



The Spade & The Hoe

Volume 7 Issue 12

December 2009

From the Desk of Pamela Frank

Come January 1st, there will be a new president of Glenview Gardeners, and I welcome her. It has been an interesting two years for me: two garden walks, two plant exchanges, many wonderful speakers and some socializing. In summer 2008, we went to the butterfly lady and an ice cream parlor afterwards. We had lots of nice give-aways over the two years: roses for Valentine's Day, coffee mugs, garden gloves, and mums. I want to thank my board members for their help and friendship for the last two years: Gloria, Marlene, Shelly, Holly, Nancy, Brigitte, Bonnie and Esther. Also, I want to thank the wonderful members of the Glenview Gardeners. It was a pleasure to be your president.

(Editor's note: Pam Frank will remain on the board as Vice-President—Program Assistant. And, new for 2010, Programs Chair will be Rosette Swanson. We welcome them both.)



December Program

On Tuesday, December 8th, we will meet at the police station at 7pm for a program on *Christmas, New Year and January Decorations* by Mari Mackenbush.



November Program

Pam Duthie, local author and gardener, presented an enjoyable slide program on *What do Real Gardeners Do in Winter*. Thanks also to Joan Ruehrmund for the refreshments.

Annual Holiday Dinner

The annual dinner will be held this year at the Diamond Café, 1723 Glenview Road, Thursday, December 17th at 6:30pm. The entrees are moderately priced. Call or email Holly Jansen to let her know if you plan to attend.

Joint Board Meeting

The outgoing and incoming boards will meet to exchange paperwork on Thursday, December 10th at 7:00 pm at the home of Judy Oppegard. Please bring all of your archives relating to your jobs to pass along to the new officers and be prepared to discuss the nuances of the jobs with them.

Through the Garden Gate

Another year is drawing to a close. The leaves have all been raked and/or mulched, roses have their little roots covered with mulch, and the plants have been prepared for winter's cold wind. So now we pull back, stack up the firewood, and prepare to hibernate before the fire with a nice glass of wine—before we begin to decorate the house for the holidays, bake up a storm with cookies and fruitcake, shop for bargains for the family and pencil in the rounds of parties. Dan & I have three birthdays to celebrate before Christmas even gets here, a granddaughter's, a daughter's, and mine. You won't find any grumbling here! Christmas is my most favorite time of year and I have never outgrown my eagerness for it to come. Dan & I love to see the lights on people's houses and the shop windows all decorated to excite the children. Out comes my Italian presepio (or crèche) and I carefully place the little houses, people, animals and angels. Such a wonderful time. Esther



Tips from Shelly Kimel

The hardest part about gardening is not digging, watering or weeding. It is figuring out which plant would thrive where. Stick this gadget into the ground (or indoor pot) and the device will gauge the sun, soil and temperature conditions for 24 hours. Then plug the device into a computer, key in your zip code, and the accompanying software will recommend the best plants for the spot. The product is called the Easy Bloom Plant Sensor and sells for \$40 at target.com.

As beautiful as fall foliage is, cleaning out the gutters can make you wish you lived in the Gobi desert. Enter this new gizmo, which uses spinning brushes and fins to power through the gutters, ejecting leaves, muck and squirrel dung in its path. All you have to do is set your ladder in one spot, place the Looj in the gutter, and then operate it with the remote control. No need to move the ladder or get your hands dirty. The product is called Looj 125 Remote-Control Gutter Cleaning Robot and sells for \$130 at irobot.com. Both of these items can be found in the December issue of Money Magazine.

Warning!

Cocoa bean shell is an attractive mulch used frequently in gardens. However, when ingested by dogs, it can cause vomiting, rapid heart rate, seizures, muscle tremors and, in very rare instances, death. Cocoa bean shell mulch is a byproduct of chocolate productions and contains two key ingredients, theobromine and caffeine which can cause methoxyxanthine toxicosis when ingested. Play it safe!



Did You Know

Does your basement smell musty? Musty odors mean fungal growth. Fungi like to grow where it's dark, damp and undisturbed. Given the right conditions, mildew will proliferate quickly. The odor you detect is a byproduct of thriving mildew colonies, and a tip-off that mold is growing, but not all mold gives off an odor. Mold and mildew can cause health problems, especially for people allergic to the spores. Plus, anything stored in the area can be damaged, including clothing, wood furniture, books, art, photographs, luggage, and textiles.

When it gets cold, below 50°, most molds and mildew go dormant.

That's why the basement seems musty in the spring and summer, but not in winter. Mold and mildew colonies pump millions of spores into your household air.

Your goal is to keep them dormant. Clean up any current mold and keep everything dry so it won't return. Wash surfaces with a solution of 1 cup of chlorine bleach to a gallon of water. A spray bottle works for corners and small areas. Apply the solution, wait about a minute and wipe off. Rinse and wipe dry and move on to the next area. Start from the top and work down. Vacuum upholstered furniture thoroughly and dispose of the vacuum bag immediately to keep from scattering spores the next time you vacuum. Once mildew is removed, keep outdoor moisture out by ensuring the ground slopes away from the house. Add the ventilation and dehumidification of an air conditioner and/or a dehumidifier.



Garden Chemicals...

should be stored where they will not alternately freeze and thaw over the winter, thereby losing their effectiveness.

Chanukah By Jacki Kimel

First, a little history: in the second century, BCE, a tiny army of the Israeli Maccabees were victorious over the Syrian-Greek superpower which controlled Israel. After the victory, the Jews wanted to rededicate the Holy Temple and light the candelabra (menorah), which was always kept burning. But the story goes that only one container of pure oil was found which should have lit the menorah for one day. The miracle that we celebrate is that the oil burned for eight days until more oil could be found. And, thus, Chanukah is called the Festival of Lights.

In true Jewish fashion, we celebrate with food! Because of the oil symbolism, fried foods are very appropriate...especially potato pancakes, known as latkes. Each night of the eight nights an additional candle is lit in the menorah. It is a holiday mostly celebrated with children with small gifts given each night including money (Chanukah gelt). There is a small top, called a dreidel, which children and adults use to play games.

In truth, Chanukah is a minor festival but it has gained much attention because of its proximity to Christmas. But we'll use any excuse to eat those latkes...and exchange gifts!



The Verdict is in on Upside-Down Tomatoes

After a summer-long test, growing upside-down tomatoes with those planted in the ground, Joel Koyama of the Minneapolis Star Tribune came to the conclusion that, although it was easier to pick tomatoes hanging in the air, the downside was having to pour a gallon of water into the upside-down planters every day and fertilize every week. However, the fruit grown that way was smaller and less tasty. The plants grown in the ground were subject to rodent damage and disease, but still were tasty and larger. This is the same conclusion my niece came to in Arizona. Upside-down is no great winner.

House Plant Tips

Poinsettias, Christmas cactus and African violets should be placed in a warm, 70° sunny window to ensure bloom for the holidays.

Christmas pepper, cyclamen and kalanchoe should be placed in a cool, 55°-60° window to achieve maximum bloom. Keep blooming plants moist but never soggy.

Cacti and other succulents should be placed in a cool, bright location and kept dry to encourage blooms in spring and summer.

December Garden Tips

A mixture of wood ashes and sand makes a good mulch for asters, delphiniums, Sweet Williams, roses and lilacs. Mulch azaleas with shredded oak leaves. Shredded maple leaves provide an excellent mulch.



In December, remember to:

- Clean and repair garden tools before storing them for the winter;
- Don't use sodium chloride on your walks and driveway as it will kill grass and plants;
- When buying firewood, make sure it does not harbor the insects that like ash trees;
- Didn't get all the spring bulbs planted? Store them in the refrigerator until next spring.;
- Use wood ashes from the fireplace as mulch as it will add potash to the soil;
- Shoveling snow is a great exercise and keeps those gardening muscles toned up;
- Pot up amaryllis bulbs and paperwhite narcissus for winter enjoyment;
- Spray houseplants to keep their leaves clean and to provide needed humidity;
- Pile up those gardening catalogs for winter viewing.

House plants often drop more leaves than usual this time of year, due to the shorter days and heated dry air of the approaching winter season.

Winter Tips

Prepare dried pine cones for gifts or for your own use in the fireplace this winter. Mix one pound of a chemical listed below per one gallon of water. Wrap the pine cones in cheesecloth and soak in the mixture for three hours or more. Spread on newspaper to dry.

Strontium nitrate—red
Copper chloride—green
Calcium chloride—orange
Copper sulphate—blue

Trim your evergreens and save the branches for decorating your home.

What's Blooming Table

Michelle brought a chives plant to donate and Esther brought film cases for seed storage.

www.glenviewgardeners.org

Pamela Frank, President
832-0630
lp2jfrank@hotmail.com

Gloria Tralmer, Vice-President
480-0848
gtralmer@aol.com

Sheldon Kimel, Treasurer
657-0772
jackishelly@sbcglobal.net

Marlene Bothfeld, Programs
205-0184

Holly Jansen, Garden Walk
729-7729
hollyjj77@yahoo.com

Nancy Spears, Publicity
nancy@spears.net

Jane Prentis, Circulation
jrprentis@msn.com

Bonnie Kimoto, Hospitality
486-9048
bonnie.kimoto@sbcglobal.net

Esther Behnke, Editor
498-4178
eabehnke@earthlink.net

ggardeners@earthlink.net

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

