

TOUCHSTONES VOLUME I

MIDSUMMER

2026



NOTICE | GATHER | REMEMBER

FROM THE EDITOR

The clary sage on the cover volunteered itself outside my studio door this spring.

I didn't plant it there. I didn't water it. And I certainly didn't choose the location.

It simply appeared and decided that was where it belonged.

The older I get, the more I appreciate things like that.

The unexpected visitors.

The plants that choose their own homes.

The wrens that return to the same porch cushion every year.

The hummingbird that buzzes past your ear while you're watering the garden.

The first tomato.

The last firefly.

The small moments that quietly become part of a season.

Touchstones was born from that idea.

Not from a business plan or a content calendar, but from a growing desire to pay closer attention to the things that make life feel like *life*.

The objects and the places.

The sounds and the rituals.

The ordinary moments we carry with us long after the season has passed.

This first issue, **Midsummer**, is a collection of those moments.

Some gathered from my garden.

Some gathered from memory.

Some gathered from a month-long project called 30 Days of Summer Magic.

Together, they form a snapshot of June from my little corner of Virginia.

Thank you for spending a few moments here.

I hope it reminds you of your own touchstones.

Deb Schaffer

Enchanted Botanicals

CLARY SAGE
Salvia sclarea



THE CLARY SAGE

Last spring, a plant appeared outside my studio door.

I didn't remember planting it.

In fact, I was fairly certain I hadn't.

My plant identification app suggested it was Mountain Sage. Or maybe something else entirely. I don't remember now.

What I do remember is deciding to leave it alone.

It wasn't in the way.

It wasn't poison ivy.

And I was curious.

So it stayed.

For most of that first year, it wasn't particularly impressive. Just a cluster of leaves quietly minding its own business while more obvious flowers stole the show.

Then winter came.

And went.

This spring, it returned.

Larger. Stronger. More determined.

By early summer, it was impossible to ignore.

The leaves stretched wider. The stems grew taller. Week by week, it climbed higher until one morning I realized it was nearly as tall as I am.

Then the flowers arrived.

Soft pink spires covered in blossoms that seemed to glow in the morning light.

Not Mountain Sage after all.

Clary Sage.

A biennial.

A plant that spends its first year preparing for a second-year performance.

I love that.

We live in a world that expects everything to bloom immediately.

We're supposed to know exactly who we are. Exactly where we're going. And exactly what we're meant to become.

And if possible, we'd like the results by Tuesday.

The clary sage had other ideas.

Its first year was spent growing roots.

Gathering strength.

Becoming itself.

Only later did it reveal what it had been working toward all along.

I think people are often the same way.

Sometimes we're misunderstood.

Sometimes we're mislabeled.

Sometimes we're still becoming.

From the outside, it can look like nothing much is happening.

But growth has never been limited to what can be seen above ground.

The clary sage outside my studio door reminds me of that every morning.

Not everything blooms on schedule. Not everything reveals itself immediately.

Sometimes the most beautiful things are the ones we almost pulled out before we knew what they were.

THE GRASSHOPPER

Every summer needs a narrator.

This year, ours happened to be a grasshopper.

He appeared quietly during the **30 Days of Summer Magic** project, offering small observations about thunderstorms, popsicles, tomato bandits, screen doors, coolers, volunteer flowers, and all the wonderfully ordinary things that make June feel like June.

He's a gentle reminder that a season isn't made up of vacations and milestones.

It's made up of little rituals.

Opening the windows in the morning.

Watering the garden before it gets too hot.

Watching for fireflies.

Listening for thunder.

Carrying a cooler that somehow feels lighter on the way to the beach than it does coming home.

Those are the moments that become our touchstones.

The grasshopper simply reminds us to notice them.



SUMMER MAGIC

entry 03

Maybe magic
is just knowing
how to
make a place feel
like
someone's waiting
for you there.

UNTIL NEXT TIME...

Thank you for spending a little time in my garden, my studio, and my corner of Virginia.

I hope this small excerpt reminded you to notice the things that often go unnoticed.

The flower that volunteered.

The screen door that still squeaks.

The first tomato.

The last firefly.

The ordinary moments that quietly become part of who we are.

This is only a glimpse of ***Touchstones: Midsummer 2026***.

The complete edition gathers together the stories, photographs, field notes, and seasonal observations that grew from a month of paying attention.

Until then...

Notice.

Gather.

Remember.

With love,

Deb

Enchanted Botanicals