



**NEWSLETTER  
NUMBER 4 August/Sept. 2020**

AT LAST – after a break of 4 months

The Next Meeting will be on August 3rd.  
at 7.30 pm

We look forward to seeing you all again,  
at the Findon Community Centre,  
222 Findon Rd, Findon, at 7.30pm for an 8.00pm start.

The guest Speaker is Alfred Senar from Bunnings  
Prospect, who will be talking about pruning roses.

We shall not be having herbal tea or supper but hope  
that too, may be soon possible.

HERB SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED

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Website: [www.herbsocietysa.com.au](http://www.herbsocietysa.com.au)

Facebook: Public Group, The Herb Society of South Australia

**OFFICERS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

President:	Sandra Stuart
Vice President:	Anthony Medcalf
Secretary:	Marianne Piercy
Treasurer:	Kath Coombs
Public Officer:	Anthony Medcalf
Committee:	Suzanne Uppill
John Thompson	Dot Rushton

The membership year begins from 1st July this year to 30th June next. Members who have not renewed their Membership fees by the 1st October will cease to be a Member of the Society.

Fees are payable to the Membership Secretary at meetings or posted to the Secretary at the Society address, or by Electronic Funds Transfer.

Bank Details: BSB 105 142, Bank SA: Account Number 537176940  
Single \$12, Single Concession \$10,  
Family \$17, Family Concession \$14.50, Group \$12

The Herb Society meets on the first Monday of each month from February to December (no meeting in January). Located in the Findon Community Centre, 222 Findon Rd, Findon, at 7.30pm for an 8.00pm start.

Members can borrow newsletters and use the library, sell and purchase plants, seeds, books and other herbal items. Visitors are most welcome. Basket supper is served at the conclusion of the meeting.

Disclaimer: The information contained in “Herb Thymes” is for general interest only. The views expressed may not necessarily be those of the Editor or The Society. The Herb Society of SA Inc. accepts no responsibility for any inaccuracy or in the use of any herb/s by any individual. For the medicinal use of herbs, The Society recommends the use of a suitably qualified practitioner.

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## Herb Thymes

- ‘Our Newsletter’ for trips, events and a calendar of regular meetings.
- A medium to keep in touch and to motivate members to grow and use their herbs.
- To maintain regular contact with members

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF POSTAL ADDRESS ON PAGE 2.

Discussion to move Herb Times to a Digital Newsletter

HERB THYMES – In Digital:

REASONS:

- Low impact on the environment.
- Instantly Available and easily receivable.
- Some members have nominated to access the Herb Thymes through our website [www.herbsocietysa.com.au](http://www.herbsocietysa.com.au)

HERB THYMES – Printed:

(for those who wish to continue with printed version).

REASONS:

- A tactile way of keeping in touch.
- 4 to 5 pages of black print, no colour or gloss paper. Totally and easily compostable.
- Much nicer to receive in the post than bills.
- A good read and feed for compost worms.
- Keeps a postie in a job.

Unless you contact Sandra Stuart on 8445 1626 or email [sandrastuart.g@gmail.com](mailto:sandrastuart.g@gmail.com) your newsletter will be posted to you.



Hello Herb lovers, I gathered articles for this edition of Herb Thymes, tended my garden and tried new herb recipes whilst Covid 19 hovered in the background; wondering when life would return to normal.

Now Our general meetings are to resume and Propagation day Sunday 13th September is back on the Calendar. Halleluiaah!

On page 15, is a summary of the committee meeting minute's, hosted by John Thompson on Zoom. They show plans for Herb Day on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October well underway.

Take time to go to our website [www.herbsocietysa.com.au](http://www.herbsocietysa.com.au)

John Thompson continues to add additional photos and text making it an interesting site to browse at any time.

Sandra and the committee would love to see you all at the August meeting.

Happy gardening

Chris Houweling

Contact me on 8682 6752 or mobile 0408 023 524.

or at [medley0246@gmail.com](mailto:medley0246@gmail.com)

Handwritten letters and interesting articles cut from magazines may be sent to 12 Hamp St. Port Lincoln 5606

Next edition deadline for Herb Thymes is July 18<sup>th</sup>. 2020.

Be careful when using common names, they can be deceiving, e.g. we loosely use the name 'Oregano' but which species varieties do we mean. Some species are quite peppery e.g. *O. vulgare/hirtum* and *O. vulgare* sometimes called Italian is mild and sweet in comparison.

## OREGANO

Family Lamiaceae	Genus <i>origanum</i>
Species <i>vulgare</i>	Subspecies <i>hirtum</i> .
Common name	Greek Oregano.

### DESCRIPTION:

Oregano is a complex group of species in the Mint family Lamiaceae.

It is closely related to marjoram and is sometimes called wild or pot marjoram. It has purple/lilac/white flowers and spade like olive green leaves.



Many subspecies, strains of oregano have evolved and been developed by man over the years to produce spicy, astringent to complicated sweet and astringent flavours.

### DISTRIBUTION:

Native to temperate Western and Southwestern Eurasia and the Mediterranean region. It is cultivated and grown all over Australia.

### PROPAGATION:

Seeds are easily germinated in a warm sunny spot after last frosts or very cold spells. Oregano seeds usually germinate within about a week or so, when about 6 ins(15 cm.) tall, thin the seedlings out but wait until spring before planting in the garden and leaving them to defend for themselves. Choose a sunny spot in well-drained soil, alkaline soil is okay.

Established plants do not require much attention, they are drought-tolerant and only need watering during excessively dry periods. Oregano doesn't need to be fertilized; these hardy plants can take care of themselves.

For best flavour and a compact growth, pinch out flower buds as they begin to bloom (use in the kitchen).

#### PROPERTIES:

Constituents: Alkaloids – Bitter Principles – Tannic Acid –Fumaric Acid – Mucilage – Resin –and Potassium.

#### USES:

Fresh oregano is a great antibacterial agent. It has phytonutrients (thymol and carvacrol), which fight infections such as staph. It's loaded with antioxidants that help prevent cell damage, and it's an excellent source of fibre, vitamin K, manganese, iron, vitamin E, tryptophan and calcium. Ref webmd.com

#### CULINARY:

Oregano is a well-loved cooking herb. It is used in Italian cooking and known by most children as "the pizza herb". It also makes an appearance in many Mexican and Spanish dishes and can be used to add flavour to almost any food.

Oregano is particularly useful in any tomato-based dish.

It is perfect for seasoning pasta dishes and most foods that contain olive oil.

Pair oregano with basil, garlic, onion, or thyme.

Whole sprigs of oregano and rosemary can be placed in steamer water for seafood along with a few large leaves of basil. It gives shrimp a lovely herbal flavour.

You can even add oregano to canned soups for a little extra flavour during lunch or on one of those lazy dinner nights. Cut fresh sprigs rinse and pat dry, before stripping the leaves from the stem. Chop the leaves finely before adding them to the dish.

Dried oregano can be added to any dish as well. Be sure to crush it between your hands first to make the pieces very fine.

## VARIETES:

L. *Origanum vulgare* or Italian Oregano was used in early times as a strewing herb when earth floors were common.

To use as flavouring for ale; as a red and purple dye. It was supposed to signify happiness, the Greeks and Romans weaved garlands of wild marjoram for betrothed couples to wear and planting it on graves to ensure happiness in the life to come.

Marjoram - *Origanum majorana* is a somewhat cold-sensitive perennial herb or undershrub with sweet pine and citrus flavours. In some Middle Eastern countries, marjoram is synonymous with oregano, and there the names sweet marjoram and knotted marjoram are used to distinguish it from other plants of the genus *Origanum*. It is also called pot marjoram, although this name is also used for other cultivated species of *Origanum*.

(editor – the mix of common names used I find most confusing).

## LIQUID FERTILISERS (Jon Lamb)

Use of in winter:

There is little point in applying animal manure or powdered fertiliser to boost plant growth at the moment – the ground is too cold.

If you need to stimulate winter-growing vegetables and flowering annuals, try spraying their leaves with a liquid or soluble fertiliser, as it is absorbed directly into the plants' leaves.

A liquid seaweed product can be added, as it will increase your plants' tolerance to cold.

At this time of the year organic fertiliser is great for improving soil health.

## REVIEW: “THE SEED COLLECTION”

Not a book but an ‘Online Seed Store’ that has an amazing collection of Heirloom herb seeds, open pollinated, non-hybrid and non-GMO seeds with no chemical treatments.

The seeds come in minimalistic pkts at small prices. (no fancy coloured pkts).

My first order of 6 pkts came in a normal DL Envelope at a cost of \$11 incl. freight and handling. They took 1 week from Vic. Germination was vg and fast.

My second order included, among other things a slug and snail trap which I’ve found also caught earwigs and millipedes. (used suggested bait of yeast in a little water). I’m rapt!

I’ve yet to place my third order which will include valerian seeds.

Their website and newsletter are well written and makes an interesting read.

The Seed Collection is an Australian owned and operated business based in Ferntree Gully, Victoria. They specialise in: Herb, vegetable and flower seeds.

by Chris Houweling

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REMINDER: Time to put out your ‘DO NOT DISTURB’ sign on your dormant plants.

e.g. Comfrey, Stevia, Echinacea, Elecampane (*Inula helinium*), and the often-forgotten biennial Foxglove.

## FOXGLOVE PLANTS:

Foxglove plants are biennials or short-lived perennials. Oftentimes, because of their short life span, foxgloves are planted in succession.



Biennial foxglove usually does not bloom well in the first year. During its second year, it blooms beautifully, then set seeds and dies. True perennial foxglove, like *Digitalis mertonensis*, *D. obscura*, and *D. parviflora* may flower each year but they still only live a few short years. However, they all leave behind their seeds to carry on their beautiful legacy in the garden.

It is very important to note that foxglove is a toxic plant. Before doing anything with foxglove, be sure you are wearing gloves. While working with foxgloves, be careful not to put your gloved hands on your face or any other bare skin. After handling the plant, wash your gloves, hands, clothes and tools. Keep foxglove out of gardens that are frequented by children or pets.

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## POTAGER's GARDEN:

A type herb garden that is not often spoken about is a “Potager Garden” but it could also be easily called a Permaculture garden. All in all, an informal garden to be enjoyed by all. (pronunciation: puh ta zhay)

It's a garden that combines both edible and ornamental plants; a vegetable garden that is utilitarian in nature but designed with beauty in mind; much like an English kitchen garden, but often formal and symmetrically designed in the French fashion.

Potager gardens were invented in France as ornamental kitchen gardens. They combine fruit and veg crops with flowers and herbs to enhance the beauty of the space. ... The design is carefully thought out,

often in the traditional four-bed layout for easy crop rotation. However, modern potager gardens can be more free form

Put simply a garden plot which follows the principles of garden design to create an area which is ornamental and productive. Rhythm, line, colour and texture needs to be balanced with a focal point to bring the design together.

## MAINTAINING THE POTAGER YEAR-ROUND

Harvesting vegetables without destroying planting patterns is a challenge in a formal potager garden.

These techniques can help:

- Edge plots with contrasting plants, including herbs and flowers, which will mask bare spots as the season progresses.
- Choose varieties in keeping with the scale of the garden. Keep free-ranging perennials in bounds with buried strips of metal or plastic. Catmint, lettuce, Marigolds, winter savoury, Strawberries., Lamb's ears.
- After harvesting, use quick fillers such as chervil or cut-and-come-again salad greens. Many of the latter self-sow and can be moved easily to fill gaps when required. Alyssum, Basil, Parsley, Chives, lavender and the many varieties of sage.

REF: Brooklyn Botanic Gardens.

## NETTLES:

In Hans Christian Andersen's story 'The Wild Swans

*The princesses had to weave coats of mail for the 11 swans from tough nettle fibres, Since early times the people of Eastern Europe believed in the magic power of nettles as protection against thunder and witches and demons of all kinds. In the Balkans, nettles were applied as a local anaesthetic in cottage surgery.*

Nettles were also used for many other bizarre practises.

Nettles are still popular as a natural dye but I doubt if they are still used to manufacture technical chlorophylls to colour fats, oils, soaps and foodstuff.

## RECIPES:

### NETTLE SOUP



With gloves on, cut with scissors enough nettles to fill a 2-litre bowl loosely not packed. On a wooden board chop nettles finely as you would any herb or throw in blender, don't over process.

Sauté a finely sliced onion in butter until soft then add nettles, cook a further few minutes. Add 600mls of water and bring to the boil, add 1 pkt of chicken noodle soup cook for 20mins, reduce heat stir in 300 mls of milk, salt, pepper and nutmeg.

N.B. Do not use nettles towards end of winter as they are then tough and fibrous.

### NETTLE AND OATMEAL STUFFING FOR CHICKEN.

½ colander of nettle tops.  
3 rashers of bacon.  
1 cup of oatmeal  
1 level teaspoon of marjoram  
1 level teaspoon of tarragon  
salt, pepper,  
1 large clove of garlic.  
2 tbsps. of butter.

Remove coarse stems from nettles and chop tops finely.

Dice bacon and fry gently until it starts to brown.

Put the chopped nettles, bacon and any fat from the pan into a large bowl, add oatmeal, dried herbs, a good pinch of salt and lots of freshly ground pepper.

Crush the garlic with salt and stir into the other ingredients. with a fork, mix together very thoroughly.

Melt the butter and stir in.

Cram the mixture into the chicken and roast as usual.

REF: A Country Harvest by Pamela Michael 1980.

#### MEETINGS GENERAL OUTLINE:

A concise outline of points of interest to those who did not attend the following meetings. The full minutes are available at General meetings.

#### MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20/4/20

Nomination: “That Christine Houweling be accepted as a committee member” Moved/Seconded: Sandra/Kath.

TRIPS: Our trip to St Bede’s Community Garden has been cancelled, but Ollie Black will be happy to rearrange it at a future date.

#### GENERAL BUSINESS:

National Herb Conference:

South Australia’s National Herb Conference date to be decided, but plans to continue

September propagating - pending.

**NEXT GENERAL MEETING:**

- to be decided. No meeting will be held in May.

**MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15/6/20**

**GROUP REPORTS:**

**SALVIA GARDENING GROUP:**

Fullarton Park Community Centre is now open and the Spring Salvia Sale will probably be okay for October, but to be confirmed.

Sandra to advise Robyn Powell and Lorraine Thompson.

**SEED SAVERS GROUP:**

Stripped lavender

May make lemon verbena bags for Herb Day, but uncertain whether it will be held this year.

Ilsa is ordering seeds

Next meeting will be on Thursday 2nd July.

**HERB THYMES:**

John and Chris have uploaded issues of Herb Thymes for 2019 and 2020 to the website.

They will also arrange for electronic copies to be available to email to members.

Chris to put a notice in the Herb Thymes asking members to advise us whether they would prefer to receive a hard copy, or either of these alternatives.

**HERB DAY:**

Fullarton Park Community Centre is yet to confirm whether we can hold Herb Day this year.

The raffle will be run regardless of this. Lijan has done the raffle books, and they can be sent out with Herb Thymes.

The retractable hose will be the first prize, but possibilities are being followed up for other prizes.

The kitchen may not be available for hot food, so it was decided to provide only cakes and biscuits, tea and coffee.

#### GENERAL BUSINESS:

Any meetings or events held by the Herb Society are required to have an individual COVID-Safe plan.

It was decided that the AGM would be held at the August general meeting.

Our Post Office box to be moved to Woodville next year. Sandra to enquire.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2020:

### AUGUST:

Monday 3rd General Meeting 7.30pm

Guest Speaker: Alfred Senar from Bunnings Prospect, who will be talking about pruning roses.

Thursday August 6th 7.30pm to 9.30pm Seed Group

### SEPTEMBER:

Monday 7th General meeting 7.30pm.

Sun 13th Sept. propagating Findon 2-4pm

Propagation Day will be on Sunday 13th September  
2-4 pm Findon Community Centre. 22 Findon Road,  
Findon. Free admission and parking.

Bring your secateurs. Pots, potting soil will be provided.  
Cuttings will be chosen and taken from our garden at the  
rear of the Findon Community centre.

### OCTOBER:

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> General meeting 7.30pm.

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> 8.30 to noon, Spring Salvia Day. Fullarton Park Community Centre, 411 Fullarton Rd.