



# The Spade & The Hoe

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## December Meeting

The regular December 14th meeting will be our annual Holiday Dinner. This year we will meet at Periyali Greek Taverna, 9860 Milwaukee Avenue, at 6:30 P.M. At last count, we had 20 reservations. Please call Jane Prentis (729-3230) to let her know you plan to attend this gala event. We can choose our dinners from the menu and, of course, the bar will be open.

January By this fire I warm my hands  
 February And with my spade I delve my lands.  
 March Here I set my thynges to Spring  
 April And here I hear the fowls sing  
 May I am as light as bird in bough  
 June And I weed my corn well now.  
 July With my scythe my mead I mawe.  
 August And here I shear my corn full low.  
 September With my flail I earn my bread  
 October And here I sawe my wheat so red.  
 November At Martinsmass I kill my swine.  
 December And at Christemass I drink red wine.

- Anonymous

From *The Sweet Life, Reflections on Home and Garden*  
By Laura Stoddart



The November meeting was so interesting. We all learned much from Lucy Barnas, a Master Gardener, who spoke on Closing Your Garden.



## Gardening

Gardening is a solitary and often meditative activity and for many gardeners the garden becomes a place of refuge — a private, even sacred spot where the cycle of the seasons is the only clock and time unfolds in a natural and unhurried way. Although gardeners may work from dawn till dusk — composting the soil, weeding the perennials, setting out plants, fighting the pests, bemoaning the weather — in the end, the peace and contentment they derive from creating even a small patch of beauty is immeasurable.

- A Gardener's Miscellany

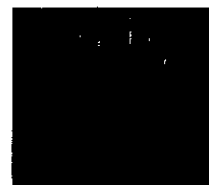
Every flower about a house certifies to the refinement of somebody. Every vine climbing and blossoming tells of love and joy.

-- Robert G. Ingersoll

## Through the Garden Gate

The pin oaks are always the last to drop their leaves, and finally have done so. Our compost bins are filled to the brim, so some of this year's leaf largess had to go into the yard waste container. I'm still not finished cleaning up all the beds (especially since Mrs. Barnas said to clean up the hosta beds), so I have that to do yet. And then we had to have our lovely white pine removed. That south bed looked so nice, but now it is SO barren. Not only do I not have a shade garden there anymore, but I have about 30 feet of naked fence line! This winter I will be planning what kinds of shrubs will do against the fence. Perhaps I can transplant a holly back there from the front bed, and maybe move my McCartney rose out in front of it. That still leaves me with many yards of fencing to cover. Out come the shrub books! I certainly have my work cut out for me this winter.

As soon as the holidays are over the garden catalogs begin showing up in our mailboxes. Review your notes you took over the past growing period (you did take notes, right?) and plan your garden accordingly. Happy Chanukah! Merry Christmas! Happy New Year!



**Guest Columnist—  
Marlene Bothfeld**

By the time you receive this month's *Spade and Hoe*, you should have put your garden tools away for the season, planted new bulbs, and divided your perennials. As we gardeners give our bodies a much needed rest, we still begin to look forward to the coming of spring to start the routine all over again. If you are looking for something to do to help pass the time until Spring arrives again, we have listed below several places to visit and enjoy the winter season.

Lincoln Park Conservatory Gardens, 2391 N. Stockton Drive, Chicago, 312-742-5369. Free admission Winter Flower & Train Show, 12/9-12/31/06. Opens daily 9 A.M.

Garfield Park Conservatory, 300 N. Central Park, Chicago, 312-746-5109. Holiday Flower Show 12/1-12/31/06. Opens daily 9-5 P.M. Free admission

Morton Arboretum. Rte. 53 at I-88, Lisle, 630-719-2465 Open 7 days a week. 1,700 acres of trees and shrubs.

Chicago Botanical Garden, 1000 Lake-Cook Road, Glencoe, 847-835-5440. Parking fees: cars \$12, Vans \$20, Seniors \$7 on Tuesdays. Free admission.

Cuneo Museum, 1350 Milwaukee Ave., Vernon Hills, 847-367-3725. 12/2-1/7/07. Adults \$10, kids (2-12) \$8;

holiday tour of the mansion, 11/24-12/31, Adults \$12, Seniors \$11. Winter Wonderland holiday light display, 11/24-1/6/07, Monday - Thursday \$5 per car; Friday-Sunday \$10 per car.

Mitchell Park Horticultural

Conservatory, 524 S. Layton Blvd., Milwaukee, WI, 414-649-9800. Peace on Earth holiday show & Balloon-a-Palooza, 11/18-1/1/07; Model Railroad Show, 1/13-3/18/07. Please call for prices before going.

**Remember: Dues are Due Effective January 1st and can be paid in November or December. Dues are \$30 each or \$35 for couples.**



**Pomanders**

Pomanders have been made for centuries. They were originally used to ward off strong smells, and the perforated china balls made commercially today date back to the 1550s. The most popular homemade pomanders use citrus fruits, often oranges, stuck with cloves. Very simple to make, their exotic, heady fragrance lasts and lasts. To make your citrus pomander you will need 1 orange, lemon or lime and about 1 ounce of whole cloves. Wearing a thimble, punch the cloves into the fruit as closely together as possible. Wrap the fruit in brown paper and leave in a dark cupboard to dry out and 'ripen' (this takes about 3 weeks). Traditionally pomanders are then placed in a muslin, cheesecloth or lace bag, and tied with a decorative ribbon and hung up.

**What's Blooming Table**

Thanks to Brigitte for sharing her witch hazel flowers at our November meeting. Bring your plants to the January meeting!

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

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### Did You Know...

Both the aroma and the excretions from the roots of marigolds (*tagetes minuta* or *tagetes patula*) are invaluable, whether in flower or vegetable garden. They kill nematodes in the soil as well as whitefly. Potatoes and tomatoes need them badly.

Likewise, foxgloves stimulate growth and help disease resistance of garden plants. Besides, they will improve the storage qualities of such things as potatoes, tomatoes and apples grown near them.

Chamomile planted beside a delicate or ailing plant for a short while would improve its health immensely, and herbs such as mint would develop far better scent and taste. In fact, the exhalation from the leaves is beneficial to humans as well as plants. Be sure to remove the chamomile when the 'patient' has improved.



### Simple Gifts

To make your own bath oil you will need 1 1/2 fl oz olive oil and 1/4 tsp. lavender oil (available from a health store). Mix the oils together and stir well. Pour into a nice colored glass bottle, seal (preferable with a cork), label and decorate with a ribbon.

To make your own body oil you will need 1 1/2 fl oz almond oil and 10 drops of any floral essential oil. Mix the oils together and stir well. Pour into a colored glass bottle (you may add a sprig of the chosen flower to add a bit of decoration), seal and label.

Herb bath bags filled with dried herbs such as rosemary, chamomile, bay and thyme are another gift you can make yourself. Put all the ingredients into a double thickness muslin or cheesecloth bag and secure tightly. The bath bags can be used only twice, so it is a good idea to give a gift set.

*In the language of flowers, acacia = friendship  
Aster = loyalty  
Carnation = steadfastness  
Lavender = sweet memories  
Lilac = young love  
White lily = innocence  
Lupine = infatuation  
Narcissus = vanity  
Peony = dignity  
Poppy = indolence  
Red rose = earthly love  
White rose = spiritual love  
Yellow rose = jealousy  
Snapdragon = revenge  
Sunflower = happiness  
Violet = modesty*

### In December, remember to:

- remove leaves from the grass, shred and lay them on the beds as mulch;
- water evergreens until the ground freezes;
- mound soil around the bases of roses to protect the grafts;
- cut chrysanthemum stems down to about 4-6 inches to trap leaves and snow in order to protect the crown;
- wrap roses, clematis, and other plants in chicken wire to protect them from rabbits;
- put up bird feeders and bird baths and keep them clean and filled;
- cleaning up the garden now means less work in spring when so much needs your attention;
- After the ground freezes, pile shredded leaves on your perennials.

. Chicagoland Gardening, November/December 2005

