



The Spade & The Hoe

Volume 6 Issue 12

December 2008

From the Desk of Pamela Frank

Dear fellow members of Glenview Gardeners. As we end 2008 I hope that all have enjoyed the club this year as much as I have enjoyed being president. When I was asked to be club president, I was hesitant, wondered why they were asking me. I'm basically shy and not computer savvy and I had only been in the club since 2005. I was told I would have lots of help and I have. Thank you to my vice president Gloria, our treasurer Shelly, programs Marlene, garden walk coordinator Holly, publicity Nancy, circulation Jane, hospitality Bonnie, and our newsletter editor Esther. You all have done a wonderful job and we have had a great time with wonderful speakers.

This year's highlights for me were: #1, the plant exchange in May where members could get free plants for their gardens, some goodies provided by Gloria & Len and a couple hours of socializing; #2, the garden walk in June featuring the gardens of Richard & Nancy Spears, Jackie & Shelly Kimel, and Pamela & Larry Frank; thanks also to our coordinator and plant wrangler Holly for a great job; #3, our visit to the butterfly house of Arlene Prchal. Arlene and her husband were great hosts and the cookies were delicious. The visit to the ice cream parlor afterwards was true happiness. Thank you to all our members and I'm looking forward to a roses, peonies, irises and hyacinth bean-filled 2009.

December Program

On Tuesday, December 2nd, we will meet at Red's Garden Center at 7pm for a demonstration on *Winter Greenery for Containers*, with the arrangement to be given as a door prize. Come earlier and view the holiday decorations, hostess gifts, and Santa's reindeer.

For those who are interested, go to the Botanic Garden and enjoy Holiday Lights and the indoor Wonderland Express train village exhibit.

I pray you, mar no more trees with writing love songs in their barks.
- William Shakespeare
(1564-1616)
From *As You Like It*

November Program

Tom Micheliti, president of the American Hosta Society, gave many pointers on the care of hostas as well as showing us his favorites. Did we know that they are native to the Orient? Thanks to Judy Oppedard for the refreshments.

Dues Are Due

Send in your dues to the treasurer Shelly Kimel, 2141 Mickey Ln., or give them to him at the December program.

Dues Are Due

Through the Garden Gate What fun to see the snow flurries in November! Puts me in the mood for a fun winter. My Christmas shopping will be all done by the 1st of December. Organization is a key component of us Capricorns.

A mystery: last year, both of my oak trees bore acorns for the 1st time. This year, no acorns. Why not? What happened? I don't know. I tidied up my work bench, discarded many plastic pots into the recycle bin, stashed away the rest, put all the liquid chemicals into a bucket and into the basement for the winter, put away the lawn mower and brought out the snow thrower and shovels, collected seeds and passed them out to friends, and brought in the logs for the fireplace. Just generally got the house ready for winter.

So, dear friends, whether you celebrate Chanukah or Christmas, Dan joins me in wishing you good health, love and happiness for the coming year.

Esther



Report from the Nominating Committee—Esther Behnke, Chair

The report was given at the November meeting. A motion was made and seconded to accept the slate of officers for 2009. The vote was unanimous.

President—Pam Frank

Vice President—Gloria Tralmer

Editor—Esther Behnke

Programs—Marlene Bothfeld

Garden Walk—Holly Jansen

Treasurer—Shelly Kimel

Hospitality—Bonnie Kimoto

Circulation—Brigitte Steinforth

Publicity and Archives— Nancy Spears

In addition, Holly appointed Brigitte as her co-chair of the Garden Walk.

“...He heard the snow falling through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.”

*-James Joyce 1882-1941
from Dubliners*

Herbs

Among the herbs of particular interest now in winter are hyssop, marjoram, oregano, rosemary, sage, savory and thyme. These plants possess vital life-giving forces in their every part: root, stalk, leaves and flowers are permeated with a cheery vigor that helps drive away chills while warming and harmonizing the system — qualities especially welcome during cold weather.

Though these herbs have many uses in hot weather cooking, one of their particular virtues is their ability, fresh or dried, to enliven heavier cold weather foods. Their aromatic spiciness combines well with robust dishes and their nutritional contribution is high. Plan to use your herbs in seasonal specialties.

- Growing & Using Herbs in the Midwest



Dues are Due!!!

The 12th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count

The 2008-09 Great Backyard Bird Count will take place February 13-16, 2009. Also, Project Feeder-Watch Season has begun. You can sign up at anytime. FeederWatchers keep track of their birds through the winter and report their tallies each week. Go to www.birdsource.org/gbbc/ for more information. Finally, make sure you're maintaining healthy bird habit in your yard by taking the Audubon [Healthy Yard Pledge](http://audubonathome.org/pledge). Go to audubonathome.org/pledge for more information.

Rosemary is the symbol of remembrance and is the chief herb of Christmas. In the Middle Ages, mothers would slip a sprig of rosemary into their baby's cradle so the child might have a sweet and peaceful sleep. It is said to bring happiness to families who use it to perfume the house on Christmas night. A popular medieval New Year's gift was a sprig of rosemary and an orange stuck with cloves (known today as a pomander ball). Use rosemary in combination with rosehip berries in holiday wreaths and centerpieces for a rich fragrance throughout the house. The plants are unsurpassed as gifts or tokens of appreciation. Other traditional herbs of Christmas are thyme, lavender, rue, pennyroyal (a creeping mint), bedstraw or cradlewort, horehound, sweet woodruff, chamomile and the little star-of-Bethlehem.

“Onion skins very thin, Mild winter coming in. Onion skins thick and tough, Coming winter very rough.”

Holly and Ivy

The evergreen holly is a slow-growing tree that will stand almost all conditions of soil and climate. The number of berries is said to foretell winter weather: few berries means a mild winter as the birds will be able to find food from many sources; an abundance of berries means extra provisions for the birds in view of harsh conditions to follow. The holly tree represents masculinity, steadfastness and holiness.

Ivy was known to the Greeks as Cissos after a young dancing girl who collapsed and died of exhaustion at the feet of Dionysus after dancing before the gods at a feast. So moved was he that he turned her body into ivy, which embraces anything it touches. Because of its clinging properties, ivy is seen as the female counterpart of the masculine holly and as a symbol of unpredictability (ed. note: clinging?? Unpredictability?? Hah!) Ivy is credited with the power to prevent drunkenness.

“Hemlock and cedar, Rosemary, thyme and basil, Frankincense and myrrh, Mistletoe, fir and the sweet spice of the east.”

- William Hamilton

“Silly gardener! Summer goes And winter comes with pinching toes, When in the garden bare and brown

You must lay your barrow down!”

- R.L. Stevenson



The Winter solstice

The days leading up to the winter solstice, on December 22, are the darkest days of the year. Life for that time seems dormant when the sun is at its farthest point from the earth.

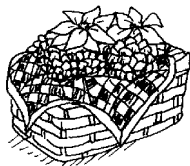
St. Thomas' Day, December 21, the shortest day of the year and the longest night, is said to be the turning point of the gardener's year. This festival has been celebrated in Europe for centuries, with the festivities linked to the fertility of the soil and the longed-for return of the sun. In southeast England, broad beans would be planted on this day and the wise gardener would check the skin of his onions on St. Thomas' Day to ascertain the weather for the coming winter months.

As the earth lies dead and cold, the rich scents of the holiday herbs remind us of growing things, of sunshine and gentle rains. The evergreens, fragrant and bright, speak of life everlasting.

The lore that surrounds mid-winter greenery reaches back in time when our ancestors were terrified lest they would be overwhelmed by cold and darkness. As the days raced toward the winter solstice, fire was lit and living greens were gathered in tribute to those spirits who controlled the seasons. It is with this long night, a time of rest in the garden, that our year truly begins.

We are all but a tiny part of the every-moving stream of the seasons and the years that slip by without our notice. Sit back and rest. It is a time for reflection, a time to celebrate.

-Growing & Using Herbs in the Midwest66



In December, remember to:

- keep a fresh Christmas tree in plenty of water and away from a heat source;
- keep houseplants too away from a heat source and water sparingly;
- either spray the foliage of houseplants weekly or have a humidifier near them;
- on cold nights, be sure the houseplants are not too near windows which can cause them to become chilled;
- remember to save the wood ashes from the fireplace and add them to the compost pile;
- check houseplants for diseases and don't add a new plant until after you have quarantined it for a few days;
- be sure to use non-damaging salt on icy sidewalks ;
- protect evergreen shrubs near streets from salt spray with a wrapping of burlap;
- give all trees and shrubs in your garden a deep drink of water to last them through the winter;
- look out for our feathered friends by setting out seeds, suet cakes and fresh oranges and apples;
- take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count this winter.

The Christmas Tree

Its tradition comes from Germany and Prince Albert is credited with importing the idea into Britain. The Scandinavians' Tree of Time is derived from winter solstice symbols of everlasting life and mystic fertility. Decorating the tree with lights is said to have originated in the Jewish Festival of Hanukkah — the Festival of Light. The variety of fir most commonly used as a Christmas tree is the Norwegian Spruce.

What's Blooming Table

Thanks to Pam for showing her blooming Christmas cactus.

www.glenviewgardeners.org

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