



The 2023 Lincoln Regional Center Herb Garden attracts insects, which pollinate the world's food supply and most flowering plants. More about the garden on page 7. Photo: Ann Lif

Inside...

Membership Spotlight

p. 3

Recipes

p. 4-6

Regional Center Herb Garden

p. 7

Invaluable Pollinators Need Places to Live, Work, Play

Co-president Janet Lindsteadt

The Harvest Moon the end of September was a spectacular sight to behold. We are only able to harvest though due to our native pollinators. Even one single native plant or tree that supports bees, butterflies and other pollinators can make a difference in our gardens. Are you noticing fewer butterflies and bees in your own backyard? The populations of native bees, butterflies, and other insect pollinators has been declining for several decades. I have some common milkweed in my garden, and I have seen fewer and fewer caterpillars.



About three-fourths of all flowering plants are pollinated by insects, as well as the crops that produce much of the world's food supply. Without insects, the birds, fish and small mammals that depend on them decline; if they decline, the entire food web and local ecosystem is affected. So, by planting one native flower, tree or pollinator host plant (and hopefully many more than just one) provides pollinator nesting sites and creates refuge from pesticides. Many people find insects annoying, but we should really start thinking about the fact that we can't survive without them. Native

bees are the most important pollinators in the ecosystem. Mason bees and leafcutter bees are most critical to growing food and flowers. Making holes in a dead tree for a bee house and planting herbs such as sage, thyme, borage, lavender, chives, dill, basil, oregano, rosemary and mint will draw in pollinating insects, including flies, beetles, moths and butterflies.

Avoid cutting down everything in the fall because dead material and hollow stems are perfect homes for pollinators and beneficial insects. And, in the "spring clean" timeframe wait until temperatures have reached 50 degrees, allowing time for the overwintering of the bees and butterflies. If you notice any bees still nesting, move them to a corner of your property to give bees a few more weeks to emerge on their own. Nebraska Statewide Arboretum even has "Leave the Leaves" signs available for purchase to help educate the importance of leaving the leaves for winter habitat for our insect friends.

We need to work with Nature, not against it.

"Always do your best. What you plant now, you will harvest later." OG Mandino

October 28, 2023, NHS Agenda

Aldersgate United Methodist Church
8320 South St.

9:30-10 a.m. Social tea time

10-10:20 a.m. business meeting

President: Janet Lindsteadt, Jill Kuhel
Secretary: Pam Knott
Treasurer: Rocky Bray
Program: Amber Jones, Jenni Dougherty
Newsletter: Cheryl Alberts
Membership: Ann Lif, Kathy Dawes
Plant Sale: Janet Buck
Herb Garden at the Regional Center: Ann Lif, Janet Buck, Denise Wiemer, Pam Wealand, Kathy Dawes

10:20-10:30 Herb of the Month

Lemon thyme, Joan Leitner

10:30-10:50 The Magic of Herbs & Spices, Cooking Around the World, Marilyne Phelps

10:50-11:15 Program

Member Demonstrations

11:30 -Noon Social Time

Herbert's Herb Bits, Susan Hanlon

How to Store Dried Spices

1. Be sure containers are airtight. Moisture can cause ground spices to cake.
2. Keep your spice shelf away from strong direct light, especially if your spices are packed in clear jars.
3. Keep spices away from all heat sources, but still close to where you prepare food.



Membership Corner

Co-chairs Ann Lif and Kathy Dawes

We had a very good turnout at the Sept. 23 meeting. Joining the NHS during the month of September was Maggie Fritz and Ben Patton, both of Lincoln. Welcome to NHS!

Everyone, please join us for Social Tea Time from 9:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. before each meeting.



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, 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
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.



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

Member Spotlight



Name: Joan Leitner

How did you learn about NHS? Marilynne Phelps, on an OLLI bus tour.

What is your favorite herb? Why? Basil, I like Italian food.

Hobbies/passions: I have a pollinator garden, mostly hardy perennials. Also, vegetables in pots. New this year have been growing beets in pots; they are fast-growing and have pretty, veined leaves. I also usher at the Lied Center for Performing Arts, have been a TOPS member for 20 years and belong to OLLI.

Please tell us something you'd like us to know about you: I do artwork, having painted acrylics, done stained glass, thrown pots and drawn with pencil. I also owned a small dress shop in Lincoln.

Feel free to tell us about family, pets, etc.: I have two grown children and four grandchildren. During COVID I got two parakeets, Charlie and Sweetie. It's fun to watch the two interact.

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.

2023 NHS Officers, Board Members

Co-Presidents

Jill Kuhel
Janet Lindsteadt

Vice-Presidents

Amber Jones
Jenni Dougherty

Secretary

Pam Knott

Treasurer

Rocky Bray

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Marilynne Phelps

Newsletter

Cheryl Alberts Irwin

Membership

Ann Lif
Kathy Dawes

Plant Sale

Janet Buck

Contact:

neherbalsociety@gmail.com

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.

Nebraska Herbal Society of Lincoln



To join the Nebraska Herbal Society of 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 _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____ (important to include for newsletter)

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



Recipes, Marilyne Phelps

Pesto Lasagna with Green Beans and Potatoes

- 1 package of lasagna noodles boiled according to package directions. After draining & letting the noodles cool a bit, pour some olive oil in your hands and rub all the noodles so that they do not stick together
- 5 big potatoes, cut into rounds and sautéed (in batches) in olive oil until tender & golden. Drain on paper towels.
- 1 pound green beans boiled in salted water and then sautéed in a little butter (add salt & pepper if needed)
- 1- 1 1/2 cups Parmigiano Reggiano, grated
- 1/2-3/4 pound of Provolone cheese roughly torn into pieces
- Bechamel Sauce (recipe below)
- Basil pesto



Photo: Amber Jones

Bechamel Sauce

3 cups of hot whole milk, do NOT boil
5 1/2 tablespoons of unsalted butter
6 tablespoons of all purpose flour

Salt and pepper to taste
Freshly grated nutmeg

In a small pan melt the unsalted butter over low heat.

Add the flour and beat vigorously with a whisk making sure there are no lumps.

Continue to beat until it turns a golden color and is smooth.

Take the pan off the heat and slowly pour the hot milk into the mixture beating vigorously with the whisk. Bring the pan back to the heat (still on low) and add salt, pepper and the freshly grated nutmeg (all to taste). Continue whisking until the Bechamel thickens and when a spoon is inserted in the sauce it coats the back and does not slough off. Taste and add more salt, pepper and grated nutmeg if necessary. Set aside. Before you assemble the lasagna, mix the Bechamel and Pesto thoroughly.

Assembling the Lasagna

Get all ingredients ready to assemble the lasagna.

In a 9 X 13 pan spread a thin layer of the Bechamel/Pesto sauce.

Add enough lasagna noodles to cover the pan.

Spread another layer of Bechamel/Pesto sauce.

Sprinkle 3-4 tablespoons of grated Parmigiano.

Spread pieces of the Provolone cheese so that all areas have some cheese.

Spread rounds of potatoes all around.

Spread pieces of green beans all around.

Cover with lasagna noodles and begin the layering process once again.

Continue to layer until you use up the ingredients

End with lasagna noodles covered with the Bechamel/Pesto sauce and the cheeses.

Bake covered with aluminum in a 350-degree oven for about 30 minutes or until you see the lasagna bubbling. Uncover the lasagna, raise the oven temperature to 375-385 degrees and bake for another 6 minutes or until the top of the lasagna is golden.

Cool for 10 minutes before slicing into squares.

Pesto alla Genovese - Official recipe of the Consorzio Pesto Genovese (all ingredients should be DOP)

50 grams Genovese basil (60-65 leaves)	30 grams (2 Tbls) Pecorino Fiore Sardo
1/2 cup of Ligurian extra virgin olive oil	2 garlic cloves, peeled (1 minced mine)
70 grams (3/4 cup) of Parmigiano Reggiano	15 grams (1 Tbls) Italian pine nuts
4-5 grains of coarse salt (if making in a mortar or food processor use a bit of regular salt)	
Ice	

Note: I got as close as I could to the Consorzio's very strict rules about the sourcing of the ingredients: the Parmigiano, the Pecorino and the olive oil were imported from Italy.

1. Put the blades and bowl of the food processor in the refrigerator for 10-15 minutes until very cold.
2. Meantime prepare the basil leaves - take them off the stems and wash them under cold running water. Place them in a large bowl with plenty of ice for 4 minutes.
3. Take the leaves out of the bowl and place them on a big kitchen towel. Dry them very well.
4. Place the dried leaves in the cold food processor along with the garlic, pine nuts and grated Parmigiano Reggiano.
5. Chop the ingredients coarsely for just a few seconds. Add salt and the Pecorino Fiore Sardo (in small pieces or grated). Chop/blend for 1 minute.
6. Now, with the food processor on, add the Ligurian extra virgin olive oil in a steady trickle. Blend for 5 minutes or until you have a very creamy pesto. Do not let the pesto get warm, so work quickly. Maintain the food processor on low and stop at intervals to keep the pesto cool.

Storage: Store the pesto in the refrigerator, in an airtight container, for up to 5 days. Cover the pesto in a layer of extra olive oil.

If you use a mortar & pestle: Never pound the leaves or use force. Gently rotate the pestle along the walls of the mortar, massaging the leaves.

Garlic: The quantity of garlic can be decreased or increased according to taste.

Nuts: Walnuts can be tolerated as a replacement for Italian pine nuts or as an addition to the pine nuts. Any other ingredients must be avoided.

Pickled Red Onion

1 big red onion
red wine vinegar
salt

Cut red onion into thin rings. Place rings in a bowl full of very cold water, soak for 1/2 hour.

Drain onions, dry the bowl and put the onion rings back in.

Pour enough red wine vinegar so that there is about a 1/4 inch - 1/2 inch at the bottom of bowl.

Sprinkle a bit of salt on the onions; and black pepper for spice if desired.

Mix the onion rings with the red wine vinegar, ensuring everything is wet.

Every half hour turn onions, mixing well. Repeat this 3-4 more times until the onions have the desired "pickled taste." The longer they soak the stronger the taste. Drain onions when they are pickled to your taste or leave them in the red wine.

Store in a closed container in the refrigerator.



Courtesy photo

Salad

- 2-3 potatoes cut into small/medium chunks
- 1-2 cups green beans split in half
- 4-5 tomatoes, roughly cut into small/medium chunks
- 2-3 hard boiled eggs, roughly cut into small/medium chunks
- 1 English cucumber, cut into rounds (optional, not typical)
- 1 cup of green olives and/or black olives
- Salt and pepper to taste
- A few anchovies roughly cut (optional. I did not use).



Photo: Amber Jones

Boil green beans in salted water until desired doneness, drain, set aside.
Do the same with the potatoes, making sure they don't get mushy.
Arrange all the ingredients on a flat platter, sprinkle salt and pepper to taste over all.
Pour some of the olive oil dressing on top (recipes below).
Sprinkle small, torn pieces of fresh basil on the salad. (lemon basil is delicious here).
Arrange pickled onions on top, around the edge of the platter or serve them separately.

Dressings

1. Mix your favorite vinegar, extra virgin olive oil, salt, pepper
OR
2. Thoroughly mix Balsamic vinegar, extra virgin olive oil, salt, pepper and oregano; pour over salad (I used Trader Joe's Aceto Balsamico di Modena)



September NHS Minutes, Pam Knott

The meeting at Aldergate Church was called to order at 10 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 23. Rocky Bray gave us the treasurer's report, with a balance of \$7,569.08. We saw the form that has been/will be used to request reimbursements. Ann Lif asked that members let her know if they needed a new name tag. At least two new members joined our organization.



Photos: Amber Jones

Kathy Cartier will give the next member presentation. Jenni Doherty gave the herb presentation on elderberry. It was very informative and she had an elderberry syrup for us to try.

Marilyne Phelps told us all about pasta and pesto. She made a delicious lasagna with potatoes and green beans that was amazing.

Herbalist Alex Svoboda gave a presentation on herbal sleep remedies. It was very informative and she had product for us to buy.

To end the meeting we learned about tinctures from Sharon Ohmberger of Firth, and were able to sample some.





Regional Center Garden Update Fall 2023, Ann Lif

The 2023 Lincoln Regional Center Herb Garden was a success! We had positive feedback from staff and patients who enjoyed all the beauty and buzzing activity around the flowering plants.

A big THANK YOU, to the faithful volunteers who worked on the garden every week from April through the end of October: Ann Lif, Pam Wealand, Kathy Dawes, Denise Weimer and Janet Buck.



Photos: Ann Lif

If you would like to volunteer next year, please contact me and I will provide you details about our garden tending.

The team also wishes to thank all the members who donated plants to make this possible. For 2024, would you be willing to start some seeds this winter and donate a few plants for the garden?

Following is a list of plants we would like: If you do start seed for us, contact me so I know who is growing what: neherbalsociety@gmail.com Attn: Ann Lif

Lemongrass- 2 plants
Chamomile- 2 plants
Lambs ear- 5 plants
Hyacinth vine- 1 plant

Basil- 2 plants
Rosemary- 3 plants
Parsley- 2 plants
Winter savory- 2 plants

Coriander- 1 plant
Sweet marjoram- 2 plants