# GOT THYME

# MARCH

SEASIDE HERB SOCIETY

ORMOND BEACH, FLORIDA

2023

## Monthly Newsletter

**Seaside Herb Society Meets on the third Saturday every month, from September through May. Our Next meeting is on March 18, 2023, at 9:30.**
**Friends and family are welcome to join our meetings as a guest.**

Please Visit, Follow, & Like our Facebook page @ https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=seaside%20herb%20society%20volusia%2Fflagler%20counties

**Donna Fresquez & Patricia Craven**

### A Letter from the Editor

**Happy Springtime SHS Members,**

The gardening bug has my full attention with the spring air upon us. It's fun seeing my neighbors outside planting their gardens too. See the last page of this newsletter for pictures of what I am growing and eating. I would love to share pictures of what you are growing or post tips on planting for those members new to gardening.

This has been quite a busy month already; too much to mention here, so I'll let you read about it in this newsletter. And our spring Herb Faire is just a week away- WOW, thyme flies! I hope everyone has an enjoyable time. I always love working in the education booth. Last fall, so many of you baked incredible goodies for our bake sale. I hope some of you remember to make some treats for our pets- I'm looking for a bird seed ornament to hang and feed the birds in my backyard (hint!).

Amanda, Trish, and I tried to have a book of our 2020-2021 season presentations available for this sale. We came close; our manuscript is in a rough draft and nearly completed. It will be available soon, and we can offer it at our Fall sale.

I hope you are enjoying this lovely March weather… we needed the rain!

See yawl at our next meeting,

Rebekah

**Mission Statement: We gather in the spirit of friendship and cooperation to learn more about herbs and to use this knowledge to educate and benefit others.**

## Meet Our Members

**Jennifer Campbell**
**-This, too, shall pass!**

Jennifer is one of our newest members. She joined the Seaside Herb Society in October 2022 after learning about our club from Gini Downell. What she likes about our group is meeting members with a like interest in herbs and learning how to grow and cook with fresh herbs. Jennifer's fondest memory so far is our 2022 Christmas party "with all the amazing food items."

Jennifer grew up in Calais, Maine, where the rocky beaches line the cold ocean water (brr). Eating lobster and blueberries, skiing, and skating in the snow brings back many loving memories. As much as this Irish Lassie loved

In 1980, while wandering to undetermined destinations, Maine happened upon Ormond Beach, fell in love with the area, and never left.

Now retired from Daytona State College after 34 years in administration payroll and benefits, Jennifer enjoys her hobbies. Twenty years ago, she read a book on how to play Mah Jong, then took lessons and has been playing ever since. Reading is a favorite pass time, using Good Reads to keep track of the books she read and complete annual challenges. Her favorite authors are Steinbeck, Daphne du Mavier, Amar Towlos, Jodi Picoult, Aan Patchett, Richard Russo, and Pat Conroy. But Jennifer is "always looking for a new favorite author!"

**March Display at the Ormond Beach Library**

Each year for the month of March, Seaside Society creates a display in the North side entrance of the Ormond Beach Library. This year, five of us arrived at 9 a.m. with herb-related items to create this display representing who and what we are.

Our display included our mission statement, spring sale announcement, tea and teacups, apron & hat with our emblem on each, and lots of information about herbs.

If you haven't seen it, I think it's worth the trip to the library.

**Volunteers from left to right: Sharon, Lari, Denny, Rebekah, & Andrea.**

## Books & Movies- What's on Your Shelf?

### The Secret World of Herbs-

theepochtimes.com videos- By Amanda Hale

While researching my Herb-of-the-Month presentation, I stumbled upon a British encyclopedia site and noticed this excerpt from a video called "The Secret World of Herbs." The 3 minutes or so of this clip was cinematically lovely and reasonably informative. So I watched one episode (The Alps). I thought I'd share a review.

The Alps episode contained: Artistic, beautifully captured images; Interviews with people with a deep appreciation of herbs; Details of herbal traditions of the herbs (gathering, harvesting, propagation, and use). There were scenes of a "blessing of the herbs," a video of a spa treatment, gourmet restaurant dishes (not their preparation), etcetera. I learned about the history of some uses and ancient beliefs charmingly presented.

There were actual references to herb uses in modern times. Still, they were very generalized and without many scientific details. E.g., something was anti-inflammatory and being studied at a university and held promise for this or that problem, like vascular health, but that was the depth of scientific claims.

Overall, I would describe it as appealing and uplifting for a herb-loving tourist to the area, with beautiful images. There are five episodes, each about 45 minutes long: The Alps, The Balkans, In Provence, Latin America, and India. These particular videos are free IF you share an email address. Other videos on the site are not free, and you will see buttons on some screens requesting donations, and that brings me to caution you about the producers.

The producers are backed by Epoch Times, a group of anti-Chinese ex-pats in the NY area practicing a form of qi-dong that has been severely persecuted in China (imprisonment, torture, death). My brief research indicates a definite political bent to their news reporting (especially regarding China--IMHO, they hate the government, and like anything and anyone who is anti-China, period), and some folks believe political videos may have a cultish quality.

However, this video series seemed free of that. I suspect the fact that the Chinese still practice herbal medicine probably influenced their interest in herbs--in fact, the first two herbs featured in The Alps episode were Mountain Ginseng and Edelweiss (Edelweiss originated in China botanically).

**BOTTOM LINE:** Don't watch these for deep herb info, do watch for some lovely scenes, folklore, traditional practices still alive today, and some ideas for herbal travel--But I'll be unsubscribing after I watch a few more episodes.

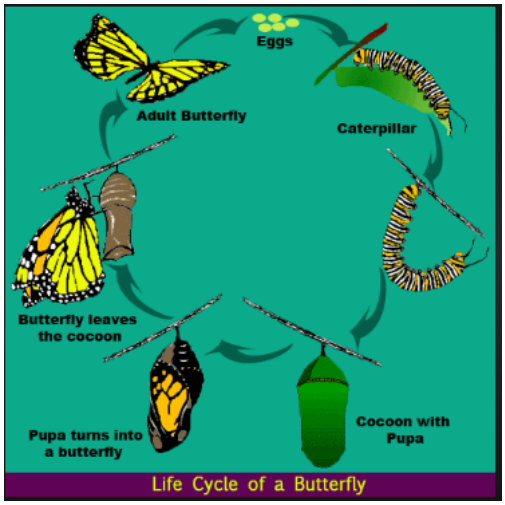
You can find the videos at theepochtimes.com--again, you will need to share an email address to watch; without that, you only see a trailer of the episodes. (fyi, I maintain a second email address just for sites where I might get pestered with email and use that "junk email id" for things like this—it keeps my "real" inbox clean).

# February Speaker

## The Butterfly Guy- Jim Ledman

There are over 20,000 types of butterflies worldwide. They come in a remarkable variety of colors and patterns. Some mimic plants and other animals as a line of defense against predators! Butterflies rely on specific plants for food or for laying their eggs. If this habitat is destroyed, the population can quickly decline.

## 4 Stages of Caterpillar to Butterfly




We must understand how vital they are to our ecosystems; they significantly affect our environment.

- Butterflies rub up against pollen as they feed on the nectar deep within flowers. The pollen contains genetic material which attaches to the butterfly and is deposited in other flowers they visit. The pollen ends up in the female part of another flower of this plant, allowing for reproduction.
- They travel long distances pollinating much of the foods we eat- fruits, vegetables, and herbs used to make our medications.
- Butterflies are susceptible to changes in the environment. They rely on specific conditions and environmental cues to complete their fragile life cycle. The butterfly population has declined significantly over the last few decades due to environmental changes.
    - Two Florida species are extinct due to the spraying of mosquitoes, and there are a few others on the endangered list. (Staletovich, 2023).
    - Since 1999, Monarch butterflies have declined by 82%. Despite deforestation in Mexico, the copious spraying of pesticides and herbicides in the United States and Canada. (Pleasants, 2023)Pesticides directly kill caterpillars and butterflies. Herbicides eliminate "weeds," aka all organic native plants, that are their food sources. Agricultural crop fields have eliminated their food sources "through a combination of spraying with Roundup (glyphosate + dicamba) herbicide and increased planting of corn and soybeans genetically modified to be resistant to the herbicide."

**There are ways individuals like us can help save our butterflies:**

- Make outdoor spaces insect friendly. Stop spraying harmful chemicals on yard plants.
- Plant native flowers and herbs that butterflies can feed on.
- Provide areas of shade with water for butterflies to rest.
- Butterflies feed on fallen fruit, so leave some or all on the ground.
- Insects, including butterflies, are often overlooked in environmental protection. Advocate for the protection of insects by bringing this to the attention of your government.

**What's the difference between a butterfly and a moth?**

Moths and butterflies belong to the same group of insects, which is the order of Lepidoptera. Butterflies and moths benefit the environment in many ways. Butterflies tend to be active during the day. Moths are typically active at night or are said to be nocturnal.

A butterfly caterpillar forms a chrysalis. The moth caterpillar does one of two things:

A. It will spin a cocoon from the outside inward and then pupates inside the cocoon.
B. The moth caterpillar will bury itself underground and pupate there.

Butterflies tend to close their wings while at rest, while moths often open their wings while at rest.

Jim generously boxed and gave butterflies to SHS members to take home and release into our backyards. Denny shared pictures of her Painted Lady Butterfly being let loose.

If you visit Key West, Rebekah recommends going to the Butterfly Museum.

# Capsaicin

**Presented by Joan P. & Geraldine McNamara**

Pronounced Cap see kin,' like Mexican.

Capsaicin ($C_{18}H_{27}NO_3$) is the pungent heat-producing chemical in Capsicum plants. Capsaicin is a colorless, odorless, alkaline oil in the membrane that holds the seeds. Hot peppers of the Capsicum annuum species belong to the plant genus family Solanaceae.

Capsaicin is found in small amounts in other spices, including cardamom, cinnamon, cilantro, cumin, ginger, oregano, rosemary, and turmeric. (Rohrig, 2013). Hot peppers vary in heat depending on variety and age. There are many varieties of peppers (capsicum annuum). A few are listed below:

1. **The Aleppo pepper** (Capsicum annuum) is a spice, particularly in Turkish, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean cuisine. Also known as the Halaby pepper, its pods are ripened to a burgundy color, then semi-dried, deseeded, and crushed or coarsely ground or made into pepper flakes.

2. **Poblano peppers** *(*Capsicum annuum*)* are chili pepper native to Mexico that can add zing to your meals. These nightshade vegetables are typically dark green and resemble other varieties of peppers, but they tend to be larger than jalapeños and smaller than bell peppers. Fresh poblanos are mild with a slightly sweet flavor but are left to ripen until red, and they become much hotter. Dried poblano peppers that are nearly ripe and deep red are known as ancho chilis, a popular ingredient in mole sauces and other Mexican dishes.

3. **Jalapeño peppers** *(*Capsicum annuum*)* vary in the intensity of the burn depending on where they are grown, how ripe they are, and the number of seeds inside the pepper. Compared to other varieties of hot peppers, jalapenos are relatively mild and sweet. In supermarkets, they are typically the hottest variety offered, giving them a super-hot reputation. Chipotle jalapeno peppers are ripened jalapeño chiles that have been smoked and dried. They can be ground and used in many Mexican and Tex-Mex recipes.

4. **Cayenne Pepper** *(*Capsicum annuum*)* originated in Cayenne, French Guiana, and is often ground to make red hot pepper.

Chili peppers can be eaten fresh or dried and are used to make chili powder, paprika, and flavors barbecue, hot curry, and other spicy sauces. Capsaicin is the main ingredient in *Hot Pepper Wax Spray* to keep animals away from your flowers and out of your yard & garden.

## History

Traces of pepper fruits have been found in prehistoric remains in Peru and Mexico, and the plants were widely grown in Central and South America by various pre-Columbian civilizations. Like other plants, pepper seeds were spread by birds before they attracted human attention. Birds lack the sense receptors for capsaicinoids and are thus unaffected by a pepper's spiciness; the seeds pass unharmed through birds' digestive systems and are excreted in new places. Indigenous peoples first domesticated the plant in present-day Mexico approximately 6,000–7,000 years ago. Chilies were an essential food to many Indigenous populations, including the Aztecs. (Sottosanti, 2023).

Initially mistaken for a form of black pepper, the first pepper seeds were carried to Spain in 1493 by the explorer Christopher Columbus and spread rapidly throughout Europe and the rest of the world.

In 1652, English botanist, herbalist, physician, and astrologer Nicholas Culpeper described the health benefits of capsaicin in his book The English Physician, a source of pharmaceutical and herbal lore of his time. (Curry, 2004).

**Health & Nutrition**

The hotness of a pepper has been measured by the Scoville heat scale, a series of "heat units" ranging from 0 to 16 million depending on the capsaicin content in a pepper. The capsaicin concentration in pepper spray is 2 million heat units. One Particle Per Million (PPM) of capsaicin is present in 1 kilogram of pepper. This is like one red marble in a bucket of 999,999 white marbles. Capsaicin is so potent that a concentration of 10 ppm would produce long-lasting burning sensations on the tongue. The amount of heat in hot peppers is usually a low risk for toxicity, but in its pure form, it is toxic.

Can use cayenne as mild medicinal at 40,000hu. My medicinal cayenne is at 160,000hu and cannot be used without proper breathing gear, eye protection, or gloves. (Hu refers to the heat unit.) If you don't know how to work with it, you don't mess with it. It is getting harder to get and is a lot of $$$ for a very small amount. You can literally & physically blind yourself.

Cayenne/Capsaicin is great for circulation as it thins the blood, warms people with Reynaud's and helps the blood flow. Contains Vit K, B6, and Potassium reduces plaque buildup in the arteries. It can heal ulcers, stimulate the digestive tract and, help digestion, ease a stomachache. It also helps reduce inflammation in the Liver. Check with your doctor before going hog-wild if you're on blood thinners.

Capsaicin helps reduce weight by speeding up the metabolism. You can mix a pinch of cayenne and lemon with water in the morning to jumpstart your metabolism.

Capsaicin can reduce symptoms of neuropathy by rubbing capsaicin cream into affected areas. Has also been useful in regulating diabetes.

Pepper extracts are used in pharmaceutical products for such conditions as arthritis and athlete's foot. The fruits contain many phytochemicals, including vitamin C, vitamin A, flavonoids, anthocyanins, carotenoids, and capsaicinoids, which are spicy components of hot peppers.

**How to stop the burning:**

Capsaicin is a chemical irritant that causes a burning sensation, redness, and pain with any direct contact with eyes, skin, or mucous membranes of the mouth or nose can produce. Washing with water or soap and water cannot dissolve this oil-based substance. Here are a few remedies that can neutralize capsaicin on the skin but should NEVER be used in the eyes.

1. Full-Fat Dairy Products: Yogurt, sour cream and milk contain a fat-binding protein called casein that dissolves capsaicin oil.
2. Corn Starch with iced water: Mix to make a paste and apply to.
3. Rubbing Alcohol or vinegar will dissolve capsaicin oil.
4. Solarcaine spray can provide temporary relief.

**References**

Curry, P. (2004). Culpeper, Nicholas (1616–1654). In O. Dictionary, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biographies.* Oxford, UK.

Rohrig, B. (2013). *Hot Peppers: Muy Caliente.* Retrieved from ACS Chemistry for Life: https://www.acs.org/education/resources/highschool/chemmatters/past-issues/archive-2013-2014/peppers.html

Sottosanti, K. (2023). *Capsicum annuum.* Retrieved from Britqnnica: https://www.britannica.com/plant/bell-pepper

## Recipes

Peppers can be eaten raw, cooked, pickled, roasted, or dehydrated. Pungent chilies can be used as condiments or spices for seasoning. Some peppers are also used as a coloring in some foods.

**Spicy Samples served**

Dark chocolate made with chili

Trader Joe's Plantain chips with hot peppers

Peanuts roasted with hot peppers

### Habanero Infused Tequila

3 habanero peppers deseeded and sliced into thin strips

1 bottle agave tequila 750ml

Unseal the tequila bottle and add the thin habanero slices to the tequila. Reseal and allow the tequila to infuse the habanero flavor for between 6 and 24 hours (the longer, the hotter the tequila will be). Remove the habanero slices prior to serving by pouring the tequila through a filter and then back into the same bottle or another sealable jar. Store for up to 4 to 6 months, but for best flavor, drink within the first 2 weeks to a month.

**Notes**

Note: It's essential to remove the habanero slices before serving or storing them. Habaneros are extremely hot and can lead to significant chili burn.

Plus, the longer the habanero steeps, the hotter the tequila will get. Over time - if the habanero slices are left in - the tequila will get too hot and bitter to be drinkable.

Use gloves when preparing this recipe. As habanero peppers are extra hot chilies, they can cause significant chili to burn.

### Recipe for Spicy Beef Curry:

2 lb boneless ribs--rub some of the curry mixes into the meat, then sauté til partially cooked. Won't take long.

In a separate 2c mixing bowl, add hot madras curry, cayenne, & red

chili pepper flakes & a teaspoon of coconut amino acids, tbsp raisins, and 1/4 c unsalted cashews -- however hot you want it and add much water however you want. More water= more runny/soupy.

Mix that up and throw it in with the beef (or chicken or shrimp if you prefer)

Stir in gently at med to low heat.

Add 2 cups cauliflower "rice" or regular rice. The cauliflower adds moisture, so if you don't want as much of a soupy texture, cut out some of the water.

I like mine very spicy but did back off a lot for the tasting and eliminated the cashews & bananas for the tasting. In my very spicy recipe, I add sliced bananas as they'll take off some of the heat like the raisins do.

This original recipe I made up got me 1st prize from a restaurant in Denver 45 years ago.

Freezes well, so make a big pot.

Great for any time of the year.

Helps with circulation in the body, too.

**Making Homemade Paprika & Pest Repellants**
**-Rebekah**

Making homemade paprika isn't that difficult, but it is time-consuming, and you must take many precautions. John and I experimented with various sweet and hot peppers to create our own unique paprika. John had to make the repellants as I easily get chemical burns from hot peppers. For cooking, I preferred sweeter and low-heat peppers.
Many types of fresh peppers can be used to make paprika. The type you choose will determine your paprika's flavor and heat.

**Making Paprika**

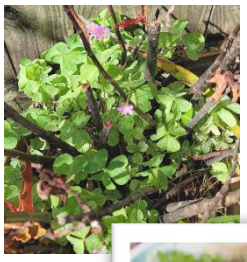
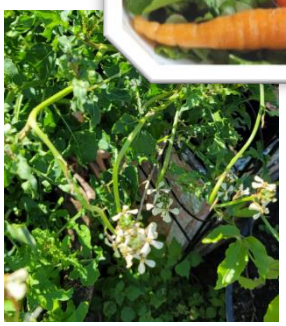
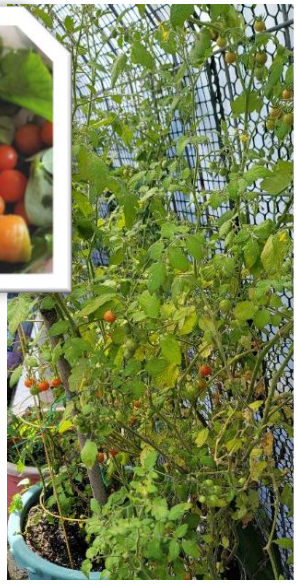
Choose 12 to 15 peppers: Mix and match sweet and spicy varieties.

1. Remove the seeds (wear gloves if using hot peppers); you can keep them for a spicier paprika, but they do not grind into powder very well.
2. Cut them into small slices and place them in a food dehydrator. Dry them well until they are hard. You don't want them to be squishy, or they won't grind well. Dehydrator times can vary greatly and can take two days. You may want to do this outside or somewhere away from your home, as the scent can become overwhelming.
3. **Grinding peppers.** Toss thoroughly dried peppers into a food processor and grind until a powder consistency my dried peppers into my food processor, using the "grind" setting.

**At this point, BE CAREFUL! Don't open the lid to your food processor right away. Do something else until the powder settles; otherwise, you may get a chemical burn.**

**To make pest repellent. Use very hot peppers and wear protective gear while making and using them. After preparing it, I mixed it with garlic and oil to wipe on areas around my plants.**

**Don't Pick My Weeds!**
**-Rebekah**

I typically check out what native plants are growing in my backyard. Thank God I did it before *"weeding"* around my plants. I realized the large whale-tail-shaped "*weeds"* were actually wood sorrel that I planted last year after our SHS presentation. When they failed to germinate, I turned that soil into a pot and planted something else. Now it is in many places throughout my garden and boy, it has such a wonderful lemony flavor in my salads and on grilled fish.

I also have an abundance of chickweed, purslane, wild violets, chamomile, everglade tomatoes, and dollar weeds- these young pods taste like asparagus!