



Never Done!

The Garden Club of Harvard

Volume XVIII, Issue 3

Greens Workshop Set for Monday, Dec. 12

Between 9:30 a.m. and noon, we'll put together simple fresh arrangements to bring cheer to Harvard residents who are housebound or in care facilities, as we did last year. If you know someone from Harvard who should be on this list, please let Barbara Heim know well in advance. All supplies and directions for this project will be provided, along with a sample and guidance.

Then make an arrangement of your own for your mantle or table. If you have a favorite container, bring it along. Or you can buy our standard "little green dish" at the workshop. We will also have boxwood, oasis forms, trimmings, and other goodies for sale.

As always, please bring some greens, cones, seedpods, or berries from your yard to share with other arrangers. These should be cut just before the workshop or, if cut earlier, kept hydrated. (See the list on page 2 for ideas.)

Barbara Heim will have a sign-up sheet at our regular Monday meeting November 28 for both arrangers and deliverers. If you can't come to the workshop, but would like to help deliver the arrangements and spend a few minutes visiting with the recipients, please contact Barbara.

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Save the Date:
Monday
February 13
for the
Plant Sale
Planning
Luncheon
 (Place to be decided)

Items from the Board

In the wake of the problems we had in reaching people to say that the last meeting was cancelled, Board members discussed including cell phone numbers in next year's Garden Club yearbook.

We need several more people to help with library flowers, so that no one needs to do more than one arrangement. Call Joan Burns to help out.

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Pieris japonica 'Mountain Fire' is great for arranging, but is not this bright in fall.

Good Greens for Winter Arranging

Bringing greens to share is vital to the success of our Greens Workshop. Without these contributions, our arrangements would be dull indeed! Here's a list of good choices:

- White pine
- Blue holly (Meserve), both green and with berries
- Chamaecyparis (hinoki cypress)
- Small leafed rhododendron
- PJM rhododendron (nice red color now)
- Boulevard cyprus
- Gold-thread cyprus
- Spruce with soft needles
- Winterberry
- Umbrella pine
- Arborvitae
- Incense cedar
- Mountain laurel
- Andromeda/pieris
- Yew
- Variegated euonymus
- Variegated vinca vine
- Seedpods of many kinds

(Don't use hemlock; it dries out quickly and drops its needles.)

What Do You Know! Garden Questions and Answers

Again, this month's answers are thanks to Connie Grabowy. Remember, if you have questions about gardening (or houseplants!), email them to Maureen Phillips (maureenkphillips@charter.net). Maureen will forward them to our panel of experts for ideas and suggestions.

When should I prune my hydrangeas? My pruning instructor recommended pruning when you feel like it. But I'm going to give some Hydrangea guidelines. The *serrata* and *macrophylla* species should be pruned in late summer. Remove older branches to ground, remove any crossover branches, and cut younger shoots back to healthy buds. *Arborensis*, *paniculata*, and *quercifolia* species should be pruned in spring as new growth appears. Shorten each shoot by about one third, cutting back to a pair of strong buds. Cut spindly shoots to ground as well as any branches crossing over each other.

My indoor begonia grows new leaves which yellow and drop off. What's going on? It could be overwatering, soil-borne fungus attacking the roots and preventing water absorption, or white-fly attack (but you would notice a cloud of white when the plant is shaken). I recommend allowing soil to dry down some, which slows down fungal growth as well as putting a stop to any drowning of the roots. The plant may recover. Also, if you can take a tip cutting you may regenerate your plant.

Items from the Board, cont'd from page 1

Is there a traffic island or some small bit of very visible public land in that you drive past often? Would you and some neighbors be interested in "adopting an island" by adding some decorative plants or a barrel filled with seasonal flowers? Or maybe you are already working on such a space and would like some co-workers. Contact Kathy Jackson, co-chair of Civic Beautification, to discuss the project. We may be having a how-to program on plantings for these areas next year.

The UMass garden calendars have arrived. If you ordered one, please contact Margaret Murphy to pick it up. And, if you missed the chance to put in your order, there *may* be an extra one or two. Of course, you can also go to the UMass garden calendar website and order a copy, but you would miss out on the group discount.

Horticulture Notes from October's Snowed-Out Meeting

Connie Grabowy

Here is the report Connie would have given at last month's meeting, if a foot of snow hadn't come our way!

Mow and bag leaves for mulch piles. The ground-up leaves can be saved until ready to layer with green debris, watering in between layers for a hot pile. Or the leaf piles can just sit there for a slower breakdown process.

Pot up paper whites in a well-draining soil or on top of stones. If using stones, bring the water up to the base of the bulbs, which reduces the risk of rotting your bulbs.



Pot up tulips, hyacinths, daffodils, or any other hardy bulbs for forcing. Use a soil mix that drains well, and water thoroughly before placing the pots in a bulkhead or other dark space where temperatures are around 40 degrees. (A nip below freezing does not seem to do much harm.) Consider placing pots in a rodent-proof container if these pests are around; these critters love most bulbs except daffodils. The bulbs need to stay at this cool temperature for at least 14 weeks before bringing in to room temperature for bloom.

Pot up Amaryllis (*Hippeastrum*) bulbs using well-drained soil. Leave a half to a third of the bulb exposed above soil level. Water pots well and do not water again until something green emerges from the bulb. Keep the pots at room temperature but out of direct sunlight. A good reference book for forcing bulbs as well as other plant material is *Forcing, Etc: The Indoor Gardener's Guide to Bringing Bulbs, Branches & Houseplants Into Bloom*, by Katherine Whiteside.

Found a remedy for white fly, which I have not yet tried. You mix 2 tablespoons of vinegar and 2 tablespoons of ammonia per gallon of water and use as a spray. I've got some white fly action, so I'll give it a try.

Two articles on hardy mums that are worth tracking down: *Horticulture* October 2004 and *Fine Gardening* September 2006. (I have them if you can't find them.) The plants are great for late fall color, and if the snow had not flattened them, you could have seen them after the October meeting.

Gardening on the Web: You've probably found your own favorite gardening websites on the internet, but here is one by an irreverent group of women gardeners: <http://www.gardenrant.com/>. The site has lots of sections, so it is fun to explore. The sections called "It's the Plants, Darling" and "Designs, Tricks, and Schemes" offer some practical advice and some good plant photos.

The Garden Club of Harvard

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“Garden Tip”

Keep watering your evergreens, especially those with broad leaves, until very late fall.

Announcements and Events

The Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts presents “**Horticulture Mornings**,” a series of symposia at the Espousal Center, 554 Lexington St., North Waltham, at 10 a.m. Topics are “Seeds Up Close: Amazing” on Monday, Feb. 13, 2012; and “Roses for the Sustainable Garden” on Monday, Mar. 19, 2012. \$15. Register by sending your name, address, telephone number, and email to Betsy Williams 978-470-0911, betsy@betsywilliams.com, or Rita DeLollis 978-475-1038, rdelollis@aol.com.

The GCFM will present “**Nature Takes Over**” featuring Bill Harper, international floral artist, lecturer, and educator, on Tuesday, May 22, at the Regis College Fine

Arts Center, Weston. Tickets are \$15 before Feb. 1, and \$20 thereafter. His theme is that floral creations are collaborations with nature. For ticket information, call Helga Frazzette 508-255-6664 or Diane Bullock 207-361-1818.

Herbal Holiday Gifts, a workshop at Tower Hill, Wednesday, Dec. 7, 6-8 p.m. Linda Russell of Scentsibilities will teach making pomanders, beauty products, herbal teas, potpourris, and more. \$25 members, \$28 nonmembers.

Winter Pruning Demo, also at Tower Hill, Monday, Jan. 2, 1-2 p.m. Techniques for pruning dormant trees and shrubs. Cost included with admission.

If you have an announcement or an article for the newsletter, please email it to martygre@gmail.com or phone 456-3547 with the information at least a week before the regular meeting. Thank you.

