

# HERBAL THYMES

Fall is here, time to gather your herbs.

FALL 2025

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## **Welcome to the Fall 2025 Issue of the Texas Thyme Unit Newsletter**

I hope you enjoy this issue and I invite you to visit our website: <https://www.texasthymeunit.org> and/or our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/texasthymeunit>. You will find information on upcoming events there.

Members of TTU maintain the Ella Ruth Herb Garden at the Wynne Home Arts Center located at 1428 11<sup>th</sup> Street in Huntsville. We usually meet there on the fourth Wednesday of most months for garden work and a monthly meeting. Stop by and visit us as the members are ready to share their knowledge and delight of herbs.

The TTU Board for 2025 is: Jeanine Sicard-Unit Char, Latasha Ruegamer-Co-Chair, Tom Readal-Treasurer, Andy Johnson-Secretary, and Gloria Hunter-Past Unit Chair.

Our members have had a very busy summer in 2025. Some of our very dedicated and talented members presented three Pressed Herbs and Flowers classes this year. One of our members led a very informative Dark Sky presentation about light pollution and its effect on pollinators and safety. Many TTU members went on a fun field trip to Old Town Spring. We also had a few workdays in the herb garden and a monthly meeting with wonderful Herb of the Month presentations and tastings.

The TTU Herb Festival for 2026 will be Saturday, April 11, 2026, and will be held at the Wynne Home from 8:00AM to 1:00PM. Members are planning on having a variety of plants, and we will have great speakers, vendors, and entertainment. We hope you will join us!

**Jeanine Sicard**



## *How I Grew From an Interest in Herbs to an Herb Nut!!*

By Jean Marsh

I can't remember a time as an adult when I wasn't interested in herbs. As a child, I spent a lot of my younger years on a vegetable farm, so I was around lots of plants, but I can't remember my mother using or growing fresh herbs.

My youngest daughter graduated from high school in 1990, so it was soon after that that I started actually spending time learning more about herbs. I was already growing quite a few common herbs, but not really doing much with them. Luckily, I somehow heard of a place in Round

Top, Texas, that you could spend the day learning, hands-on, plus being served a wonderful herbal lunch.

The weekend Herb Forum was held at the Menke House, with classes taking place downstairs. There was room for 10-15 people in each class. Madalene Hill and her daughter, Gwen Barclay, were the presenters. Well, after one trip there, I was sold! They were such a joy to learn from, bickering and correcting each other, and we could all ask questions as they talked. Those were indeed 'the good ole days'!

Darwin went with me for a few of those classes, and Stacie would come from Dallas, where she was attending SMU. It was a very special time, and Madalene is someone that I'll never forget. I've had my Country Girl Chrysanthemum, Pre-Civil War Verbena, Red Stem Apple Mint, Hilltop Oregano, and I'm sure a few others since that time. Madalene would just grab a plant and share it with us. So many good times were had at this very special place with these very special people.

I'd never had a Scented Geranium (*Pelargonium*), but I remember a small group of us sitting around Madalene on the front lawn of the Menke House under a huge live oak tree, and her giving us all cuttings and teaching us how to grow and share them.

I'm not even sure that the concert hall was started at that time, but if not, it was soon after, now internationally known as the Round Top Festival Institute. Groups of us going to Round Top for the Herb Festival every year watched it being built bit by bit as they had funds for it, into the beautiful facility it is today.

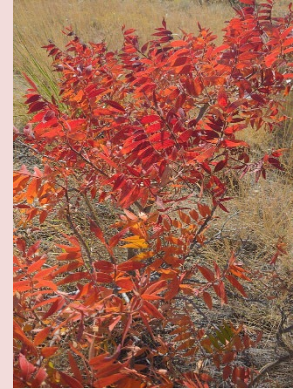
That was at least 30 years ago. During some of the classes, I heard people talking about being Master Gardeners, and knew I'd like that title by my name, so that very year, 2001, I signed up with our Walker County Master Gardener program and became one myself in 2002. I talked the County Agent, Reggie Lepley, into letting me plant an herb garden at the extension center, then every spring, I would get a group together for the road trip and weekend at the Round Top Herbal Forum. It was such great fun and such a great learning experience! It had grown immensely since the days in the basement of Menke House!

After several years of big groups going to Round Top, some of us decided we needed to have a unit of The Herb Society of America right here in Huntsville, so in 2009, the TEXAS THYME UNIT was born.

OK, THAT'S MY STORY AND I'M STICKING TO IT!! I've been an herb nut since and guess I have the Round Top, TX Herbal Forum to blame/thank for it.

# Sumac & Spice Roasted Chickpeas

2 -14 oz. cans chickpeas  
2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil  
2 tsp. sumac 1 tsp. paprika  
1 tsp. cayenne pepper  
1 tsp. sea salt  
½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper  
½ tsp. ground cumin



- Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Place the rinsed chickpeas in an absorbent kitchen towel. Gently roll and pat until the peas are dry.
- In a large bowl, whisk together the olive oil and spices. Add the chickpeas and toss well to coat them with the spices. Transfer the seasoned chickpeas to the baking sheet and arrange in a single layer.
- Roast for 20-30 minutes, check halfway through, shake the pan, and turn the chickpeas so they are light and crispy. Serve at room temperature.
- Store in an airtight container at room temperature for a week. If they soften, they can be reheated in a 350°F oven for 5-10 minutes, until they are crispy again.

## *Call for Plants*

Do you have a plant in your garden that you could propagate for our plant sale in April? Think about potting it up!

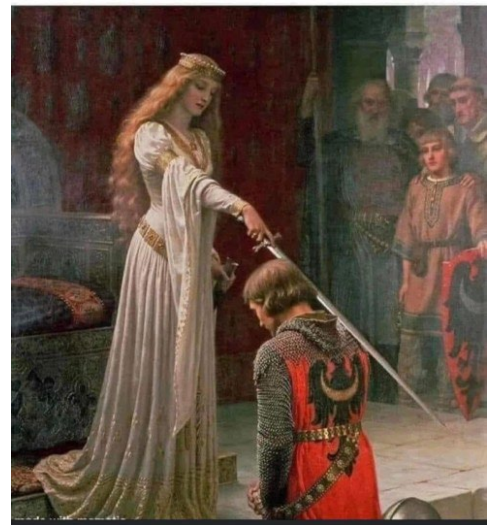
Our plant sale is renowned for having a diverse selection of plants. Along with our large variety of herbs, we also feature native species, vibrant perennials, beautiful houseplants, trees, eye-catching succulents, resilient shrubs, and even vegetables.

Send me an email if you can add to our list of plants that we will offer.

Maryann - [mreadal@yahoo.com](mailto:mreadal@yahoo.com)

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When your Plant Friend decides you're worthy of their cuttings



## Manglier: The Backyard Healer You Probably Drove Right Past

By Latasha Ruegamer

Drive the backroads of the Gulf Coast, from Texas through Louisiana and east into Florida, and you will see a scruffy shrub lining marshes, fence rows, and ditches. You might pass it without a second glance, yet for generations of Cajun, Creole, and coastal families, this unassuming plant was a trusted household remedy. Known as manglier, *Baccharis halimifolia*, it was once the superstar of the family medicine cabinet.

When fevers ran high or colds swept through the house, grandmothers reached for manglier leaves. She steeped them into a bitter, earthy tea so strong it could make your mouth pucker. Some said it tasted like over-steeped coffee, others compared it to strong greens, and a few simply laughed and said it was like drinking a cup of swamp. The flavor was unforgettable, but so were the results. Families swore it helped break fevers, ease chest congestion, and speed recovery.

Stories of manglier are still shared today. A few people even credit the tea with helping them push through the days of COVID. Whether or not science agrees with every testimony, these stories reflect the deep trust that families once placed in this backyard healer.

What once lived only in folk memory is now attracting the attention of scientists. Research teams in Louisiana have begun studying manglier in laboratory settings, and their early findings are intriguing. Extracts from manglier leaves reduced inflammatory signals in lab models. They also encouraged fat cells to release adiponectin, a hormone that supports insulin sensitivity and glucose balance. These findings suggest manglier could play a role in future approaches to diabetes and inflammatory conditions. At this stage, all studies have been in cells and not yet in the science, manglier carries cultural meaning. It reminds us that healing wisdom is often close at hand, sometimes growing unnoticed along the roadside. Like chicken soup or ginger tea, it connects people to memory, comfort, and resilience. For some families, it is a link to heritage and is a reminder that ordinary plants can hold extraordinary stories.

So the next time you drive through Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, or Florida and notice a scruffy bush growing in a ditch, remember you may be passing one of the Gulf South's oldest healers hiding in plain sight.

### References

LSA AgCenter (2022). Groundsel bush(Manglier) research continues with promise for treating diabetes and inflammation. <https://www.lsuagcenter.com/articles/page1724702207225>

University of Louisiana at Lafayette. (2022). Can a Louisiana folk remedy counter a modern health crisis? Study says yes. <https://louisiana.edu/news/can-louisiana-folk-remedy-counter-modern-health-crisis-study-says-yes>

Pennington Biomedical Research Center & Rutgers University. (2022). Bioactive compounds in *Baccharis halimifolia* and their potential metabolic benefits. [https://repository.lsu.edu/biosci\\_pubs/3242](https://repository.lsu.edu/biosci_pubs/3242)



Welcome new member Dale Belovsky and welcome back, Carol Holder. We are glad you are a part of the Texas Thyme Unit.

## What's Coming Up!

October 31, 9:00 – Propagating plants  
At the Wynne Home

November 1 – South Texas Unit Herb Fair

November – TBD – Herbal Wreath making at  
the Wynne Home

November 26 – EdCon Early Bird registration

December 3, 11:30AM, Olive Garden –  
Christmas luncheon – Bring toy & non-  
perishable donations

January 28, 9:00 AM, Wynne Home – Garden  
workday and monthly meeting.

February 4 – 10:30AM– Teas Around the World  
– Huntsville Public Library

February 25, 9:00AM – Garden workday  
and monthly meeting

## *Herb Garden Bliss*

by Samantha Lazar

Lavender soothes...

Tiny Thyme...

Boastful Basil...

Multiplying mint...

Oh Oregano!



Pressed Flower & Herb  
Workshop Bookmark and  
Greeting Card – only two of  
many beautiful creations by  
our members.

## October 2025 Meeting at the Readal House



### Garden Plants

Shampoo/Pinecone  
Ginger – Zingiber  
zerumbet

Pagoda Flower –  
Clerodendrum  
japonicum

Castor Bean - Ricinus  
communis

*Herbal Thymes Editor,  
Maryann Readal*