



Garden Club News

December 2014

PO Box 3253 Teaneck, NJ 07666

www.gardenclubofteaneck.org

The next meeting of the Garden Club of Teaneck will be held on Thursday, December 11th at the Richard Rodda Center. The meeting will start at 7:30pm. That evening we will have our annual Holiday Party!! **Those member members whose last name begins with the letter A through I please bring entrees, those whose last name begins with J through Z please bring desserts.**

The next meeting of the Greenhouse Committee of the Garden Club will be on Saturday, December 6th at 10:00 am at the Greenhouse.

Member News

Message from Pat Fromm, President

Hopefully you have recovered from consuming way too much turkey, stuffing (or dressing, in your house) and pumpkin pie, and your favorite team won on Thanksgiving Day! Now it's time for holiday parties and festive celebrations to begin! Don't miss the Garden Club of Teaneck Holiday Party on December 11th, 7:30 pm at the Richard Rodda Center! Bring a dish to share and be prepared for some of the best and most tasty food Teaneck has to offer! It will be a fun time, for members only, and a good time to meet some new members or chat with someone in another group that you rarely get to see.

Please remember to contribute to your local food bank, coat drive, or Salvation Army who look after those less fortunate during the cold winter months. We'll have a collection at the December 11th party for Helping Hands, so you can bring a contribution of food, grocery gift card, or cash and we'll deliver to them.

There will not be a newsletter or formal meeting in January so watch your email or mail box for any announcements of

scheduled events, such as the Pruning Workshop on January 10th, 1 pm at the greenhouse. Travel and be safe throughout the holiday season. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year to all! Pat Fromm

Message from Len Schwartz, Greenhouse Director

This year's pot and soil order was received last week and is now put away in the back room. Thank you Joe and Ted for all your hard work. All of our groups have made most of their specified number of about 120 cuttings for the Hawthorne school program. It appears that this year we will have considerable plant varieties. Since we have started early, the plants should be a good size by March when classes start. Please use only the black 4 inch pots for the school program. The kitchen/bathroom re design is still being settled on by our remodeling group of Myriam and Jon. Because we have included more ideas into Rudy's original design, the cost has risen and we will have to approve more money for this project.

Peter Goldman has made a diagram of the entire area surrounding the greenhouse. This is a first step in developing a

comprehensive landscape plan. We now need to form a group of members who are interested in using the diagram to design a long range plan which will eventually make our outside greenhouse space more attractive and beautiful.

Joe and I are in the early stages of constructing a piped watering system for watering our small pots for the sale. This is similar in principle to the one we now have working for the hanging baskets. The goal is to make watering quicker and easier. I hope to see you all at our next meeting on Saturday, December 6th. Len

Message from Joe Papa Horticultural Director Emeritus

The Winter Solstice is upon us and the times to reflect about last year's gardening and start your planning for the next season. I have received many of my 2015 seed catalogs and as always looking at new varieties to try. I would like to share some thoughts on seed catalogs and the ones that I look for and support. There has been a consolidation in this industry and many of these operations no longer breed seeds but are re-sellers. I usually buy (OP) open pollinated seeds and my favorite catalogs are: Johnny's Selected Seeds, Tomatoes Growers and Seed Savers Exchange. If you are anxious to get started, you can start onions and leeks in mid-February. I recently upgraded my grow lighting system with the purchase of T5 high efficient fluorescent which are 60% more efficient than the T8 system it replaced.

I thought I would do a little refresher on composting. I have two compost bins one at my garden and one at home. We often hear questions on the optimum combinations of nitrogen and carbon and the ratios. This is what I strive to do; Nitrogen 35% (all vegetable kitchen scraps) manure 15% (I use chicken poop) and lastly carbon 50% (papers, wood chips, saw dust and my

favorite leaves which are very high in mineral and micro nutrients). The more you shred the inputs the faster the process. Granted decomposition (in the winter) slows down below 40 degrees but your bin is a great place to store your waste until the process resumes in the spring. As you know landfills are filling up and the decomposition of organic wastes creates Methane Gas, CH₄ a more insidious greenhouse gas than Carbon Dioxide CO₂. It is estimated that 19% of methane gas emissions are derived from landfills. Trucking to and from landfills, the making of inorganic fertilizers and fuels require high inputs of fossil fuels and contribute vast amounts of greenhouse gases. Composting, helping the environment and recycling vegetation to aide in the renewal of our beds in the spring are something to consider if you are not already composting.

Last year was great growing season hopefully next year will be as good but not likely. Mother Nature can be unpredictable that is just the nature of things. Happy Holidays and Happy Winter Solstice! Joe

Junior Garden Club & School Program Update By Olga Newey

On November 9, 2014, the Junior Garden Club of Teaneck enjoyed its End-of-year Celebration at the Teaneck Greenhouse. Food was provided by the parents who made dishes out of the same kinds of vegetables that the students grew. They grew beets, bok choy, Brussels sprouts, 4 types of carrots, cucumber, eggplant, green beans, 2 types of lettuce, okra, potatoes, peas, radish, yellow and green squash, spinach, sweet potatoes, Swiss chard and 4 types of tomatoes. Basil, sage and parsley herbs were also grown. We decorated our beautiful garden with calendula, marigolds, Mexican sunflowers, nasturtiums and zinnias.

Some of the topics and activities that were covered were: discussion of horticulture, parts of a plant and their function, composting, seeds and how they grow, sowing seeds (vegetables and flowers), transplanting seedlings, watering, weeding, cultivating, harvesting, putting the garden to bed, trees (identification, leaf rubbings), tasting (beets, okra, tomatoes), taking home plants we made (tomatoes, flowers, house plants), propagating (division, plantlet, seed, stem), companion planting. The students each made a presentation on some of the topics covered. Certificates of completion were awarded and then we proceeded to eat. The JGCT teachers conducted tours of the greenhouse to interested parents.

We have begun to plan for next year. In addition to the basic program, we plan on offering a second-year course for returning students.



Junior Garden Club of Teaneck Members

Holiday Party – I Need Help

By Olga Newey

I've been asked to head up our holiday celebration party this year at the Rhodda Center on December 11th at 7:30. Aura will continue to create her beautiful centerpieces

(whew!). I really need help. I need a setup crew and a clean-up crew. I have also broken other jobs down so that we can have a smooth operation. Please email me, cosnew@optonline.net, or phone me, 201-833-1859, if you can help, even if it's for a little tiny bit. **This year, members whose last name begins with the letter A through I please bring entrees, those whose last name begins with J through Z please bring desserts.**

If you would like to participate in the grab bag/gift exchange game, bring a gender neutral wrapped gift of \$10 max. Something related to gardening is always appreciated. In addition, **please don't forget to bring a donation of canned goods for the Helping Hands Food Pantry of Teaneck.**

I would greatly appreciate your RSVP to me, at the above. Let me know what dish you are making so we can be prepared. I would like to start a recipe pamphlet of our dishes, so, bring a 3x5 card with your recipe so that I can produce one. Looking forward to hearing from you, Olga.

Herb of Month - Patty Libutti

From the UrbanHerban's Notebook:

Skylands is hosting a themed Christmas called: "The Twelve Plants of Christmas." Not to be outdone, I wish to install a virtual "Twelve Herbs of the Holidays." The first four: "*Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme*"---they are of the refrain from the Simon & Garfunkel song from the Graduate (1969). Each has medicinal use and symbolic meaning.

It's likely they were seasoning for your holiday meal. In the 1930s, we only saw one of them: *Parsley*---garnishing the turkey. It was the pre-eminent herb in the grocer's The scented ones include *Bayberry*, *Lavender*, and *Bedstraw*. Folk lore has it

that bedstraw was used in baby Jesus' manger, It has a sweet aroma released when it is warmed. See it at the Cloisters next summer.

One herb for the unexpected: *Mistletoe* stands for life out of death, and is a social highlight of holiday parties. Another unexpected herb is used to protect our guests: *Santolina*. Health herbs (*Chamomile, Peppermint and Spearmint*) are part of the twelve herbs of the holidays to make teas for stress-free holidays. Patty Libutti, The **Urban Herban**



Our Lady's Bedstraw at The Cloisters

Pest Patrol by Pat Fromm and Bob O'Brien

Since greenhouse conditions allow rapid development of pest populations, early detection and diagnosis of pest insects are necessary to make control decisions before the problem gets out of hand. Already, we have identified White Flies, Mealy Bug, Aphids and ants. Last year we spent \$1,466.16 which was more than double our budgeted amount in pest management. In addition, we lost an unknown amount in lost sales, all due to these common pests. Please help us meet our goal to decrease that amount this year!

By the time this comes to print, we'll have already deployed *Encarsia formosa* for

white flies and APHIPAR for aphids . But there are other things you can do NOW! PLEASE, once or twice a week and every time you water your plants, make a close inspection to look for pests and take action! Look for speckling, spots, chewed leaves, bronzing, distorted growth, dropping leaves, etc. Look carefully at the underside of the leaves where many problems begin. Some insects will be found within the blossoms, so these should be included in the inspection. There are numerous books in the greenhouse and online sources to help you identify and treat these infestations. Use a magnifying glass to look at the yellow sticky tapes near your table to see what's lurking.

If you brought peppers, chilies, eggplants, and herbs from outside at summer's end you are at risk of importing pests with them. It's best to start with new, healthy specimens in the spring. Some herbs, like rosemary, bay, and verbena can be kept in the back room for a dormancy period. Crowded plants are also more at risk so provide adequate ventilation and spacing between your plants. I know it's so tempting to have as many plants on your bench as you can but it's detrimental to your plants as well as those of others. If you see Mealy Bugs, wash the plant with soap and water and clean or wipe the leaves and stems with a cotton ball soaked in alcohol. Keep the ground under and around your bench and the work tables free of weeds, dropped leaves, cuttings etc. Finally, keep the Pest Patrol informed if you see or have problems with pests and we'll do our best to help and/or advise you. Pat Fromm and Bob O'Brien

Tool Care by Pat Fromm

Garden tools are expensive but good ones can last for years – even generations, if you take good care of them. At the end of summer, clean them and put them away until spring when you need them again.

Cleaning Items You Will Need

- a 5 gallon bucket of sand
- 1 qt Vegetable oil (you can get old oil from McDonalds Burger king, etc)
- Stiff wire brush
- Cloths
- Sand paper
- Bastard file and/or whet stone
- Murphy's Oil Soap

Tool Care Step by Step

1. First, brush off loose soil from both metal and wooden handles
2. Mix the oil into the sand in bucket then plunge metal parts of tools into the sand. This will finely clean the metal as well as slightly oil it to protect it from rust and corrosion.
3. Clean the handle with Murphy's Oil Soap and water. You can rub the Murphy's Oil on and let it sit overnight for a deeper clean or if there is sap or buildup on the wood.
4. Lastly, check the edge of your tool. If it has dulled with use, sharpen with the whet stone or file.
5. One last wipe of your tool, both wood and metal and it's ready to hang up for the winter!
6. There is a bucket of sand by the front door of the greenhouse that the Monday Group used last year to clean the tools. You are welcome to bring your tools into the facility and clean your tools there. I have a whet stone and file as well and if you'd like to borrow either, please let me know. I'm happy to loan them to your group or individually.

Pruning Workshop

By Gerry Limone

Gerry Limone will hold a Pruning Workshop in January the details are:

Where: **Greenhouse**
 When: **January 10th, 2015**
 Time: **1pm for at least 2 hours**
 Cost: **FREE**

Restrictions: **Members Only Workshop**

Notifications: **Posted, email, website**

Tools Needed: **sharp, gloves, a by-pass hand pruner, a lopper and pruning saw if they have. Please dress for out of doors.**

The program will cover:

- Know about the plant to be pruned
- Have the proper tools
- Know your purpose
 - Shape
 - Health
- Operate safely

Weather permitting there will be practical applications on some of the plants on Teaneck Garden Club property.

Final Word

May you all have a healthy, safe, and Happy Holidays. Marty Steeil