

# The Spade & The Hoe ©

Volume 3 Issue 12

December 2005

The December Meeting will be replaced by our annual holiday dinner on the eighth. This year it will be held again at Gusto Italiano Ristorante in Carillon Square on Waukegan Road. We will meet at 6:30 P.M. for socializing before dinner. Cash bar, and everyone will be able to order off the menu. See you there!

## **The Flower Family Album - Leguminosae**

One of the largest families having more than 7,000 species including trees, vines, and herbs, the peas are true pods. Some members self-pollinate but others rely on bees. Of great horticultural interest is the fact that, together with certain soil bacteria, collect nitrogen from the air and turn it into compounds that plants use for food. Its members include baptisia, lupine, bluebonnet, peanut (which pushes its yellow flowers under ground to make the pods, locoweed, and thermopsis. (See page 2)

-The Flower Family Album By Helen Field Fischer and Gretchen Marshbarger

**The November meeting** was a craft evening held in Joan Ruehrmund's rec room, and she provided the refreshments, too. Holly Jansen guided us in the art of making beautiful Thanksgiving centerpieces. All of us went home happy with our creations. Thank you so very much, Holly and Joan!

## **Dues are Due!**

It's that time of year again as our year runs January to December. Dues will remain the same as this year: single dues = \$30, couples dues = \$35. Kindly mail your dues in to our treasurer Joan at 2745 Karen Ln., Glenview 60025 before you forget, or hand her your check at the dinner. Your dues go towards paying for special speakers, Park Center room rentals, and to subsidize certain events. Plus, you get to meet with some truly special gardeners, our members! All in all, it's quite a bargain.

## **Through the Garden Gate**

Finally the garden has been put to sleep for the winter. The leaves have all been shredded twice into small pieces, just perfect for mulching the beds. The pots are cleaned and put away, hoses drained and with sprinklers brought into the garage. Delicate lawn ornaments brought in also. Windows washed and tightly closed. Now to concentrate on inside things, like quilting, reading, cleaning, reading, shopping, and reading. At least until the snow falls, then there's shoveling and taking walks in the fresh snow. Now is a good time to begin reading those gardening books you didn't have time for before, and planning what to do with the garden next year. Enlarge it? Make new beds? How about in the front to enhance the front entrance? Always something, right? Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and Happy New

Year to all my friends here!

### **The Flower Family—Peas, Continued**

Locoweed of the plains cause the death of thousands of cattle and sheep yearly. Other members are the annual sweet pea and sensitive plant whose leaves fold when touched, wisteria, cassia, alfalfa, lead plant, clovers, broom, hyacinth bean, mimosa (another 'sensitive plant'), weeds like kudzu vine, hog peanut, and bulbosa, plus the foods like soybean, various beans, and various peas.

### **Statistics**

In September, there were 412 hits on our website, most from Brazil, Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. The busiest day was Friday from 2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.

In October, there were 322 hits, most on Saturdays between 8:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M., and from Australia and Brazil. As it is springtime down there, we can understand their interest in things pertaining to gardens and gardening.

### **December Holiday Dinner**

Our social event of the year, the holiday dinner, will be held at Gusto Italiano Ristorante on December 8th at 6:30 P.M. We'll be able to order again from the menu and there will be a cash bar. Many, many thanks to Jane Prentis for making the arrangements. Plan to attend this delightful function.

### **The Flower Family—Flax, Geranium, and Oxalis**

The members have such differing leaves but the resemblance is in the flowers which have the same five, frail petals. For hundreds of years the tough flexible fibers of flax have clothed the world. The oil from its seeds mix our paints. Commercial flax furnish linen and linseed oil. Other members are yellow and buttercup oxalis (in the tropics, their bulbs are eaten like cranberries), the pelargoniums horseshoe and rose geraniums (with its fragrant leaves), and the wild or cranesbill geranium that throws its seed afar.

### **In December, remember to:**

- after the ground is frozen, mulch beds with 1-2" of compost;
- spray plants with anti-rodent products if rabbits and deer are a problem;
- water all shrubs, trees and perennials until the ground freezes hard;
- use sand or calcium chloride de-icing products on walkways and driveways;
- check tree trunks for animal and rodent damage, remembering that rabbits can stand on snow and reach;
- holiday plants can be kept alive by maintaining even moisture, indirect light, away from cold or hot drafts, and by the use of humidifiers or pebble trays;
- mist houseplants daily, especially orchids, and water less in winter. Do not fertilize unless the plants are blooming.

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with help from Garden Talk, winter 2005

### **Guest Columnist—Jane Prentis**

My friend Lee has four adorable grandsons who are brothers. Christopher and Jonathan were working on a science project, a butterfly house. They observed four cocoons develop and eventually four painted lady butterflies emerged. The boys were very excited and watched the butterflies flutter around their house, but they knew they would have to set them free if they were to survive. They discussed when and where the release would take place. They wanted the perfect place to free their butterflies. They discussed the problem with their mother and grandmother. Lee suggested that they release the butterflies in my yard because I had so many flowers. The boys thought that was a great idea. The day arrived and Christopher, Jonathan, Joshua, Benjamin, mother and grandmother arrived in my yard with the butterfly house. They looked around for the ideal release site and asked me what I thought. I suggested releasing the butterflies close to a blooming butterfly bush and they agreed. We all posed for pictures with the butterflies in their house. Then the boys placed the house next to the bush, opened the roof, and out came the painted ladies. They fluttered around at first and then took off into the garden. That summer I would occasionally see a painted lady butterfly fluttering around my garden and wonder if it was one of the 'special' ones. I hope so.

### **What's Blooming Table**

Please bring in your treasured plants, or blooms for all of us to admire at the January meeting. It is always a treat to view someone else's success with houseplants.

### **Questions, comments, payment of dues?**

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**Voting in December!** Just before we dine, we will take a vote on the nominations for officers for next year. The candidates are:

President and Editor—Esther Behnke

Treasurer—Joan Ruehrmund

Programs—Gloria Tralmer

Garden Walk—Holly Jansen and Dolores Gilbertson

Hospitality—Sharon Geniesse

Circulation—Jane Prentis

Publicity—Nancy Spears

Nominations will be taken from the floor prior to the vote.

Check out our web site! We have added new photographs from the past year. Many thanks to Carole Jean Behnke Balli for maintaining our web site! We couldn't have done it without her.

**Snow!!!**

Wasn't that snow last month wonderful? It was so beautiful as it gracefully fell to earth. For the benefit of our gardens, and the farmers in Illinois, I do hope we get a lot of snow this winter.