



*Apples are frequently used to make vinegar.
Photo: Cheryl Alberts*

Beginnings of Vinegar: NHS News



Co-President Janet Lindsteadt

Once upon a time, every American cook made their own vinegar. They began with whatever fruit was ripe and abundant, most frequently apples. If they were very economical, they made vinegar from the fruit parings and cores. They fermented the fruit to make hard apple cider then covered the jug with cloth to keep out flies and dust, and waited. If they had an active vinegar mother (the whitish veil composed of acetobacters that grows on the surface of vinegar-in-the-making), or had a piece from a neighbor, they would add it as soon as the cider had finished its alcoholic fermentation. (Having a mother starts the vinegar fermentation more rapidly.)

After a few weeks, airborne bacteria would have begun a second fermentation in the jug -- from cider to vinegar. The cook would taste the new vinegar over a period of weeks and months. When it was strong enough to suit their taste, they poured it into bottles and corked them.

Summertime is for making herbal vinegars. I make small batches of vinegar so that its flavor is as fresh as possible. Rose petals, lemon verbena and sage each will make a wonderful vinegar. I like using a good quality champagne vinegar. I really like the idea of a vinegar tasting suggested by Jill Kuhel in her July herbal vinegar talk. More to look forward to in the wonder of herbs and how to use them.

What dreadful hot weather we have! It keeps me in a continual state of inelegance. – Jane Austen

Inside...

August 26 meeting agenda

p. 2

2023 Calendar

p. 2

Membership Spotlight

p. 3

Membership Corner

p. 3

Swallowtail caterpillars

p. 4

Regional Center herb garden

p. 4

Recipes

pp.5-6

August 26, 2023, NHS Agenda

Jill Kuhel Garden, 142 S. 40th St., Lincoln

9:30-10am Social Tea Time

10:00-10:10 Herb of the Month
Lemongrass, Rocky Bray



Photo: cooklist.com

10:10-10:30 The Magic of Herbs
& Spices, Cooking Around the World,

Cheryl Alberts Irwin
M'judra – lentil-based majadra is often called the poor man's dish, and is purported to be the porridge that caused the Biblical Esau to sell his birthright. The secret: caramelized onions – lots of them!



M'judra. Photo: evaslebanesecooking.com

10:30-10:40 Herbs 101
Harvesting Herbs, Jill Kuhel

10:40-Garden tour

11:30-Noon Social Time



Herbert's Herb Bits, Susan Hanlon

This makes a pesto that may be used fresh or frozen; dried is more pungent

- Basil
- Hints of mint, cloves, anise

Uses: Pesto (a thick sauce of basil, garlic, parmesan, olive oil), vegetable soup, tomato-mozzarella salad.

Tip: use fresh, or freeze (as pesto): dried more pungent.

2023 NHS Meeting Dates, Programs

Jan. 28 Soups/Sides Luncheon

Feb. 25 Herbal Love Charms, Spells, Potions

March 25 All about garden tools

April 22 Plant sale projects & program

May 6 Annual plant/bake sale, New Hope United Methodist Church

June 24 9 a.m. Tufa Pots project, 5300 Cooper Ave. (Susan Scott home)

July 8 2 p.m. Curious Roots Herbal Farm tour, Louisville **POSTPONED**

July 22 Gary Fehr, no-till gardening benefits

Aug. 26 Garden tour, Jill Kuhel home, 142 S. 40th St.

Sept. 23 Herbal sleep remedies, Alex Svoboda

Oct. 28 Member demonstrations

Nov. 18 Holiday centerpiece project

Dec. 2 Holiday Luncheon

Meetings at Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 8320 South St, Lincoln, NE, unless otherwise noted.

Tea is served before and during meetings. Bring your own tea mug! Members are invited to bring light snacks to share.

Member Spotlight



Name: Barb McGill, Bennet

How did you learn about NHS? I met Bonnie Bake at a talk at the Ferguson House; she said I might enjoy NHS, so I attended and joined that day.

Hobbies/passions? Enjoy sewing and gardening.

What is your favorite herb? I don't really have a favorite herb but enjoy them all. The problem is I can't seem to grow any of them successfully!

Tell us something about yourself: I am married to my husband Pat and have two daughters Laura and Shannon. We have twin grandsons that will be 10 in October. We recently celebrated our 50th anniversary. My husband was a teacher for 33 years and I was a police officer at UNL for 33 years. We're now both retired, living on a small acreage southeast of Lincoln and have a dog and a cat for pets.

Membership Corner, Kathy Dawes



Deb Weber



Lisa Ditson, Kara Hoskins

We had a great turnout at the July 22 meeting with more than 30 members attending.

Welcome to new members Deb Weber (previously a member), Lisa Ditson and Kara Hoskins (mother and daughter), all of Lincoln.

Be sure to come early before each business meeting for Social Tea Time from 9:30-10 a.m. Why not invite a friend who might be interested in joining? Don't forget to bring your cup!



<https://www.facebook.com/neherbalsociety>

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The purpose of NHS is to promote the culture, harvesting and uses of herbs, through a variety of activities to meet the interests of the membership.

Swallowtail caterpillars can be seen crawling on the parsley at the herbal garden at the Lincoln Regional Center in early August.

The garden is at the intersection of Arboretum Avenue and Woods Trail on the center campus, 801 W. Prospect Pl.

Photos: Ann Lif



Nebraska Herbal Society of Lincoln

To join the Nebraska Herbal Society- Lincoln please complete the information and mail your check to: Nebraska Herbal Society Attn: Treasurer P.O. Box 4493 Lincoln, NE 68504-4493

Membership levels: Individual \$10____ Family \$15____

Name _____

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May we have permission to publish your information in a membership directory? Yes _____ No _____

Come join us

To join the Nebraska Herbal Society, send your name, address, phone number and email address to: Nebraska Herbal Society, PO Box 4493, Lincoln, NE 68504-0493. Single Membership is \$10/year, family memberships are \$15/year. Checks are payable to Nebraska Herbal Society. The NHS newsletter strives for publication monthly. Articles received after the deadline, typically the 8th of the month, will appear in a later issue. Everyone is welcome to send articles and information to neherbalsociety@gmail.com Attention Cheryl. Please do not format articles or recipes.

Disclaimer Information in this newsletter is intended for educational purposes only and should not be considered as a recommendation or an endorsement of any particular medical or health treatment. Please consult with a healthcare provider before pursuing any herbal treatments.



Recipes by Marilyne Phelps from the July NHS meeting.

Arroz con gandules (Rice with Pigeon Peas)

For the demo I cooked over 7 cups of rice so I scaled back the following recipe to 1 cup of rice:

2-3 tablespoons of olive oil or half oil, half butter or all butter
1/3 or 1/4 cup sofrito (easy recipe at bottom)
2-3 tablespoons pimiento pepper, chopped (they come in small jars)
2-3 tablespoons green olives, chopped (may use capers instead)
1 or 2 full teaspoons of sazón
1 or 1 1/2 teaspoons of adobo
1 can of chopped tomatoes with green peppers, blended or as is
1 or 2 chicken bouillon cubes, crushed or “vegetarian better than bouillon”
2 bay leaves
1/2 can or 1 can of pigeon peas (black eyed peas or black beans)
1 cup of rice of your preference (I always use Ben’s formerly Uncle Ben’s)
Hot water according to amount suggested for your rice plus 1/2 cup more
Fresh black pepper and Kosher salt to taste



În a medium skillet add your choice of oil, butter or both. When hot add sofrito, sazón, adobo, tomatoes, olives, pimientos, bay leaves and crushed bouillon or “vegetarian better than bouillon.” Sauté 2-4 minutes.

Add desired amount of pigeon peas or substitution and make sure everything is coated in the sofrito/sazón/adobo mixture. Sauté for another 3-4 minutes.

Add rice and toast it, making sure that the rice is coated in the mixture. Sauté for 3-4 more minutes.

Add water amount recommended on your box/bag of rice plus 1/2 cup more, make sure that the liquid is completely covering the rice. If you think it is not enough, add a bit more.

Taste and add salt and black pepper to your liking.

Bring water to a rolling boil uncovered. Lower the heat to low and cover the rice. Cook for 15 or 20 minutes (time will depend on the rice that you are using so make sure you don’t overcook.

When all water has evaporated, remove from heat and leave to steam for 5-10 minutes. Uncover the rice and fluff or fold very gently. Taste for doneness and if you think that it still needs a bit more time to cook, cover tightly and leave it alone (off the heat) for at least 10 more minutes.

Note:

You can make this dish non-vegetarian (which is more traditional) by adding chorizo/sausage or ham steak, chopped into small squares. Add this at the very beginning when you melt your oil or butter. Sauté the small pieces of meat until golden brown before adding the sofrito and the rest of the ingredients.

Easy “sofrito”

1 red and 1 green bell peppers, roughly chopped
1 medium sweet onion, roughly chopped
Small bunch of fresh green onions
4-8 big garlic cloves (depends on how much you like garlic)
1/2 or 1 full bunch of cilantro with only the thick, bottom stems removed
(You can substitute parsley if not a big fan of cilantro)
1/4 cup of culantro (optional)
Salt and pepper to taste



Additions (when I made the sofrito I added all of these):

Olive oil (3 tablespoons)
Fresh squeezed lime juice (1 lime)
1 big tomato roughly chopped
Cumin (1-2 teaspoons)
Mexican oregano (1/2 - 1 tablespoon)
Achiote/annato (1-2 teaspoons)

Place all ingredients in a food processor and chop very fine.
Store in ice cube trays or small freezer bags (flat) in freezer.

Plátanos fritos (Fried Plantains)

Ingredients:

Very ripe plantains (they will have some dark/black spots)
Oil or a combination of oil & butter or only butter



Peel plantains, slice in half and cut slices lengthwise

Heat oil or butter (enough to cover bottom) and sauté/fry plantains on both sides until golden brown.

Serve with crema or make your own by mixing sour cream with half-and-half and a little salt. Mix very well. The consistency should not be as thick as sour cream, it should be a bit more runny.

[The amounts of the ingredients for sazón and adobo vary from person to person. When I make new batches, my amounts vary since I usually do not follow a strict recipe. My Aunt Sergia’s recipe, for example, was 1 tablespoon of each ingredient. My mom favoured cumin, thyme, bay leaves, oregano, onion and annatto so she doubled those ingredients.]

Sazón

Achiote(annatto)	2 1/2 tablespoons
Cumin	2 tablespoons
Coriander	1 tablespoon
Oregano	1 1/2 tablespoons
Garlic	2 tablespoons
Onion	2 tablespoon
Salt	1 1/2 teaspoons/to taste
Black pepper	1 tablespoon

Adobo

Turmeric	1/2 tablespoon
Oregano	1/2 tablespoon
Cumin	1/2 teaspoon
Bay leaf	1 leaf
Thyme	1 tablespoon
Paprika	2 teaspoons
Garlic	2 tablespoons
Onion	2 tablespoons
Salt	1 1/2 teaspoons/to taste
Black pepper	1 tablespoon