



# Evergreen Garden Club

## The Wild Iris

Volume 18, Issue 7 April 2004

### *A Word from the President...*

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#### EGC 2003-2004 Board Members

##### President:

Tricia Scott

##### Vice Presidents:

Karla Briggs

Beth Feldkamp

##### Secretary:

Joan Reynolds

##### Treasurer:

Lori Lapp

The **Wild Iris** is a free monthly publication for members of the Evergreen Garden Club.

**Meetings** are held on the second Tuesday of the month from Sept. to June at Church of the Hills, Buffalo Park Rd, Evergreen at 9:15 am. All are welcome.

For **membership** information please contact Lori Lapp at 303-838-8360 or membership@evergreengardenclub.org

**Newsletter Contributions** are due by the 20th of each month to Kathi Grider at 303-670-6909 or wegriders@msn.com

##### Newsletter Editor & Website

Melinda Stroupe 303-526-0485 editor@evergreengardenclub.org

Dear Members,  
We are looking forward to our plants coming out and visiting us again! I have seen in my garden a few green things poking up. It is exciting to think that all those brown, dead plants will be up looking green and pretty before we know it. I love the coming of spring a time to renew and rejoice.

Our next meeting will be with Horticulture agent, Robert Cox . As Karla mentioned Robert has had recent surgery and we are hoping that he is on the mend and will be with us. We do have a back up program in place if he has any health set backs. Keep him in our thoughts and prayers. Church of the Hills has invited all of us to come to their Open House Celebration on Saturday, April, 3 @ 1-3PM. They are celebrating their new look. We will be sending a flower arrangement from all of us to say "Thanks" for all the improve-

ments they have made that affect us, and wishing them well. Hope you can come to it.

As I have mentioned our Membership dues are due! We would like everyone to pay before or at our June meeting. It would be so great to put our membership book "to bed" by the end of June...instead of our usual stressed out summer we go through waiting for checks. If you want to be printed in the membership book for next year we need your checks ASAP. Also we are going to pass around the membership book and the most recent addendum to have you check on your personal info. There will be a quick meeting for those who signed up for the Club's Plant sale after Robert Cox's presentation. We will just touch base and pick out a date for us to meet again. I will have a copy for each of you of everyone else on each committee. We need seven more people to sign

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### *Membership Meeting - April 9th, 2004*

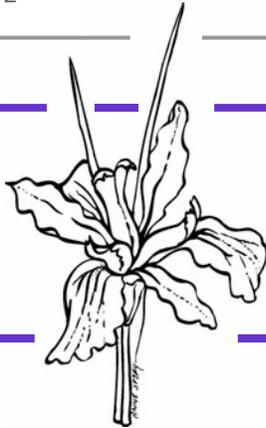
#### **Conifer Trees: Problems And Solutions**

Horticulture Agent Robert Cox will help us identify the diseases our Conifer trees are susceptible to and give us the information on how and most importantly when to treat the problems. Bring all your questions and concerns regarding the Mtn. Pine Beetle, IPS, Spruce Budworm, Mistletoe or any other plague that has rained down on your Conifer

trees.

Robert is the man to ease our troubled minds.

See you at 9:15 at Church of the Hills on Buffalo Park Road. Remember to bring your plants and cuttings for the World Gardening table, and your coffee mug. See you there!



# Garden Club News

**WELCOME!!! New Member:** Jan Brown 22061 Chip-pewa Lane, Golden, CO 80401

## **Clearing the Air** by Marie Hofer, Gardening editor, HGTV.com

Some plants do more than just look pretty

The peace lily waited for me on the front step, and I brought it into the house with mixed feelings. Short of space and already living cheek to jowl with dozens of other seedlings and houseplants, I couldn't imagine where we were going to put it. It was a particularly lusty specimen, a gift from a car dealer to thank me for relieving him of a used car. I parked the plant in an out-of-the-way corner, a place where things typically get forgotten.

But this plant was far from ordinary. The first thing it did--in the space of what seemed like only a few weeks--was to double in size. The second thing it did was develop a personality, maybe somewhat on the hysterical side. We left town for a day and when we returned, the peace lily had swooned. Somewhat like a Victorian princess getting the "vapors," it had shown its displeasure at being short of water by releasing turgor in every single leaf; normally upright, the plant cascaded like a river of leaves over the sides of the pot. I watered it, and within an hour, the plant was back to normal.



**Green comfort:** Many common houseplants (shown here, golden pothos and dieffenbachia) are adept at raising humidity and reducing indoor air pollutants.



**Proximity is everything** when you're looking for cleaning power from your plants. A good-sized plant or two can help freshen a work station

The third thing it did--or I imagined it did--was to help make us feel good. I'd moved the plant (now quite large) next to the computer, where my husband and I both spend a lot of time. Eventually I noticed that we seemed to sneeze less, complain a little less of eye irritation and generally feel a little more comfortable. And maybe we did, for all kinds of reasons that science has already quantified.

In the early '80s NASA found that plants can purify air. It turned out that a number of plants, including the peace lily, are pretty good at absorbing volatile organic chemicals (VOCs), translocating the chemicals to their roots and breaking them down. A worthy deed, since formaldehyde and/or numerous other VOCs are a natural byproduct of many of the ingredients of modern life--

plywood, particleboard, carpeting, synthetic fabrics and plastics, to name the most common. High on the good plant list were the areca palm, lady palm, rubber plant, English ivy, Boston fern. The spider plant, which has often been linked with air-purifying properties, wasn't quite as efficient.

One of the factors influencing VOC-removal rate has to do with the rate of transpiration--that is, how much water evaporates from a plant's leaves. As the plant absorbs water through its roots, air is pulled into the root zone, where microorganisms facilitate the breaking down of the chemicals into sources of food and energy. That would help account for why the peace lily which thirsts for a lot of

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*(Continued from President's Message pg.1)*

up for the Hospitality Committee. If we want the lovely food, tea and coffee at our meetings to continue we need more people to be available for this committee. Our Hospitality Committee sets up the coffee and the beautiful table displays, and stays behind to clean up. We always have people who sign up to bring food, but without our Hospitality Committee to bring it all together it just cannot happen. Please help us with this. There will be clipboards again to sign up! Whatever you can do to help our club will be appreciated. Thanks to those who have already offered their help.

Wishing everyone a great spring. Let us all hope for and get more moisture!

See you at the April meeting.

Tricia

**P.S.** For our May meeting (May 11th) we have decided to combine our clean-up day with our program. So we will go to our gardens in the morning, and then meet back at the church with our picnic lunch afterwards. While eating our lunch I will do our program on topiary designs. As we have only one day booked for our Church of the Hills usage, it makes sense to kill two birds with one stone.

*(Continued from Clearing the Air pg.2)*

water, is so good at what it does.

Still, the best of the air-cleaning plants can remove 1,000 to 1,800 micrograms of VOC per hour, the studies show, but that equates to less than two milligrams of bad stuff. Can people actually tell the difference? A Norwegian study found that office workers whose spaces had plants reported 23 percent fewer complaints of fatigue, stuffy noses, coughing and eye irritation than workers who had no plants nearby. No doubt helping alleviate discomfort was the fact that plants also increase the humidity level of a room to a more comfortable 30 to 60 percent.

Science has also been busy measuring some intangibles. A Texas study showed that workers are better able to solve problems and think of new ideas when plants are around. A Washington State University study found that people who performed a stressful computer task had 12 percent quicker response times and lower systolic blood pressure when plants were around. In fact, in some cases plants don't have to be immediately present; hospital patients recover a little faster from surgery and require less pain medication with just a view of a garden. But that's another story. There are plenty of studies showing that people often report feeling less stressed when there are only pictures of plants or nature around. What tangible things do plants do when they're present? Studies have shown that people feel more attentive, think a little more clearly and possibly even more innovatively, when plants are around. They report feeling less stressed. Researchers seem to be finding out that plants not only help remove airborne chemicals and dust, but they may help us feel generally better.

### **Air Cleaners at Their Best**

If you want to help freshen your indoor air, here are some points to keep in mind:

- Plants aren't a panacea. You can't offset the effect of polyurethane with even two dozen areca palms. Plants, no matter how many you have or what kind, are no substitute for good ventilation and, more important, eliminating or reducing the source of the pollution whenever possible. Plants aren't powerful vacuum cleaners that suck contaminants from across a large room. Put them near where you spend a lot of time--by your computer, in the kitchen, beside a comfortable chair.
- Pea gravel on the surface of your potted plants or use a hydroponic (growing in water, not soil) system.
- Keep your houseplants as vigorous as possible. The healthier they are, the better job they'll do at reducing air pollutants.

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## *Minutes of the March 9th, 2004 Meeting*

### Minutes of the March 9, 2004 Evergreen Garden Club Meeting

President Tricia Scott called the meeting to order at 9:38 am. There were 38 members in attendance. Tricia passed around clipboards with sign ups for the Garden Club Plant Sale June 5th, as well as sign ups for hospitality, next year's team leaders, orders for shirts, and Earth Day to be on April 24, 2003.

Secretary Joan Reynolds gave a report on a thank you from one of the World Gardening recipients in India.

Treasurer Lori Lapp reported that we have \$554.77 in checking, \$8851.59 in savings, for a combined total of \$9405.96. We have raised \$306 from the library book sale. She also noted and thanked Priscilla Chapin for donating a 2003 version of Quicken to update our bookkeeping.

A new member, Jan Brown was introduced and welcomed.

Louise Mounsey thanked all the generous donors for the many wonderful plants and spring items for the World Gardening table. She encouraged members to continue donating and to give generously. Our donations to World Gardening have exceeded previous years' donations, shattering previous records!

Joan Reynolds spoke about the Relay For Life to be held July 17-18 and started a sign up for our team.

Evergreen High School students will be working at the Evergreen Metro District Office on April 14th 9:30 to 1. Anyone interested in 'watching kids work' is welcome to observe as Irma Wolf supervises this volunteer workday.

Irma gave an update on the irrigation situation at the traffic circle. Irma and Ken Ball attended the last board meeting and it was decided to try to get a 'key' to the nearby fire hydrant to hook a hose up to water this garden as needed, since the costs of trenching in a pipeline and digging holes in the garden were very high and the hole digging would cause measurable disturbance to the happy plants existing in the roundabout. Gerry Shulte from the Evergreen Metro Water District wasn't too keen on the fire hydrant key idea; instead he offered to install a water spigot next to the fire hydrant! Ken and Irma were measuring the planters to be our new project as Gerry returned from lunch and Ken was listing good plant selections for the planters. Irma and Ken agreed that this may have helped in such a positive offer from Mr. Shulte. Ken has graciously (as always!) consulted on this project. This is a 'go' pending Water Board approval of the spigot.

Tricia encouraged members to pay their dues ASAP and also started a copy of the yearbook to be passed around with a current addendum attached for members to check their information. She stressed that her goal is to have all the information on the committees and members complete by our June meeting. This includes dues to be paid.

Julaine Kennedy reported that she has lost her Evergreen Garden Club work-shirt. She kindly asked members to keep a look out for it.

The business meeting was concluded at 10:03 a.m. with a break until 10:30 before our program. Dore Huss, owner of Stems, a flower shop located in Marshdale, gave a wonderfully creative and fun demonstration on arranging fresh flowers in unusual containers. Her fresh, natural and 'loose' approach, mixing all sorts of things, was refreshing. Many questions were asked and answered as she worked her magic. Dore's 'tricks' using curly wood as a frog WOWed us, as did her unique containers. Her use of sticks across the top of one vase gave everyone a new look at arranging flowers, and a lovely way to make them 'stay'. She generously passed out miniature gardening tools with a card attached offering Garden Club members a 10% discount for purchases made for the next year. Members lingered afterward inspecting and trying to memorize how she had created several unique arrangements. Dore's lively personality and great selection of unusual cut flowers will likely see many new customers, as well as increased visits from her existing clients in our membership!

Respectfully submitted,  
Joan Reynolds  
Secretary



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## Over The Garden Fence

*By Karla Briggs*

### **A GARDEN ON THE ROCKS**

I attended a class presented by Marilyn Raff on rock gardening and I realized that a rock garden is probably the most suitable and feasible garden for our area. A rock garden can be a perfect solution to aid in erosion on a steep slope, it traditionally contains regional plantings, it is a viable alternative to turf, it is xeric in nature, and the plantings are often not on the elk and deer A side of the menu.

To create a rock garden, begin by investigating your site's exposure to sun, water and wind. Rock garden plants require a sunny site and good drainage. No wet feet for these drought-tolerant plants. A mixture of 1/3 gravel, 1/3 compost and 1/3 soil is a good place to start. Fortunately, rock garden plants require workable soil only 8" deep. Remember that the soil will settle whether you create a berm or till the existing site. The most ideal situation is to prepare the site and soil in the fall and then plant in the spring. If you can't wait to plant--what gardener can--remember to plant a little deeper to accommodate the settling of the soil.

Selecting rocks for the garden is limited only by your imagination. Lots of small rocks, a few huge rocks, or a combination of sizes will work. The kind of rock used is a matter of taste and cost. A trip to the high country will provide all the inspiration you need; Mother Nature has done a marvelous job creating rock gardens on grand and small scales. The only requirement for placing rocks is to bury them securely so your rocks don't roll! The shape, texture and color of the rocks add interest to the design of the garden. Rocks can also create a bit of shade for those one or two shade-loving plants you must have.

Now for the best part: the plants! April 17th is Denver Botanic Gardens' annual rock garden plant sale. The sale is an excellent place to learn about and purchase plants for the garden. There are gardeners to answer your questions and give advice and ideas. The two traditional planting schemes in a rock garden are specimen plantings and sweep plantings. Specimen plantings feature a single plant or grouping of a single plant, while sweep plantings are a swath of plants weaving their way through the garden.

Last but not least: MULCH. A rock garden must have mulch to protect the plants from heaving and to maintain moisture. The kind of mulch used is up to the gardener. Some options are wood chips, pine straw or rock mulch. A depth of 2-3" will provide the protection the plants need in our climate.

It is a good idea to create a barrier around the rock garden to prevent grass from moving in. A path to provide access to the garden for weeding and watering and also to wander and view the garden is helpful.

Suggested reading: "Rock Garden Design and Construction", North American Rock Garden Society. Well, there you have it--a beginner's guide to creating a garden on the rocks.

Karla Briggs

# HORTICULTURE

## Creating an indoor Jungle

By John Starnes

*Submitted by Jean Todd.*

For many gardeners, winter's return and too-long stay is none too welcome. For them, an indoor jungle of houseplants provides a tenuous link to sanity during those cold, bleak months - living hope that our cabin fever will finally give way to joyful spring delirium. Soon, our soil will be warm again, our gardens brimming with flowers and fresh produce.



Winter doesn't have to be fatal for plants, if you help them adapt.

To salve our spirits, many of us try to cheer up our homes with houseplants. But have you ever watched a favorite spathiphyllum or dracena or begonia sicken and die without warning? Did you then buy another one only to have tragedy repeat itself despite resorting to pesticides and expensive blue "miracle" fertilizers? Kind of makes you understand folks who fill their homes with silk and plastic flowers. Yet we all know someone who doesn't fuss over their lovely winter indoor jungle, so what gives?

First of all, most of the houseplants we buy were grown to perfection in humid greenhouse conditions and often routinely sprayed with fungicides and insecticides and fed with chemical fertilizers applied to light, fluffy artificial soils. Once out in the real world and in our dry dusty homes, they are off life support. But hey, weren't they supposed to cheer you up instead of adding to your winter depression? So, here are a few cheap and easy things you can do to help them adapt to a healthy new life in your home.

Repot them into real soil, or at least top dress them with it. That fluffy, lifeless stuff, often with bits of plastic foam in it, dries out in the blink of an eye, especially with central heating dehydrating the air in your home.

Try making a damp mixture of three parts bagged or homemade compost, one part cheap clay cat litter and one part alfalfa pellets you can buy a 50 pound bag of at a feed store. (Any unused alfalfa pellets can be scattered in the garden if you have only a few potted plants.) Toss this damp mixture like a salad, let it age two weeks in a large container, then repot your houseplants in it, or at least apply an inch of it to the top of the soil in all your potted plants. As this rich homemade soil mellows, it will ripen into a biologically active, moisture- and nutrient-retentive medium that needs only a few deep waterings a month. Plant roots will thrive in it.

I also like to add a few earthworms from the garden to each pot to keep the soil loose and more fertile. Bury a couple nuggets of dry dog or cat food a few inches down to give the worms an ideal food source.

Throw that perky blue soluble fertilizer, or those pricey fertilizer stakes, or those very expensive beaded slow-release ones out in a landscape bed where they can provide a little artificial nutrition without causing much harm. Why? They usually lack many essential elements that plants need to be healthy, and are often so high in salts that a crust of them forms on the outside of clay pots. Those salts cause brown leaf tips and poor overall health. Instead, buy a bottle of old-fashioned Alaska Fish Emulsion, or any fish emulsion that plainly states it is made from seagoing fish. Not only will your plants get their first complete meal of all plant nutrients in balanced amounts, they will be spared soluble salts.

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*Continued from Horticulture pg.6)*

Sure it smells fishy for a few hours after you treat your plants to it, but just pretend you are strolling along a balmy Caribbean beach. Fish emulsion is so beneficial to potted plants that even if you don't give them that improved homemade soil but switch to a feeding of dilute fish emulsion every two months, you'll see a dramatic improvement in overall health. And at 3 tablespoons per gallon of water, it goes a long way, making it less expensive than inferior chemical fertilizers. If you have many potted houseplants, you can't beat "Mile High Rose Feed" since nearly all plants (not just roses) utterly thrive on this fully complete, all-natural dry fertilizer that even contains kelp meal.

Look for it in small buckets or big bags; sprinkle it on your potted plants' soil every 3 months about as heavily as you would Parmesan cheese on spaghetti. You may well be stunned how well your houseplants respond to either it or the fish emulsion.

Mealy bugs. Spider mites. Scale. Aphids. Don't you just cringe upon noticing them sucking the life out of your plants? Just remember, they prefer sickly, poorly fed, stressed plants coated with house dust.

So now that you've given your potted plants good soil and a wonderful meal, give them a shower once a month to rinse off dust and spider mites clinging to the undersides of leaves. A forceful stream of warm water from the shower head will dislodge most pests, remove that dust, plus give the soil a good deep monthly drench. Let them drain and drip dry in the tub and put them back in their spots clean and refreshed. Mealy bugs cling tightly to stems, so use a small paintbrush dipped into rubbing alcohol to kill them. Soil gnats hover in the air and are harmless to people, pets and plants, but if you can't stand them, flypaper is a cruel but effective measure. You now have a green thumb with indoor plants. And as your living collection and your confidence grows, you can almost look forward to each winter and being surrounded indoors by the hopeful green glow of chlorophyll. And just imagine waking up to colorful new blooms on a cozy window sill as a blizzard rages just beyond the cold glass.

What could be better revenge against Old Man Winter than soaking in that sight?

*Submitted by Jean Todd*

*(continued from Clean Air pg.3)*

### **Great Green Air Cleaners**

Areca palm (*Chrysalidocarpus lutescens*)  
 Lady palm (*Rhapis excelsa*)  
 Bamboo palm (*Chamaedorea seifrizii*)  
 Rubber plant (*Ficus elastica*)  
 Golden pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*)  
 Florist mum (*Chrysanthemum morifolium*)  
 Dracaena 'Janet Craig' (*Dracaena deremensis* 'Janet Craig')  
 Pygmy date palm (*Phoenix roebelenii*)  
 Fig 'Alii' (*Ficus macleilandii* 'Alii')  
 Boston fern (*Nephrolepis exaltata*)  
 Peace lily (*Spathiphyllum* sp.)  
 Corn plant (*Dracaena fragrans*)  
 Golden pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*)  
 Florist mum (*Chrysanthemum morifolium*)  
 Gerbera daisy (*Gerbera jamesonii*)



Dracaena ranks high in the ability to remove formaldehyde from the air

### **For more information:**

This great little book describes the care and culture of 50 plants that can help purify the air in your home or office, rating the plants on how well they remove chemical vapors, how easy they are to care for, etc.: *How to Grow Fresh Air* by B. C. Wolverton

**Plants at Work** (affiliated with the Associated Landscape Contractors of America)

Website: *Plants At Work*

*(submitted by Toni Yerkes)*

## Happy Easter!

### Hop into spring by customizing Easter baskets with simple gifts

- For many children, it's an essential rite of spring: waking on Easter morning to find a basket filled with gifts and sweets left by the Easter Bunny.
- This modern tradition has its roots in pre-Christian festivals of thousands of years ago, when the end of winter was celebrated at the vernal equinox.
- Eggs were decorated and shared as symbols of renewal and birth, and baskets abundant with gifts were exchanged among neighbors and friends.
- Still a wonderful way to welcome the new season, the sharing of thoughtfully stocked Easter baskets is not for children alone. Here are some ideas for making these springtime surprises unique and personal.



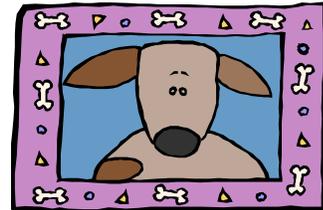
### Basket of plants

- Turn an Easter basket into a tiny, portable garden, and it will be thriving long after all those chocolate bunnies are gone.
- To make, line a woven basket with a plastic container, fill with potting soil, then add transplantable spring plants from your local garden center or florist. Use greenery such as creeping fig and ferns; a flowering plant such as an African violet; a bunch of Irish moss; or any other small plant that appeals to you. Add a handle to the basket if it doesn't already have one: A pliable pussy-willow branch, bent into shape and fastened in place with floral wire, is an attractive choice.

### Don't forget Easter treats for man's best friend!

#### Etta's Biscuits by Lori Lapp

- 1/3 cup margarine or Unsweetened applesauce
- 1/2 cup powdered milk
- 1 egg, beaten
- 3/4 cup hot water or chix or beef broth Etta's Biscuits



- 1/3 cup margarine or Unsweetened applesauce
- 1/2 cup powdered milk
- 1 egg, beaten
- 3/4 cup hot water or chix or beef broth
- 1/2 tea granulated garlic
- 3 cups whole wheat flour
- Pour hot liquid over margarine/applesauce
- Stir in powdered milk, garlic and eggs
- Add flour 1/2 c at a time
- Knead 3 - 4 minutes (May need to add more flour to make very elastic dough)
- Roll out to 1/4 inch thickness
- Cut into shape - the dogs don't care if they have cute shapes - but we do.
- Bake 325 degrees for approx 50 - 60 minutes - Be sure hard
- Cook and watch the tails wag!

# Evergreen Garden Club

PO Box 1393

Evergreen, Colorado 80437

[www.evergreengardenclub.org](http://www.evergreengardenclub.org)



*Celebrating our  
38th Anniversary*

## Denver Botanic Gardens Schedule of Events

[www.botanicgardens.org](http://www.botanicgardens.org)

North American Rock Garden Society

Location: Mitchell Hall

Date: April 17, 2004

Time: 9AM-5PM

Admission: Free with Garden Admission

### What's Blooming

#### Plant of the Week—**Week of March 22, 2004**

*Townsendia hookeri*, also known as Easter daisy, is a diminutive but lovely genus of the Aster family. It is a sun-loving perennial that can be found throughout the Rocky Mountains from the central United States to Canada. Its growth habit could be described as a small, grey-green, hairy, cushion-like mound with small, white daisy-like flowers covering its surface from late March through July. *Townsendia hookeri* flourishes in dry, open places and sagebrush hills. In Colorado they can be found in Park County in the Mosquito Range, and in Boulder County along Left Hand Canyon. At Denver Botanic Gardens, *Townsendia hookeri* can be found in Wildflower Treasures.

