae
Other names: Love-in-a-Mist, Fennel Flower, Wild Fennel, Devil-in-a-Bush, Black Onion Flower, Persian Jewels
Native: Southern Europe or northern Africa
Propagation: By seed - raked in - does not like to be transplanted. Will self-propagate
Location: Full sun to partial shade
Name from: Latin Niger referring to black seeds and Damascena - comes from Damascus
 Common Name from fern like foliage that seems to form a mist around the flowers
Parts to use: Seeds
Garden Use: Nice compliment plant to broader leafed plants
Problems: Nearly pest free, but doesn't like wet feet. Don't overwater
Myths/Legends:
Historical Medicinal Uses: Ease digestion and gas, eliminate parasites. Prevent conception. As an expectorant.
Culinary Uses: Seeds sprinkled on breads, rolls and used in cakes like poppyseed.
Cosmetic Use: Used in perfumery.
Other Uses: Great addition to dried flower arrangements.
Notes: Brought to North America by the colonists in the 1600's.
Recipe:

Nigella Seed Torte

CRUST

1 cup crushed graham crackers
 1 cup flour
 2/3 cup melted butter
 1/2 cup chopped walnuts

CUSTARD

1 ½ cups hot milk
 1 cup sugar
 ¼ cup nigella seeds
 5 egg yolks
 4 tbsp cornstarch
 1 tsp vanilla

Press in 9x13 pan. Bake 10-15 min. @ 375 degrees.

Combine 1/4 cup water & 1 envelope Knox gelatin - let stand. Cook above ingredients over med. heat until thick. Add the gelatin mixture to the custard after the custard is done. Beat 5 egg whites till stiff, adding 1/2 cup sugar while beating - also add 1 1/2 tsp. cream of tartar. Add to the custard after the custard is cooled. Put custard in crust & refig.. Add layer of whipped cream.

ROMP IN THE SWAMP

We received a letter from Bubolz thanking us for our help with the Romp in the Swamp. There were about 470 visitors this year. One gentleman who came thru with his family said we were his favorite booth! We've had a table at Bubolz for about 5 years, and even participated in the event before the "Romp" - the Haze in the Meadow Daze. Next year Bubolz is thinking of another type of event, and will keep us posted on the details. But they definitely would like us to continue to participate.

Autumn Thoughts By Kristin Urban

Recently I made my 100th round trip journey to Aberdeen, South Dakota, to visit family. Well, I don't know that it was the 100th, but I've been making it on average at least twice a year, so over 40 years, it has to be at least the 100th trip.

A 600 mile trip over 11 hours is a lesson in geography and natural science, should one pay attention. And the most obvious notice brought to one's mind is that rainfall makes a profound difference.

Aberdeen lies at the head of an ancient lakebed....flatter than a flitter, as the saying goes (or maybe that should be a "fritter"). From the south side of Aberdeen (third largest city in South Dakota with a population 25,000 intrepid souls), on a clear day, you can see the grain elevators of Warner, eleven miles away. The trees that might appear in the windbreaks, depressions, and creek beds, don't reach a height to hide those square-shouldered "sentinels of the prairie," as Willa Cather described them in her stories of Nebraska. The average rainfall in Aberdeen is 20 inches a year.

The landscape to the east of Aberdeen, following State Highway 12, isn't much different. Windbreaks choked with buckthorn, Chinese elm, plum, Russian olive, and other hardy, narrow leaved survivors on little water, rustle their browning fall foliage in the brusque winds that blow uninterrupted to the Coteau des Prairie, an elevation rise of over 800 feet above Aberdeen (Aberdeen elevation 1202 ft.) The wind blows even more fiercely over this rocky moraine, supporting little besides short grass prairie, beef

cattle, and gullies filled with scrub oak, stunted willow or osier, and gnarly sumac.

I hate driving over this area of the state, especially at night. The wind drives relentlessly; the clouds bunch in dramatic fashion, prophesying violence; the light is weird (or Wyrd, if you're into Anglo-Saxon literature). I think the land is haunted.

Just east of Summit (at 2014 ft., the high spot of the Coteau des Prairie, as you may have guessed from the name) there's a farmstead that I've been watching decay over the decades. Originally sheltered by volunteer cottonwoods, the house foundations disappeared long ago under waving grasses. The barn was the last to go, the roof sliding south a couple years back, and collapsing over the rock supported footings this past winter. Now beef cattle, mixed breeds of Hereford, Angus, Simmental, and Charolais, chew their cuds under the remaining bare-branched cottonwoods or stand on the slight elevation provided by the fallen barn, letting the wind give them ease from gnats and flies.

This area of the country doesn't sport the beautiful autumn color to which we are accustomed in Wisconsin. If there's been enough moisture during the growing season, you might see a little flush of gold among the cottonwoods and ash before the leaves fall. Mostly, it's just "brown and down." One day you'll have gray-green and browning leaves shivering on the trees; the next day, winter skeletons are etched against the washed blue skies. There's an austere beauty to this land....but it's not a place for the faint-hearted.

Crops grow, of course. Field corn, soybeans, hay (they're lucky to get two cuttings). Winter wheat and winter rye, oats and barley are usually



used as cover crops for new hay fields. As a child, I remember the blue fields of flax in the spring. You don't see many dairy operations; mostly beef cattle. My uncle used always to have four or five milking shorthorns; and I remember trying to help crank the milk separator for the cream crop that my aunt produced to help supplement their income. Such diversified farms are a thing of the past.

East of Summit, the land drops to the Big Stone River and the rainfall increases slightly. More trees and shelter belts are in evidence. This landscape persists without much change until the driver reaches Montevideo, MN. Usually I take MN Hwy 7 all the way across to the Twin Cities; but because there have been road closings and detours on that road; and because I was detoured to U.S. 212 at Montevideo, I decided to take Hwy 212 all the way. The highway follows the Minnesota River Valley part of the way Montevideo has an average rainfall of 24-26 inches per year. It's amazing what a couple inches of rainfall can mean.

The cottonwoods and ash grow 20-30 feet taller than they do 150-miles to the west. The farming landscape is rich with drying field corn; and giant John Deere green beetles munch their way over the fields, harvesting bumper crops of soybeans. I followed or met dozens of semis carrying flatbed cages of sugar beets; tractor-trailer units that carried their cargoes to staging areas to be offloaded by elevators that built long pyramids of the gray-red roots on asphalt or concrete slabs. Sugar beets, I observe, are more effectively "stored" outside.

The tidy farming communities I passed through had brick-faced main streets, anchored by hardware stores and huge concrete and corrugated steel silos for grain. Tucked inconspicuously between the banks and land offices are small restaurants with their local congregations of patrons in jeans, bib-overalls, and gimme caps, and hopeful craft and antique "shoppes." This is a much more prosperous area of the Heartland country: houses are larger; barns and outbuildings are tidy and painted; yards are actually lawns and mowed; colorful flower

gardens aren't just brave, but boastful.

Roadside vegetable stands sport mounds of pumpkins and colorful gourds and other end-of-the season produce. Which brings me to brag: My husband and I have put up over 600 quarts and pints of varying sizes of produce from our garden this year. We have either frozen or canned sweet corn, spinach, tomatoes (stewed and plain), tomato juice, salsa (60 pints), sauerkraut (100 pints), beans, dilled beans, and pickles: dill pickles, bread and butter pickles, pickled beets, pickled carrots, and pickalilly (or chow-chow....it's a relish). We also froze strawberries from the Pick-Your-Own fields on our rural road.

It's interesting what one might regard as a legacy. My brother Blake, who died of cancer September of last year, also canned lots of produce....and we're still eating salsa, applesauce, pheasant and pheasant stock that he canned in fall of 2006. I brought back a dozen pints of pheasant this last trip, along with two huge boxes of apples from his trees. His vegetable garden has gone to weed and silver maple seedlings, but still provides rhubarb and raspberries for pie and jams. My younger brother Mark says it's God's garden now.

Today I'm back in God's country, which we here in Wisconsin have a right to claim, if you compare our landscape with the so-called God-forsaken land where my South Dakota family lives. Wisconsin woodlots were brushed with maple crimson and tangerine, and mounds of asters and mums decorate the homesteads. The season marches toward winter, but in this respite between the green of summer and the blue-white of the snow-filled months, we can luxuriate in the rich colors of harvest, full larders, and thanksgiving.

Do harvest whatever herbs weren't touched by frost last night and put to bed those hardier perennials. I will. They will be the foundation for lots of projects during those long "lazy" winter afternoons while we wait for the seed catalogs which anticipate spring and another growing season.





- Nov 15 9:00 - Make Xmas decorations at Dixie's for Heritage Hill
- Nov 18 FV Meeting 6:30 - GFC - Pumpkin - Spa night bring basin, towel and washcloth
- Nov 19 GB Meeting 7:00 - GBBG - Pumpkin
- Nov 29 Meet at 10:00 at Heritage Hill to decorate Tank Cottage
- Dec 16 FV Christmas Party - 6:00 GFC - Potluck - Bring white elephant gift to exchange
- Dec 14 GB Christmas Party - 1 - 3 - Gokeys Wine Mart - bring white elephant gift to Xchange Potluck

Agenda for November Meetings

**Fox Valley - 18 November - 6:30 Meeting - Gardens of Fox Cities
November - Jessica and Jackie
December - Potluck**

**Green Bay - 19 November Green Bay Botanical Garden -7:00 Meeting
November - Diana M and Mark G
December - Pot Luck at Gokeys Wine Mart
January - February - Erin and Yvonne**

**Herb of the Month - Pumpkin
Welcome & Introductions
Secretary's Report & Treasurer's Report Highlights**

Old Business:

- Sign book for dues reduction
- GB and FV Book Thymes
- GB - Zen Day Report - Sandy/Yvonne
- FV - Herb Garden Designs
- Anything else?

New Business

- GB - Officer report
- GB - Crafts - Yvonne/Mary V.
- HerbFest 2009 - Jackie/Yvonne/Tracy/Kristin
- GB - Purchases - Tablecloths, canopy
- GB - Schedule
- FV - Affiliation
- FV - Schedule
- FV - May 16th

**Please bring agenda to the meeting - only a limited number will be available.
Go Green - bring a mug for tea!**

Herbs of the Month - Coming up

- November - Pumpkin
- January - BAY - Herb of the Year 2009
- February - Artemisia
- March - Culvers Root

GB - New - We will go around the table and everyone should say something about the herb of the month - up to 1 minute.

Book Thymes

Clan of the Cave Bear by Jean Auel

By Kristin Urban

Our Book Thymes reading club met Saturday, October 25, at Jackie Johnson's home near Seymour to discuss the popular novel, *The Clan of the Cave Bear*, which is the first in author Jean Auel's Earth's Children series.

The books are set in the dawn of the development of the human race, about 25,000 years ago. A tremendously popular series, the Earth's Children sequence has sold over 34 million copies since *Clan of the Cave Bear* was first issued in 1980 and has undergone several reprints and reissues and has been translated into 28 different languages. Every book in the series has been a best seller.

In spite of the book's popularity with the general reading public, and even in spite of the fact that *The Clan of the Cave Bear* was nominated for a number of literary awards, including an American Booksellers Association nomination for best first novel, it must be acknowledged that the book is seriously flawed from a number of standpoints.

The narrative concerns the difficulties faced by a young Cro-Magnon woman to be assimilated into the Neanderthal clan by which she is befriended and into which she becomes adopted. Ayla, the main character, is lost after an earthquake destroys her family and family home. She wanders far from her geographic roots, survives a cave lion's attack, and is found and nursed back to health by the Clan's medicine woman, Iza. Ayla comes to be regarded as some sort of lucky charm when she discovers the new cave needed by the Clan. However, jealousy and suspicion aroused by her talent, skill, and difference contrive to make her an object of persecution and exclusion.

Undoubtedly, part of the attraction of the novel stems from the subject matter about which so little is known....a pre-historic society about which little actual fact is available and much is surmised.

Therefore, Auel's novel falls within the genres of science fiction and fantasy. However, even in these worlds of make-believe, authors must create worlds of the plausible. Much of *The Clan of the Cave Bear*, while interesting from a "it-could-have-happened" position, has some glaring weaknesses.

Although obviously well-researched, some of the detail is erroneous to the time, even where it is true in fact. For example, Iza, the medicine woman, collects and uses herbs and herbal remedies for the health and healing of the Clan; and she passes on this knowledge to Ayla to give the young "alien" status in a future that promises to be difficult. But many of the herbs that Iza uses could not have existed during the time period about which Auel writes....they would not have existed at that time or/nor in that geographic location. And some of the detail (such as a two and a half page description of flint knapping), while accurate, is overwhelming and does little to advance the story.

Auel's use of the third person omniscient point of view, while it enables us to enter the minds of all the characters, does so without discrimination....no character is made to seem more or less important than any other character. Equal weight is given to the thoughts of Ayla's foster sister Uba, even though Uba plays a very small role in the total story. This lack of discrimination makes not only for a longer than necessary story but fails to drive the narrative forward in a positive way.

Thematically, the book addresses some important issues: nature versus nurture; the conflicts between the demands of the individual and the dictates of community; the problems of patriarchy; whether or not cultural stagnation equals extinction. However, the heavy-handed treatment of these issues robs them of the reader's participation in arriving at the author's point of view. There is little dramatic irony or suspense; and since the narrator often intrudes into the novel with sociological tangents on why the Neanderthal people died out, the reader often feels

he/she is reading a treatise rather than a work of fiction.

That said, the book has still sparked a wide and appreciative audience; and all of the five books released in the series have been best sellers. As one reviewer observed, "[*The Clan of the Cave Bear* is] long, escapist, about as far from the modern world as you could hope. It allows the reader to have one-up on the protagonists because of their levels of technology and knowledge of the world was so inferior to our own. It demands emotional involvement rather than powers of deductive thinking. If you fancy reading a deep, involved saga that is different from the usual genres, and you have plenty of time on your hands, this would be a good choice."

Five of the six books planned for the series have been released as of 2002; and an August 2008 letter found on a fan club website suggests that Auel may be planning on two more books. She wrote, "...I'm now thinking there will be a seventh book because I don't think I will be able to tell the story in only one more book." Fans of the series should be delighted with another two "chapters" in the saga.

Book Thymes readers enjoyed a lively discussion about *The Clan of the Cave Bear*. We also enjoyed Jackie's hospitality, complete with tables of goodies: taco salad, mozzarella cheese chunks to be dipped in horseradish sauce; butter crackers and herbed sour cream, pumpkin bread pudding with whipped cream (see recipe in Nov newsletter), apple crisp, and hot apple cider. Bernie brought dog treats and people treats as well.

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