



The Spade & The Hoe

Volume 8 Issue 1

January 2010

From the Desk of Judy Oppgard

Well, the hectic holidays are coming to a close. Hope you all had as much fun gathering with family and friends as I did. Now I'm looking forward to a wonderful new year of interesting programs and friendly meetings with our Glenview Gardeners members.

The surveys you've completed have been helpful to plan fun activities and surprises throughout the year. Pam and I have met several times and our holiday board meeting was also enlightening.

We have had such a super team of volunteers over the years, many who have served on the board for decades. I want to take this time to thank them (without listing all their names) for all the time and energy spent making our club unique. A lot goes on in the planning for the garden walks, plant exchanges, publicity and program selections. Also, keeping the financial and historical records is quite a task. Organizing the hospitality and sending the newsletters deserves applause as well. They all have been fantastic and most have agreed to accept the challenge again.

A special thanks to our editor for handling our informative newsletter and website. If you've never checked out the website, do so — it's terrific! HAPPY NEW YEAR, GARDENERS!

Judy

January Program

On Tuesday, January 12th, we will meet at the police station at 7pm for a lecture on vermiculture by Pam's husband Larry, plus members' holiday exchange party with food trays. Bring photos, plants, magazines, and books.



December Program

Mari Mackenbach presented an enjoyable program on making holiday decorations. Thanks to all who brought cookies for the cookie exchange.

Annual Holiday Dinner

Thanks to all who came to share our annual dinner at the Diamond Café. We all had such a good time and the food was delicious!

Chicago Flower & Garden Show

March 6-7, 2010

Be sure to attend this exciting show. After a bleak winter, it's nice to see flowers! They have some really great speakers lined up, plus the gardens that they create are unique.

Arranging a bowl of flowers in the morning can give a sense of quiet in a crowded day — like writing a poem or saying a prayer.

- Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Through the Garden Gate

Another year has come upon us. The festivities are over. Now comes the peaceful drawing in, of staying home by the fire, of reading, cleaning out the house of unused things, packing away all of the holiday decorations. Not being a shopper, the stores' closeout sales don't entice me. I am content to read and quilt, plan garden projects and quilt projects. Cook and eat, bake and eat, and, did I mention, eat? Thank God my exercise class started up again!

As all of you know, the piles of gardening catalogs are growing and their pictures are so beautiful! But then reality sets in: when has anything grown in my garden ever looked as lush and wonderful as these pictures? The pictures must be heavily re-touched, or else the plants are grown in the south somewhere, lovingly tended, fertilized every other day to achieve such grandeur. In my garden, it's sink or swim. I don't coddle anything (except the lemon tree), so everything has to really grow on its own. Somehow I don't think I'm alone in this laid-back attitude. Enjoy the peace!

Esther

Garden Tips

Take advantage of this month's gardening hiatus and think of all the improvements you can make. Peruse the nursery catalogs that have begun arriving and make those lists of 'must-haves' and 'maybes'.

Continue to feed the birds. Remember, they depend on you for food to survive the cold winter months.

Use calcium chloride instead of sodium chloride on stairs and driveways. Calcium chloride does not damage grass or trees.

Also, remember to pile fire-place ashes on your compost pile. They are a good source of potash, phosphorus, calcium carbonate and a bit of zinc.

My dad painted the wooden handles of his tools to keep from losing them and to identify them when someone 'borrowed' them. Bright paint helps you see them quickly in the garden.

Spray houseplants every so often to remove dust and insects from their leaves.

FREE to a good home...

Free terrarium to a good home. Five gallon glass Carbuoy (like old water bottle on top of office water cooler), about 22" tall.

Originally planted in 1973 (can you believe it is still alive?). Some of the original plants are gone but its ecosystem survives on 1/2 cup of water a year. Can be replanted.

Call Nancy Spears at 847-998-1277.



Did You Know

If you have bromeliads, you can get them to bloom by putting them in a plastic bag with an apple for one week. The ethylene gas given off by the decaying fruit will induce flowering in bromeliads.

Birds are good weather forecasters. When it's about to rain, the birds fly about chirping. The moisture in the air makes them jittery, causing the birds to fly about in a nervous state.

Begin to fertilize potted herbs as soon as they show signs of growth. Now is also a good time to divide houseplants.

On every stem on every leaf, and at the root of everything that grew, was a professional specialist in the shape of a grub, caterpillar, aphids or other expert, whose business it was to devour that particular part.

- Oliver Wendell Holmes

January Fact

The name January comes from Janus, a two-faced god with one side looking backwards recalling the old, and the other looking forward to the new. Last season's failures have faded to dim memories, and hope springs eternal that the new gardening year will be successful. This is the most optimistic month of the year for gardeners. It is filled with hours and hours of delight, plowing through all the many seed and plant catalogs that come through the mail. It is that time of the year to think, plan and dream about your new spring garden.

- Growing and Using Herbs in the Midwest.



*Cold is the winter day, misty and dark;
The sunless sky with faded gleam is rent;
And patches of thick snow outlying mark,
The landscape with drear disfigurement.*

- Robert Bridges

Winter-Blooming Houseplants

Abutilon (Chinese lantern), anthurium, begonia, brunfelsia, euphorbia (crown of thorns), hibiscus, impatiens, justicia (shrimp plant), pelargonium (geranium), African violet, Meyer lemon, calamondin orange, goldfish plant, cyclamen, poinsettia, amaryllis, hoya, jasmine, kalanchoe, tree gloxinia, osmanthus (sweet olive), pentas, yellow flax, rosemary, schlumbergera (Christmas cactus), streptocarpus (cape primrose), white calla lily.

Most will flower on and off during the year. Fertilize with a high potassium content (potash) to promote flowering. Plants in bloom generally need more water than resting plants. Christmas cactus likes a cool room with good light but little or no direct sun. Jade plant and Christmas cactus can last for generations. Others, like cyclamen and poinsettia are good only until they finish blooming. Most like a cool room, except African violet.



Photos wanted

If you have a really great photo of your garden, send it to me in an email, making the photo as large as you can. We will put it up on our website. The photos will be changed regularly during the year.

January Garden and House Plant Tips

Tansy should be planted under fruit trees because its scent deters flying insects and Japanese beetles. In the garden, it also keeps away striped cucumber beetles, squash bugs and ants.

Apple scab can be prevented by planting chives around the trunk. And, when made into a tea, chives can be used as a spray for powdery mildew.

The most beneficial plant, however, is the marigold. When planted throughout the garden, it discourages beetles, nematodes and other bad insects.

Indoor plants show their first growth in January, long before outdoor plants do. Be ready to begin fertilization and dividing, if the plants need that. Some plants love being root bound. Another way to divide is by taking cuttings and rooting them before potting them up.



In January, remember to:

- Monitor critter damage to your shrubs and trees;
- Chop branches off your Christmas tree to cover the roses and perennials;
- Note which veggies did well and reorder the seeds from seed catalogs;
- Keep poinsettias away from drafts and near bright light;
- Check houseplants for dry soil;
- Help wreaths last longer by placing them in cool places;
- Spray front and back of wreaths to keep them fresh;
- Direct your snow thrower away from shrubs and small trees;
- Pile up those gardening catalogs for winter viewing

Rosemary Biscuits

2 c. whole wheat flour
2 c. unbleached white flour
1/2 tsp. salt
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tbsp. sugar
4 tbsp. unsalted butter
2 tbsp. fresh rosemary, chopped fine, or 2 tsp. dried rosemary, crumbled
1 1/2 c. milk

Sift flours, salt, baking powder, baking soda and sugar together. Cut in butter to make pea-sized lumps. Add rosemary and milk; mix together to form a soft dough.

Preheat oven to 400'. Grease and flour a baking sheet. Roll dough to 1/2" thick on a lightly floured board. Cut into 1 1/2" squares, place close together on the baking sheet and bake for 20'. Serve hot or remove to racks to cool.

Makes 24 to 36 biscuits.

What's Blooming Table

Marlene brought garden magazines as freebies.

www.glenviewgardeners.org

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