

Shoreham Garden Club

<http://shorehamgardenclub.com>

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December 2013

President's Message -

Dear Shoreham Garden Club Members:

As 2013 draws to a close I cannot help but reflect on the year that has passed; a February snow storm challenging even the heartiest of snow lovers, a stellar spring with the earth bursting forth in all its glory, a summer hot, hot, hot and dry, but filled with sunshine, and a fall that thrilled leaf-peepers and pumpkin-pickers across the Island.

Our Club also had an eventful year, of informative and fun events as well as welcoming many new members who bring with them a myriad of gardening and life experience. And 2014 promises to be another active year; in fact for the first time in its history, the SGC will

have Co-Presidents, Pat Thompson and Jean Ozol, who bring with them a host of talents and experiences that will surely benefit the Club.

Members new and old have volunteered to Chair Committees and host events, and the Officers have updated the Constitution and By-Laws to make them "user friendly". Both the Constitution and By-Laws will be submitted to the membership for a vote at the first General Membership meeting in 2014. Indeed, the Shoreham Garden Club is "blooming"



and 2014 promises to be a very good year!

As this is my final message as President of the Shoreham Garden Club, I thank you for the opportunity to be part of a group of wonderful people and wish you a blessed holiday season and peace-filled New Year.

Hope to see you soon,

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EXECUTIVE BOARD

President: Kate Ventura

Vice President: Pat Thompson

Treasurer: Sheila Sussman

Secretary: Elaine Squires

Program Chair: Carol Ryan

THE HISTORY OF HOLIDAY GREENS

Dr. Leonard Perry, University of Vermont

Many people usher in the holiday season by decorating their homes with evergreen boughs, sprigs of holly, garlands, and mistletoe. Although now considered a Christmas tradition, writer Lisa Halvorsen explains how this practice is not something recent, dating back many centuries.

The Greeks and Romans were among the first to bring evergreen boughs indoors in winter. They were amazed that the evergreen remained green year-round, even during the bleak winter months, and decided that it must have supernatural powers. To them it symbolized nature and the promise of spring when the earth would be verdant again.

In the 1800s, greens were used in this country to make memorials to honor loved ones who had died. Evergreen boughs and other greens were woven into wreaths, crosses, and stars and placed on graves in cemeteries. During the Victorian era, the custom of bringing evergreen boughs and other greens into the house at Christmastime was revived. Many people made elaborate arrangements for mantelpieces and tables using boughs, ivy, laurel, yew, and hemlock.

A kiss under the mistletoe, another popular American custom, came from Scandinavia, where according to mythology, Balder, the son of Frigga, the Norse goddess of love, was struck dead by an arrow made of mistletoe. As Frigga wept, her tears fell onto the mistletoe and turned into small, white berries. She declared that mistletoe should no longer be used to kill, but to encourage love. Thus, anyone found standing beneath the mistletoe must be kissed.

Mistletoe also played an important role in the Druid celebrations of the winter solstice. Because it appeared to grow in the air--the plant wound itself around the tree, its roots never touching the soil--the Druid high priests believed that it was a sacred plant. During the solstice, they would climb the trees, cut down the mistletoe, and toss it to the crowd below. It was considered bad luck if even a single sprig touched the ground. Catching the mistletoe ensured that livestock would be fertile and reproduce.

Holly and ivy often are used together in holiday decorations, a tradition that stems from a Middle Ages belief that holly was male and ivy female, and so the two should be intertwined forever. Holly also was thought to have protective powers, while ivy stood for love.

The tradition of decorating evergreen trees for the holidays began with Martin Luther in the early 1500s. Legend has it that he was walking through the woods one Christmas Eve and noticed how the sparkly stars shone through the branches of a snow-covered fir. Wanting to share the magic with his children, he chopped down the tree and brought it home. He decorated it with candles to represent the stars.

In the 1600s, families in France decorated fir trees with gold foil, paper roses, apples, and sweet treats at Christmastime. German immigrants brought this same tradition with them when they settled in America. However, Christmas trees did not become widespread in America until the 1800s. Although first sold commercially in New York City in 1851, it wasn't until four years later, when President Franklin Pierce placed the first tree in the White House, that many Americans adopted the tradition. Electric Christmas tree lights were invented in 1882 by Edward Johnson, Thomas Alva Edison's assistant.



This year, as you deck your halls with holiday greens, think of the history behind these traditions and of the many before you who incorporated greens into their rituals and celebrations.

THE GARDEN CLUB IN ACTION—FALL GARDEN CLUB ACTIVITIES

On September 17th we took a trip to the Highline in New York. The Highline is the elevated train tracks on 8th Ave. We began our trip at Chelsea Market, we had lunch and then walked the entire Highline. It is amazing that amid the hustle and bustle of a New York street in there is an oasis of peace and calm to enjoy and relax. If you get a chance to go, don't miss it.

On September 29th we had a new members reception at the home of Kate & Mike Ventura. Quite a few members attended. The board members explained the duties of the various committee's and chairperson's and we all got to know each other a little better. We thank Kate & Mike for hosting such a lovely evening.

On October 19th we had a members workshop and "fall tasting" at the home of Pat & Charlie Thompson. It was a beautiful day, and we were able to do our "leaf pressings" outside. Judy Farone organized and prepared everything for the project. She taught us how to make beautiful painted leaf impressions on card stock. Everyone brought leaves, ferns to share. The cards turned out beautifully. Afterwards we had a "fall tasting". Everyone brought something that reminded them of fall for us to eat for lunch. The food was amazing, we maybe a garden club, but we have some fantastic cooks in the club. We had squash soup, a whole pumpkin stuffed with meat, rice spices etc. We had a Swedish apple pie, and many other wonderful things to taste. It was a great workshop and a great lunch!

On November 9th we had a general meeting at the North Shore Library. Bill Schiavo, one of our members, spoke about his garden and his use of deer resistant and drought resistant plants for the garden. It was a great program, we left with lots of ideas for some new plants that will keep us happy and the deer looking for food in someone else's garden. The program was very lively and we all had a lot of fun. Bill & Ronnie gave everyone pieces of Christmas Cactus to plant for blooms in next years Holiday Season.



WINTER TREES

All the complicated details
of the attiring and
the dis-attiring are completed!
A liquid moon
moves gently among
the long branches.
Thus having prepared their buds
against a sure winter
the wise trees
stand sleeping in the cold.

William Carlos Williams

"God gave us our memories so that we might
have roses in December." - J. M. Barrie

IN THE WINTER GARDEN

Winter has visited our garden my love
Trees have been stripped bare and flowers wilt
A frost has been laid upon the ground
Even the birds have taken to flight, away
Amid the silence of the morning I walk
Through our garden which we nurtured
How solemn it now looks without colour
The summer seems but a distant memory
How beautiful it looked back then
How beautiful it will look once more
But now in the mornings drab light
With barren trees and wilted flowers
I walk upon the hardened earth
Which feels like stone beneath my feet
We talked of planting a fruit tree
For flavour and shade in years to come
Now that is an idea in waiting
Till winter has passed, and spring returns
Winter is here in our garden my love
As I watch the vapour of my breath rise
I say your name, a love for all time

-Matthew Holloway



Roses are red,
Violets are blue
Gardens are green
They love us too.

Neil Bagget

"Nature has undoubtedly mastered the art of
winter gardening and even the most experienced
gardener can learn from the unrestrained beauty
around them."

- Vincent A. Simeone

Calendar of Events

- ◆ January 7th Executive Board Meeting, 3:00 pm Pat Thompson's home
- ◆ February 22nd Pot Luck Dinner and Raffle, 5:00 pm Location: Dawnmarie Piazza's home
- ◆ March 6th Executive Board Meeting: 3:00 pm Location: Jean Ozol's home
- ◆ March 15th: General Meeting: 10 am Location: Shoreham Public Library
Vote on Budget and Calendar
- ◆ March 20th Spring Newsletter poems and articles deadline
- ◆ April 10th: Executive Board Meeting: 3:00 pm Location: Pat Thompson's home
- ◆ April 12th: General Meeting: 10 am Location: Shoreham Public Library



WINTER GARDEN RECIPE



2 oz Canadian whisky
1/2 oz peach schnapps
1/4 oz sweet sherry

Shake, strain into a glass filled with crushed ice,
and serve.

(From DrinksMixer.com)

CHEERS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Nothin'll Grow There Except Peanut Butter and Bird Seed!!!

Nancy M. Delcher Carroll County Master Gardener

After all the hoopla of Christmas, there is usually Christmas leftovers - namely the tree and the wreath and the greens. Unfortunately these items aren't edible or I would have had them for dinner along with the standard turkey and smashed taters. We can still use them for our bird buddies. I would have included small rodents but they're on my you-know-what list right now for stealing birdseed and tunneling under the air conditioner. Don't take these lovely dried up items to the landfill. Use them as decorative birdfeeders and protection. It's going to snow, I know it is. Dead trees provide some protection for small birds. You can also prop the tree up - put it in an old bucket making sure there's drainage, use rocks to support it (don't tell me you don't have extra rocks - you live in Carroll County) - or - tie it loosely to an existing live tree or trellis or pole. Decorate it with bird treats - suet bells and bars, pinecones dipped in peanut butter and birdseed, dried fruit, etc. What about those popcorn strings your kids wanted to make but never ate? It can actually look nice if you do it right (and you don't have to be Martha Stewart). If you don't use tinsel (horrible stuff) to begin with, you won't have to pick every strand off in order to make it safe for the birds.

One year I took the wreath off the front door when it started to lose its needles and I used small pine cones tied to the wreath that I had smeared with peanut butter and bird seed. I hung it on a nail on a tree out front - the little birds and especially small woodpeckers loved it. It was fun to watch the little guys - they're so pretty they look like live wreath decorations. I did remove all the human decorations - the bow, the jingle bells, and the battery-powered lights!



The squirrels and chipmunks are another story - I gave up and bought the squirrels their own feeder. It cost \$4.95 at Walmart and seems to be worth it. They spend all their time with their butts up in the air, upside down, retrieving little nuggets of corn and peanuts. And, they've given up on the bird feeders! I have found that squirrels don't like safflower seed but chipmunks aren't as picky. For that, I have a cat.



Of course you can always do other useful things with leftover and dying Christmas greenery - mulch! Either chip it up or just cut the branches to use for protecting your sensitive plants. You can make a pile of the branches in a corner of your yard and let whatever wants to live there. One thing you don't want to do is burn this stuff in your fireplace - these sappy trees cause creosote buildup, a potential fire hazard. It's also not a nice idea to compost your poinsettias - just in case you have enough of them to make your compost pile a hazardous waste dump! Save the dirt and dump the plant. Have a great post-holiday

time - it's the best time of year, when all the human demands of the holidays have passed - do something nice for your feathered and furry friends, even those nasty little chipmunks.

GARDEN HUMOR

GARDEN HUMOR



You Know you're A Master Gardener When:

10. You rejoice in rain...even after 10 straight days of it.
9. You have pride in how bad your hands look.
8. You have a decorative compost container on your kitchen counter.
7. You can give away plants easily, but compost is another thing.
6. Soil test results actually mean something.
5. IPM rules!
4. You'd rather go to a nursery to shop than a clothes store.
3. You look for gardens open to the public whenever you go on vacation.
2. Your non-gardening spouse is actually getting involved with your garden endeavors...digging ponds, building bird houses, watering, pruning, turning compost piles, planting...

And you definitely know you're a Master Gardener when...

1. You are surrounded by terrific people who share your passion!

Created by Audrey, Emmitsburg, Md.

Shoreham Garden Club
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*The Shoreham Garden
Club was organized in
1929 and
Chartered in 1949*

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