# November 2023 Newsletter

**Seaside Herb Society meetings are held on the third Saturday of every month, from September through May. Our upcoming meeting is on Nov. 18, 2023, at 9:30.**

**Friends and family are welcome to attend 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**

**EDITORS NOTE**

## Editors Letter

Happy Thanksgiving! This is the time of year we bake and make our favorite recipes for our friends and family. It's such a festive time of year.

In preparation for our December Christmas party, I recall many delicious recipes that members offered to share at our 2022 Christmas party, but I didn't receive any of the recipes. If members are willing to share their family recipes this year, please send them to me or bring a copy to the party for me to add to our January Newsletter.

Another suggestion made by Lari is to make setting up and cleanup easier on whoever is hosting each month, everyone should get their own chair for the meeting and put it back when done. This will greatly reduce the amount of time it takes our presenters to set up and clean up.

Also, our Seaside Herb Society is still in need of a secretary. Please consider volunteering.

Lastly, please be prepared to choose the Herb presentations for our 2024 meetings. Sue Fowler sent out a list to choose from or add to.

Looking forward to our November presentations: Judy Jean Master Gardener of Flagler County and our Bay Leaf presentation with samplings. This is our last herb of 2023.

--Rebekah

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

**Jack Dunlap Jr.**

Born and raised in Daytona Beach with memories of a small-town boyhood. Believe it or not, he moved to Ormond Beach in 1971 because "homes were cheaper than Daytona Beach back then."

Jack became interested in gardening & herbs ten years ago, African Blue Basil being his favorite. "They are easy to grow. Requires very little care. Just leave it alone. Don't over water. Honeybees & native bees love the flowers." His other plants include bromeliad and orchids.

About six years ago, Jack and his wife Kathy joined our Seaside Herb Society. They learned about us through word of mouth and decided it would be fun to do together. Through the years Jack has helped with sales and has presented information about honeybees, which he and his wife raise and sell at our annual Spring Sale.

What he likes best about our SHS is learning about herbs. Jack says, "SHS Herbies are a fun and friendly group… crazy, but in a fun way!"

Jack retired after fifty years in building construction in Volusia County. Some of the more prominent buildings he built are the Lutheran Church, Steak & Shake, Bojangles, banks, schools, etc…

He now spends his time gardening, beekeeping & koi keeping. (I had to look this one up, Koi fish!)

## Christmas Tree Decorating Committee

Our committee is working hard preparing for the upcoming Casement Christmas tree. Doris made the pattern for the holy garland.

## Seaside Herb Society Herb Garden

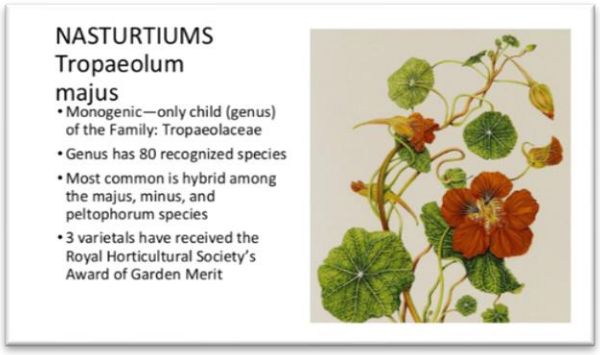
Isaiah spoke at our last meeting about the garden beds he is replacing. He plans to begin the project this month.

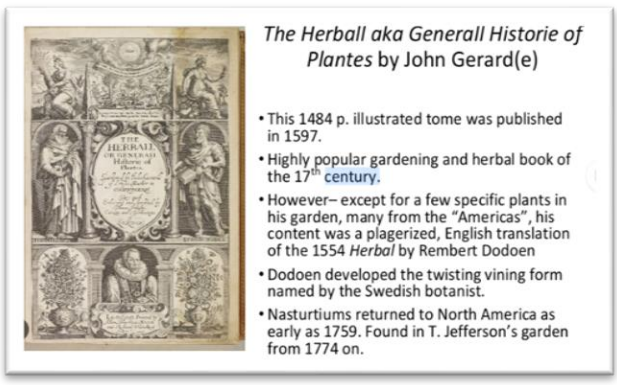
Eagle Scout Isaiah took up donations at our fall plant sale.

## Seaside Herb Society Fall Plant Sale Sold Out Early

Our plant sale was amazing, everything was sold by 11 am. Unfortunately for the customers who showed up after that! (Is it too early to start planning our spring sale?)

These events are so much fun for us as much as our community.




# Nasturtiums

Presented by: Lari Knochenmus & Susan Gavett

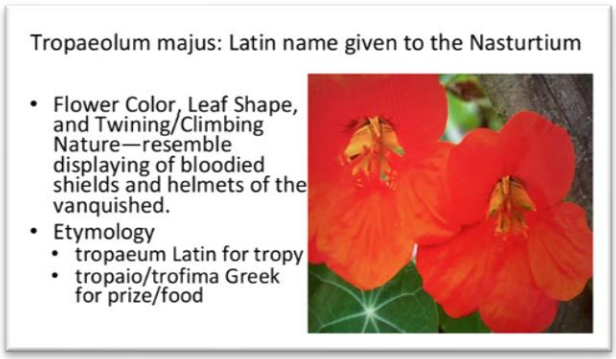
Botanically named after the Greek word for trophy (*Tropaeolum*), nasturtium is a climbing plant with brightly colored flowers that has historically symbolized victory. Its other reputation of "nose-twister" / "nose-tweaker" comes from its Latin translation, *Nasus* (nose) and *torquere* (to twist). *(Oxford English Dictionary, 1995)*.

Nasturtiums are of the Tropaeolum genus which is comprised of roughly 80 species of annual and perennial herbaceous flowering plants, whereas the nasturtium is in its own unique monogenic (involving or controlled by a single gene) classification, Tropaeolaceae.

Nasturtium officinale is a genus of a small number of plant species in the family Brassicaceae cabbage family), commonly known as watercress or yellowcress. (USDA, 2015). Nasturtiums are related to garden cress and mustard, noteworthy for a peppery, tangy (pungent) flavor. The difference between Nasturtium & cress is that Garden cress and watercress belong to the mustard family (Brassicaceae), and nasturtium belongs to the Tropaeolaceae family. All three types of cress have similar flavor qualities and are used in similar ways. Cresses and nasturtiums have a spicy aroma and a refreshing, peppery, pungent taste.

The most common nasturtiums in cultivation are hybrids of *T. majus*, *T. minus*, and *T. peltophorum* (McFarlane, 2001):

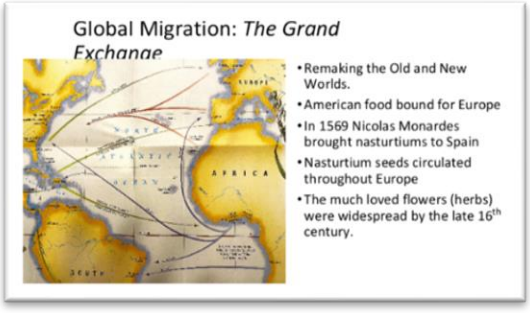
- *Tropaeolum majus* is known as the garden nasturtium, Indian cress, or monk's cress. Originating in the Andes from Bolivia north to Colombia, it is an annual plant.
- Tropaeolum minus the dwarf nasturtium is a perennial plant endemic to mountainous regions of Ecuador and Peru.
- Tropaeolum peltophorum native to the UK can be annual or perennial. This species is edible.

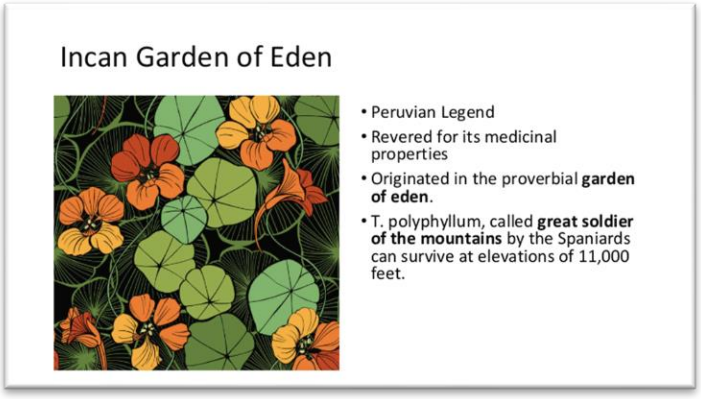



For thousands of years, people have used this plant for food, medicine, and works of art. At different times in history, the nasturtium has been considered a vegetable, an herb, a flower, and some fruit. Indigenous to South America, its natural habitat is the Andes mountains' tropical or subtropical montane forests. Prized by the ancient Incas of Peru as both salad vegetable and medicinal herb, wildcrafted nasturtiums were used to make tea to treat respiratory infections and as a poultice for cuts and burns.

The Latin word for Tropaeolum is tropaeum, which means trophy which comes from the Greek word *tropaio*, meaning prize. Food used to be given to winners in athletic contests. The word for food in Greek is *trofima*." (Greene, 2013).

Nasturtiums were discovered in Peru in the





1500's. Imported to Europe by Spanish conquistadors around 1500, the nasturtium was introduced as a vegetable, along with the potato and tomato by Nicolas Monardes, a Spanish botanist, in 1565, and reaching England by John Gerard in 1597. At that time, it was known to British growers as "Indian Cress." due to its peppery flavor and spicy fragrance similar to watercress. Gerarde, a Dutch botanist developed the twisting vine. Soon, they were being grown for their flowers. (Pore, 2022).

Carl Linnaeus was a Swedish botanist, zoologist, and physician who first structured the principles for defining natural genera and species of organisms and to create a uniform system for naming them. He is also considered the father of modern ecology. (Calisher, 2007) The nasturtiums' twining vine and broad yellow flower reminded him of an ancient practice of displaying shields and helmets of slain soldiers on a tree's trunk at the battlefield scene, giving rise to its name, nasturtium.

Nasturtiums came to North America with immigrants around 1759. By 1774, Thomas Jefferson planted nasturtiums in his garden. He pickled the seeds and categorized the Nasturtium as a fruit along with the tomato (which is botanically a fruit but legally a vegetable. That came from a US supreme court ruling in the 1890s and involved different taxation rates for fruits, vegetables, and seeds.) (Greene, 2013).

Their tuberous roots typically have leaf-long stalks. Many species twine around other stems to provide support. (Allaby, 1992).

Nasturtiums have five petals, the uppermost is elongated into a nectar spur. The five petals are clawed. The fruit is naked and nut-like, with three single seed segments. (McClintock, 1993).

Their bisexual flowers have both stamens and carpels. (Bisexual plants in general have an ova and a stamen that produce their own pollen, granting these plants a complete and independent life cycle with or without the actions of pollinators. This is a vital environmental attribute to areas that suffer drought and overuse of pesticides that kill off our pollinators. Currently, the USA alone sprays 85 million tons of pesticides annually.)

**Growing**

Nasturtiums are easy to grow and aren't picky about soil, light, or water. Rich soil produces lots of leaves, poor soil lots of blossoms. Thus, they are a natural indicator of the quality of your soil. The seeds, which germinate in a week to 10 days, are large so they make a good project for kid hands.

Dwarf Nasturtiums add butterfly-like rainbows of color to annual beds and borders (and attract hummingbirds which pollinate them.) Trailing forms of Nasturtiums color fences, trellises, slopes and hanging containers. Aphids incidentally love Nasturtiums so organic gardeners like to plant them around the vegetable garden to "lure" aphids away from other plants.

Nasturtiums grow equally well in containers or as ground cover around vegetable gardens. When used as a companion plant, it acts as a *trap crop!* In other words, it draws aphids and other garden pests away you're your vegetables.

However, pests aren't the only thing nasturtiums attract. Bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and other pollinators are also attracted to these beautiful, fragrant plants. So, don't spray herbicides, instead plant nasturtiums.

Nasturtium flowers, leaves, and immature seed pods can be added to salads. They are rich in Vitamin C. The immature pods can be pickled, and the mature seeds roasted for a peppery snack or ground and used like black pepper.

Like all wild plants with a good dose of oxalic acid, they come with the warning not to eat them in large quantities.

According to a Harvard Medical Student study, "Medicinal raw materials are considered to be the entire terrestrial part of nasturtium (leaves, sprouts, buds, and seeds), which contain:" (Stepron, 2022)

- carotene
- essential oil
- vitamin C in high concentrations
- B vitamins
- antibiotics of plant origin
- bio activators
- sulfur compounds
- Trace elements: iodine, potassium, phosphorus
- phytoncides
- mustard glycosides
- coloring substances

Infusion from the leaves of the plant, a tablespoon of dried and crushed raw nasturtium leaves in a glass of boiling water. Let it brew until the broth is cooled down. Drain and divide into small amounts to consume throughout the day to prevent or reduce: (Calisher, 2007).

- Ischemic heart disease (Sedaghattalab M, 2021)
- Diseases of the lymph nodes

- Pneumonia, chronic and acute bronchitis
- Strengthening of immunity during colds
- Scurvy and bleeding gums
- Constipation- acts as a mild laxative
- Reducing feelings of anxiety, increased nervousness
- Unpleasant symptoms during menopause in women
- Help falling asleep and deep sleep
- Kidney disease (Sedaghattalab M, 2021)
- Removal of gallstones from the gallbladder.

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# Recipes

**Cream of Nasturtium (Watercress) Soup**

Ingredients:
2 cup Cream,
2 cups Vegetable Stock or Broth
1/4 cup Marsala, Sherry or ½ cup White Wine
Season with a Bay leaf,
Salt to taste,
¼ tsp each White Pepper and Sweet Paprika, grated nutmeg on top
1 cup Watercress (Nasturtium) leaves, stemmed
Preparation:

Heat Cream, Sherry, and Stock slowly, warm to scalding. While warming add a bay leaf; salt to taste; and ¼ or more tsp white pepper and paprika. When the cream sauce is warm, grate nutmeg into the pot and add the watercress. Stir until the cress is wilted and a vibrant green (a couple of minutes). Serve immediately. Watercress will get bitter if cooked too long. Don't boil.
Garnished today with pepitas (pumpkin seeds) and corn nuts.

**Nasturtium Tea**
Nasturtium flower & leaves
Boil in water
Add honey or sweetener as desired

**Nasturtiums add spice to alcoholic beverages**

Nasturtium-infused vodka, tequila, and wine – add beauty and flavor to your beverages!
Ingredients
Vodka, tequila, or wine
Clean, freshly picked nasturtium flowers- about 10 flowers per cup of alcohol.
Stuff your flowers into a bottle of vodka or other alcohol of choice and stow them away for a few days or even weeks. The longer the flowers are left to infuse, the stronger the nasturtium flavor will be.

**Herbed Cream Cheese, Cucumber, and Cress Canapes**

Ingredients:
Rye Bread, Baguette Slices, or Bruschetta Bread
Nasturtium Leaves (Watercress), stems removed
Cucumber thinly sliced
Herbed Cream Cheese—ingredients
4-oz cream cheese
2 Tbsp. Mayo
1 tsp each fresh tarragon, chives, and mint
¼ tsp lemon zest
Salt, and pepper to taste
Preparation:
Mix until well combined with the herb cheese ingredients.
Spread herb cheese on each bread slice, top with a cucumber slice, and then top with a leaf or 2.

**Nasturtium butter**

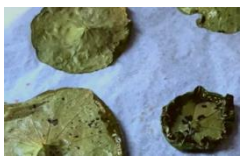
Ingredients
3 tablespoons of chopped nasturtium flowers
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup of unsalted butter
Ground black pepper
Instructions
Mix your flowers and salt with your room temperature butter in a bowl and add a dash of black pepper for some extra peppery flavor.
Next, place your butter on some wax paper, and roll it into a butter log. Pop it into your fridge for about an hour to chill and firm, then it'll be ready for sandwiches or as a delicious butter melt.

**Cold Shrimp in Nasturtium (Watercress) Cream Sauce**

Cold Shrimp Ingredients:
1 lemon, zested, halved
1 cup white wine or unseasoned rice vinegar
3 Tbsp sugar
1.5 to 3 Tbsp salt
1 to 1-1/2 pounds shrimp, peeled, deveined
Preparation:
Put lemon zest, vinegar, sugar, salt, juice half of lemon and toss into 6 cups of water in a large pot. Bring to rolling boil.
REMOVE pot from heat, add shrimp, let sit for 3 minutes, check for opaqueness (doneness) by slicing shrimp in half.
Remove shrimp from water to a plate and CHILL in freezer until cool, about 10 minutes. When cool, remove from freezer. Pat dry if any moisture remains, cover tightly, and place in refrigerator. Toss with cream sauce just before serving.
Ingredients for Cream Sauce:
½ cup mayonnaise
½ cup sour cream
½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. black pepper
1 tsp. sugar or substitute
½ tsp. sweet paprika
½ c. chopped leaves, stems removed
Few drops hot sauce (opt.)
Preparation:
Combine the ingredients; the consistency should be that of a salad dressing or sauce. Makes 1-1/2 cups.

**Nasturtium Chips**

If you like Kale Chips, you'll love Nasturtium Chips



Ingredients:
- Nasturtium leaves
- Bottle or spray olive oil
- Salt, garlic powder, &/or onion powder

Method:
1. Preheat oven to 275(F).
2. Wash and dry Nasturtium Leaves

3. Lightly spray or brush both sides with extra virgin olive oil.
4. Line a tray with baking paper and place the nasturtium leaves face down to prevent curling in the oven.
5. Season with salt, onion, or garlic powder.
6. Bake in the oven for 10 minutes. Check if they're crispy before taking them out.
7. Remove them from the oven and let them cool before transferring them to a plate or platter.

**Calamondin Fridge Pie garnishes with Nasturtium Flowers**

Calamondin Puree Instructions:
Rinse and cut fruit in half. Working over large bowl to catch juice, remove the seeds. When have 2 cups of fruit and juice in a liquid measure, put in saucepan and add 1-1/2 cup water. Bring to boil and boil 15 minutes. Let stand overnight. Next day pulse pan contents in a food processor to a chunky consistency.

Ingredients for the Pie:
14-oz. can sweeten condensed milk
8-oz Cool Whip thawed
½ cup lemon juice, prefer fresh squeezed
2/3 cup calamondin puree
9-inch readymade graham or nut pie crust
Flowers for garnish (optional)
Preparation:
Beat condensed milk and cool whip together; add lemon juice and beat until thick. Add fruit puree. Pour filling into pie shell(s).
Chill for at least 2 hours.
Garnish before serving.

**Spinach Salad with Warm Maple Dressing**

Ingredients
Warm Maple Dressing

- 1/3 cup avocado oil
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 1/2 tablespoons pure maple syrup
- 3/4 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon honey
- 1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- Nasturtium leaves chopped fine salad
- 8 cups of spinach, stemmed and roughly chopped
- 1 cup of nasturtium flowers (whole or pull petals apart)
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced unpeeled Honeycrisp apple
- 1/4 cup fresh blueberries
- ¼ cup feta cheese, crumbled
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Black pepper, to taste
- ¼ cup nasturtium leaves finely chopped

Directions
Make the warm maple dressing:
Combine salad dressing ingredients in a lidded glass jar. Process with an immersion blender until well combined, about 30 seconds, or seal with lid, and shake vigorously. Dressing can be made up to 5 days in advance and stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator. Heat dressing just before serving.
Make the Salad:
Toss salad ingredients in a bowl. Set it aside.
Add dressing to skillet; heat over medium until it just begins to simmer, about 1 minute. Pour about 6 tablespoons of warm dressing over the salad and toss to coat. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve salad with remaining warm dressing, if desired.