

The Spade & The Hoe

Volume 5 Issue 12

December 2007

December Dinner

The December Annual Dinner will be held at Periyali Greek Taverna on Milwaukee Avenue on our regular Thursday evening, Dec. 13, at 6:30 P.M. Come and join your friends and fellow gardeners at this fun evening. We will individually order from the menu and there will be a cash bar. Please call Marlene to reserve your place at our table!

Combined Board Meetings

Your out-going and incoming boards met in November to review the jobs and to pass along the paperwork of each to the new members. It was an orderly and welcomed 'changing of the guard'. Many, many thanks to the members who are leaving the board. You have been hard-working and very helpful to me and to all the club members. Thank you.

I love old gardens best — tired old gardens that rest in the sun.



The November meeting was well-attended. Sam Darin, the Tool Man, was an engaging speaker who taught us how to sharpen each of our garden tools and our kitchen knives! Thanks to Jacki & Shelly who were the hosts.

Proposed By-Laws Change

Article 7—Meetings, Section 1. Of the Club. Reads "Regular meetings of the Club shall be held on the second Thursday of each month, except for any month in which there is a field trip or other activity." The proposed change has two options:

- 1) change the meeting day to the second Tuesday of the month, or,
- 2) change the meeting day to the fourth Thursday of the month.

This has come about because we are unable to secure the second Thursdays' reservations of a room at the police station. These are the two days that were offered to us.

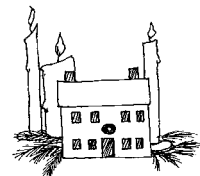
Please think carefully about this topic. The vote will be taken at the regular January meeting.

One should learn also to enjoy the neighbor's garden, however small; the roses struggling over the fence, the scent of lilacs drifting across the road.

- Henry Van Dyke

Through the Garden Gate
This is my last column written as president. I hope I was able somehow to fire you up with the zeal of the great gardeners I know you are, adding to your collection of plants, expanding your gardens as you expand your knowledge. I love to read gardening books, scavenging ideas from them that I can apply to my own little Garden of Eden. I encourage everyone to read the 'door prizes' you win and carefully read the catalogues that will begin to bombard your mailboxes this month. I say 'carefully' so that you won't be disappointed with your choices. After all, you learn from your mistakes as well as from your successes. When next I appear, it will be merely as your editor. And we will be welcoming our new leader, Pam.

So, I wish all of you, my friends, a very holy and blessed Hanukkah and Christmas spent with your children gathered around you. And best wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year!



Nature Blog

Sheryl DeVore of the Pioneer Press has a new blog. She will discuss the flora and fauna seen in yards and neighborhoods, in the northern part of Illinois, and even further afield. Check it out!

www.blogs.pioneerlocal.com/backyardbeat/.

*All through the long winter
I dream of my garden. On
the first warm day of spring
I dig my fingers deep into
the soft earth. I can feel its
energy, and my spirits
soar.*

- Helen Hayes

Rose (*Rosa damascena*)

The 'queen of essential oils' is one of the most prized and most valuable—it takes the petals of 30 damask roses to make one drop of Rose otto essential oil. The rose is the mystical symbol of love and romance, and its oil is thought to be an aphrodisiac. Rose oil is probably best loved for its marvelously feminine and sensual fragrance. This scent does have a potent anti-depressant effect and may be used, via face and body massage, skin care, baths, or vaporizers to treat nervousness, sadness, or long-term stress. It is often included in cosmetic creams for its refreshing and mild tonic effect on sensitive skin. The oil is also an excellent remedy for disorders of the female system. Its properties are antibacterial, astringent, antiseptic, antidepressant, anti-inflammatory, digestive, and aphrodisiac.

- The Art of Aromatherapy
by Pamela Allardice



"To Make Oyle of Roses — take of oyle eighteen ounces, the buds of roses (the white ends of them cut away) three ounces, lay the roses abroad in the shadow four and twenty houres, then put them in a glass to the oyle, and stop the glasse close, and set it in the sunne for at least forty days."

John Partridge,
The Treasure of Hidden Secrets and Commodious Conceits, 1586

Violets

The violet has a long and interesting history of culinary herb and medicinal use. While violets have come to be symbolic of steadfast devotion, they have also been associated with death. One ancient legend claims that violets sprang from the blood of the dying Attis, a Phrygian vegetation god who was slain beside a pine tree. In an annual ritual, the Phrygians hung an effigy of the god on a pine tree decked with violets. What we now know as the Maypole, according to Sir James Frazer in *The Golden Bough*, probably evolved from ancient pagan rituals celebrating the rebirth of plant life in the spring. Medicinally, violets were used to treat sore throats and respiratory ailments.

- Susan Wittig Albert,
"An Unthymely Death"

There are fairies at the bottom of our garden!

- Rose Fyleman

Handy Tips

Do not throw away your egg cartons. They are as good for growing small seedlings as peat pots, and cost you nothing.

Cut the legs off old pantyhose. They have enough give in them to make perfect tree ties.

Rinse out your beer bottles and milk bottles and pour it on your flowers. The yeast makes them grow big!

Herbal Bath Scrubbies

Mix 1/4 cup regular oatmeal with 1/4 cup dried herbs and 1/4 cup grated unscented bar soap. Place 1/4 cup of this mixture in a cotton bag and fold it inside a washcloth. You can use a single herb or mix several together, or add a few drops of essential oil. For a relaxing bath, use lavender, thyme, comfrey, or lemon verbena. For an invigorating bath, use rosemary, yarrow, jasmine, or lemon balm. When you're finished bathing, discard the contents of the bag, rinse, and turn it inside out to dry, then refill. This recipe makes enough for three scrubbies.

Susan Wittig Albert,
"An Unthymely Death"

Dues

**It's that time of year,
when the leaves fall,
acorns are gathered,
and dues are due.
Please bring your
checks to the December
dinner or mail them to
Shelly at 2141 Mickey
Lane. The dues for 2008
will remain the same as
this year: single \$30,
couples \$35.**

Financial Report to 11/12/07:
Open. Balance \$2,011.42
Income 1,029.50
Expenses 901.01
End. Balance \$2,139.91





Guest Columnist —

Bonnie Kimoto—Poinsettia
(*Euphorbia pulcherrima*)

As a young child I thought we were fortunate if we had a poinsettia plant for the holidays. When I went to Jamaica to visit a friend who worked there, I saw large poinsettias growing next to a building in Kingston. My friend Becky said that they grew wild in Jamaica.

In 1825 Joel Roberts Poinsett was appointed U.S. Minister to Mexico. Four years later he returned to his home in S. Carolina, bringing cuttings of the beautiful Mexican wildflower that now bears his name. The plant that we know is very different from its Mexican forebears, and different from the houseplants that were grown for holiday color for the next 130 years. Poinsettias then were short-lived plants. The colorful bracts lasted, but the foliage dropped off and left the flowers stranded atop the naked stems. This is usually when I threw the plants outside in winter.

In 1963 a mutation was discovered that held its leaves. That plant was used in further plant breeding and its genetic characteristics were imparted to plants sold today. Some varieties have been developed that will hold them until summer. White, pink and multi-hued varieties are sold in addition to the popular red. To keep your plant, give it good light, keep it warm and water as soil begin to dry. Beginning in late September, put it into a closet for 4 to 6 weeks (to reduce length of day to less than 12 hours) in order to initiate bloom which comes 10 to 12 weeks later. Start from cuttings in early summer. May your holidays be brightened by colorful plants.

Celebrities!

Logon to the webpage of neighborhoodCircle.com to see your outgoing and incoming presidents in two articles! Click on Clubs to see the big article.

In December, remember to:

- if using a real Christmas tree, make sure it has plenty of water;
- apply mulch to late planted bulbs to help them root;
- mow grass as long as it is growing;
- cut back dormant perennials to about 3" above ground;
- clean and sharpen shovels, spades, hoes, forks, etc. Oil their wooden handles;
- add a 2-4" layer of organic matter over vegetable garden and till in;
- for houseplants, only use tepid water and take care not to over water;
- don't fertilize plants during their rest cycle, and only at half strength during growing periods;
- give your plant a rest period in late winter by reducing water for two months or until it re-sprouts;
- kalanchoe is a short-day plant and needs two months of continuous darkness (16 hours) at night for flower buds to appear. Cover plant with a box to eliminate light;
- prune back branches of goldfish plant after flowering to stimulate growth;
- mature bromeliads can sometimes be coaxed into flowering by covering the plant with an airtight plastic bag along with half an apple for four days. The ethylene gas from the apple should bring on buds in six weeks;
- aphids, white flies, and spider mites appear when the air is dry; increase humidity.

When clouds appear like rocks and towers,
The earth's refreshed by frequent showers.

- Anonymous

What's Blooming Table

Remember to bring something to the January meeting.

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The Spade and The Hoe is the official publication of the Glenview Gardeners.

Nature, Mr. Allnut, is what we are put into this world to rise above.

- From *The African Queen*