



# Evergreen Garden Club

## The Wild Iris

Volume 18, Issue 1 December 2005

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

#### **Inside this issue:**

Club News.....	2
Minutes.....	3
Garden Fence .....	4
Horticulture .....	6

#### **EGC 2005-2006 Board Members Presidents:**

Jean Todd  
Meredith Bossert

#### **Vice Presidents:**

Kathi Grider  
Nan Spence

#### **Secretary:**

Chris Gray

#### **Treasurer:**

Priscilla Chapin

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 Priscilla Chapin at 303-697-4140 or Pris4430@aol.com

**Newsletter Contributions** are due by the 20th of each month to Karla Briggs at karla@tuppersteam.com

**Newsletter Editor & Website**  
Beth Feldkamp 303-679-9465  
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Al Blount and Nancy Ditman, Master Gardener, both of the Denver Garden Railway Society, presented such an interesting program on small G-scale railroads and gardens. So many clever ideas provide inspiration to all of us. Al had wonderful pictures of many different railroad gardens, giving us different perspectives. In Al's garden and some of the others presented, the built-to-scale structures, bridges, people, and vintage cars were made by hand and included amazing details. The gardens were beautiful with small trees pruned to scale, colorful small flowers and groundcovers. Nancy actually starts the vast majority of her plants, including perennials, from seed in her basement with a light set-up and greenhouse area. She cannot bring herself to throw away plants, so she sells them, cheap, to people who come by her house. We might be visiting you, Nancy. Nan Spence can provide Nancy's address and phone number.

Thanks again to Joan Reynolds for pinch-hitting with secretarial duties. Thanks, also, to Virginia Cerrillo for volunteering to help Louise Mounsey with the World Gardening table and for shredding our excess membership booklets from last year. It's good to know that our e-mail addresses, etc. are not accessible to those who are not garden club members. Trish, thank

you for donating the profit from the lovely center piece you created for our table and silent auction. You give SO much to this group.

Louise Mounsey needs help with the telephone tree. Please think about volunteering. It is used in between meetings to call the approximately 16 people who do not have e-mail in order to communicate critical information.

We are looking forward to our trip to see the Blossoms of Lights on December 13 at the Denver Botanic Gardens. We have chartered a 20-passenger van from the Evergreen Senior Resource Center. Vicki Joyce has volunteered to drive a few more in her van if necessary. Call Nan Spence or Kathi Grider for details. Watch for e-mail updates and phone calls before the trip.

As the holidays are celebrated and 2005 comes to a close, we send a big thank you to Kathi Grider and Nan Spence for the entertaining programs we have enjoyed. We look forward to those planned for 2006. To our enthusiastic and wonderful club members and our hard-working board, we wish peaceful holidays and a joyous new year.

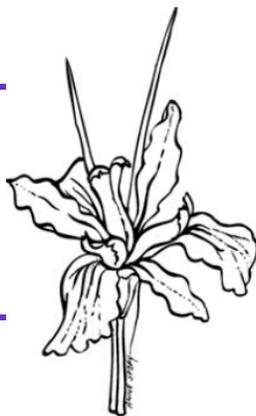
Jean & Meredith

### *Membership Meeting - December 13, 2005*

#### ***Blossoms of Lights***

In lieu of the club's traditional wreath-making day, let's take a holiday outing! What could be more festive than the Blossoms of Lights at the Denver Botanic Gardens. In order to enjoy the lights, of course, we'll have to

attend in the evening hours. Stay tuned for more specific information as the holidays approach.



# Garden Club News

**Welcome New Members!!!**  
**Eleanor Viergever and JoAnn McGee**

*Happy Holidays!*

The bus is full! 20 have signed up to ride the bus to the Botanic Gardens for Blossoms of Light on Tuesday Dec. 13th.

The bus leaves **promptly** at 5:30pm from the Church of the Hills parking lot, and will return around 9:30pm. There will be light refreshments. See you there!

**\*\*Denver Botanic Gardens is a drop-off point for the Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation's Joy Drive! Drop off a new unwrapped toy or book for a child (ages newborn to 18) to the Gardens' Front Gate or Information Desk between November 10 and December 25 and receive a voucher for one free child's admission to Blossoms of Light.**

## **Why Most Calcium Supplements Are Useless for Osteoporosis**

From Bottom Line Health

For years, American women have been taking calcium supplements for stronger bones. Yet they continue to get osteoporosis in record numbers. Why? Because taking supplements is not enough. You also need to engage in weight-bearing exercise.

But here's good news. You don't have to lift heavy weights or do torturous aerobic workouts. Researchers have studied the effect of different activities, and they've found that one of the best bone building activities is **gardening!** In fact, **gardening** was more effective than almost all the other activities studied.

**Bonus:** Because **gardening** is performed outdoors, your body is also exposed to sunlight, which provides bone-building vitamin D. Just make sure you apply sunscreen if you're going to be spending more than 15 minutes in the sun.

## *Minutes of the November 8, 2005 Meeting*

President Jean Todd called the meeting to order at 9.35am. 42 members were in attendance.

Jean welcomed new member Eleanor Viergever to the club. Eleanor has recently relocated to the Evergreen area from Michigan.

Jean welcomed three members to the meeting who had been recently been absent due to illness – Bev Wickland, Sandee Ball and Chris Gray.

Joan Reynolds, acting secretary, presented the secretary's report. Joan read three thank you notes that had been received from World Gardening recipients. Because last year EGC made a record contribution to World Gardening, more funds were available for distribution. Joan noted that two of the three thank you notes were received from new recipients of our funds.

Jean made a motion for the minutes of the October meeting to be accepted. A 2nd motion was made and the October minutes passed as written.

Priscilla Chapin presented the treasurer's report:

EGC Checking	\$416.66
EGC Savings	\$9,213.74
Total Assets	\$9,630.40

Jean informed members that copies of the proposed budget were available for members. A motion was made by Tricia Scott to accept the budget as written. Louise Mounsey made a 2nd motion. The budget was accepted as presented by treasurer Priscilla Chapin.

Jean expressed her thanks to Jinny Cerillo for the help she had given Jean in the shredding of all the outdated EGC member books.

**New Business:** Kathi Grider informed members that our Dec. meeting will be to the DBG to see their Blossoms of Light festival. The bus can accommodate a max of 20 people. Cost is \$15.50 and that includes transportation, admission to the DBG, entertainment and refreshments on the bus. Guests are welcome. Cost for a guest is \$20.00 as the club is picking up the cost of refreshments for EGC members only. The bus will leave Church of the Hills parking lot at 5.30pm and will return by 9.30pm. A sign up sheet is available. This is the first evening field trip for EGC members, and very enjoyable evening is expected. Kathi noted that in case of inclement weather, DBG would give us a rain check for this event.

On November 1, the board held their monthly board meeting. Liz Hamilton and Beth Feldkamp were also in attendance. Both Beth and Liz informed the board that EGC needs to update the software that is used in putting together the Wild Iris. The cost of the new software would be \$200.00. This money has been allocated in the budget. Liz will also update the EGC web site and will give the club a zip file. Liz informed the board that EGC website had 5,003 visits through May '05. April '05 was the busiest month with a total of 912 visits. At present, links are available to both the CSU web site and DBG web site.

Jean noted that the beautiful centerpiece on the hospitality table had been brought by Tricia Scott. Wholesale cost of the centerpiece was \$15.00. A silent auction would be held, bidding would begin at \$16.00 and any profit would go to the club. Tricia plans to bring a centerpiece for silent auction at monthly meetings as often as possible. Tricia also informed members that she had received a bill for the denim shirts that had been ordered and that she was expecting the shirts to arrive very soon.

On Sat November 12, Conifer will hold their annual arts and crafts fair at Conifer High School from 9am to 4pm. 10% of all proceeds go back to the community.

The alternative Christmas fair is also scheduled for this coming weekend, November 12 & 13 at Church of the Hills.

*(Continued on pg.5)*



## Over The Garden Fence *By Karla Briggs*

### ***YOU SAY TOMATO, I SAY SUN GOLD***

The first time I met Tricia Scott I knew we would be fast friends. We were at an Evergreen Garden Club meeting where we were discussing all things gardening. It was during that conversation we discovered our shared love for a particular tomato, the SUN GOLD.

The Sun Gold is a small tangerine-orange sweet cherry tomato. It has a high sugar content that produces a delicious peppery, citrus taste. The first small globe of fruit I popped into my mouth sent me into convulsions of ecstasy. They are delightful eaten fresh from the vine and when you cook them all of their sugary, flavorful goodness is enhanced. I have roasted them, sautéed them, and added them to any and all recipes that call for tomatoes. These little gems have been my sustenance while working in the garden. I simply say to myself, "I need a little something" and walk into the greenhouse and devour a handful or two.

The Sun Gold tomato is easy to grow. At our Evergreen/Conifer altitudes it can be grown in a container, cold frame or greenhouse. As with all tomatoes, our cool evening temperatures prevent the fruit from setting so some protection from cold is required.

Tomatoes are divided into two major categories: bush and vining. The bush varieties are known as determinate and the vining varieties are known as indeterminate. The Sun Gold is an indeterminate, a vining variety, so it requires lots of room for the roots to grow and staking to get them to grow vertically and provide support for the plant. If the plant is to be grown in a container it should be a large one, five gallons or more. I grow tomatoes in a raised bed in the greenhouse. Staking can be done with string, wire or cages. I use tall tomato cages. The trick is to start staking the seedlings right off the bat to prevent breaking the branches or stems.

Tomatoes require a well-drained soil with lots of decomposed organic matter, aka, Karla's horse poop. The plants also require high amounts of phosphorus for flower and fruit development. Tomatoes are "heavy feeders" but when grown in containers or confined areas it is easy to over feed the plants. Diluting commercial fertilizers to a third strength is a good rule of thumb.

Sun Gold tomatoes are self pollinating. They are easy to grow from seed, which is good because the plants are difficult to find for sale in the retail market. Tomato seeds need a germination temperature of 70-75 degrees. When the plants emerge, move them to full light. As soon as they get their fourth or fifth leaf, transplant them into large containers or beds. If you are a tobacco smoker or chewer, wash your hands or wear gloves before handling the plants, tomatoes are very susceptible to tobacco mosaic leaf virus.

Allow the surface soil to dry out between watering, but NEVER let the plants wilt. Regular watering prevents a myriad of diseases, so maintain a strict watering schedule. Planting tomatoes too close together also increases the chance of disease. Give the plants lots of room, around 2 feet between plants, for good air circulation and light penetration.

Pruning indeterminate tomato plants encourages fruit development, because less of the plants' energy is being used to grow excess stems and leaves.

*(Continued on pg. 5)*

*(Continued from Minutes pg.3)*

At the board meeting on Nov 1, discussion was held re the updating of brochures for the garden at the Evergreen Library. It was decided by the board that since the EGC brochures need to be updated, the board will undertake this project. The newly updated brochures will then be available at the library and a separate sheet will be inserted in the brochures with a detailed list of the plants in the library garden. Ken Ball informed members that the library will not pay for the cost of the brochures, but will pay for the cost of any plants.

World Gardening: Louise Mounsey encouraged members to look over all the wonderful items that had been brought to the World Gardening table and encouraged members to purchase these items. There will not be a World Gardening event in December. Louise informed members that she needs help with the phone tree. Ginny Cerillo will help Louise with the setting up of the World Gardening table every month.

The meeting adjourned at 10.25am.

Following a short break and a little social time, it was time for our much-anticipated program of Garden Railways to begin. For this presentation, we were graced with the presence of several guests of EGC members. With a toot of the train whistle from president Jean Todd and "All Aboard" call from vice president Nanette Spence, we were off on a wonderful journey through tiny landscapes and villages.

Al Blout is President of the Denver Garden Railway Society. Al's own railway layout has been featured on Channel 7 and Channel 9 and "The Denver Post." Although his railway is only three years old, it is an amazing miniature representation of turn-of-the-century Colorado. His layout's success lies in its scale. Flagstones form cliffs and canyons. Compared to the trains, sweet alyssums appear to be the size of lilac hedges. Johnny-jump-ups cast shadows on the roofs of the tiny buildings. Patches of Irish and Scottish moss simulate grassy lawns, and dwarf Alberta spruce seem as towering as lodge pole pines.

Nancy Ditman is a member of the Denver Garden Railway Society. She is also a Master Gardener with Arapahoe County. Nancy took us through a quick tour of her gardens filled with both annual and perennials, most of which are grown from seeds started in her basement where she has created a unique germination setup. When ready, these plants will be placed in the garden through which Nancy's two unique trains pass through. One of her trains is made up of cars for each of the major holidays. Cars especially created for each of her grandchildren comprise the second train.

Al also took us on a tour of a few of the more than one hundred garden railways in the Denver area. The program came to a halt at 12 noon. Many members expressed interest in a summer field trips to visit some of these Denver area garden railroads.

Respectfully submitted,  
Chris Gray, Secretary.



*(Continued from Over the Garden Fence pg. 4)*

Prune the plants' side shoots that grow right above where each leaf stem is attached to the main stem. When the plant is eight to ten feet tall or when the height exceeds the growing space or your reach, prune the top five inches of the leader stem.

I have saved the most valuable piece of information for last: where to buy Sun Gold tomato seed. My source is "Johnny's Seeds". The moment I receive the catalog, I call in my order. I never want to be left standing in the cold, dark land where no Sun Gold tomatoes grow. Sing it with me now, "you say tomato, I say Sun Gold".

Karla

## Make Beauty Last Longer

A few simple steps can keep your seasonal plants vibrant.  
By Fran Sorin



**Poinsettia:** Set your poinsettia in a sunny spot in a cool room.

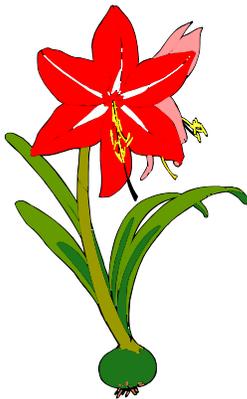
Don't overwater it -- wait till it's dry.

**Amaryllis:** This bulb can easily be brought to bloom year after year.

**Christmas cactus:** This favorite can be passed down from generation to generation if given the correct care.

Holiday plants add beauty and color to our homes during the season, but getting them to last can be daunting. Here are some tips to ensure success: Poinsettias are the most popular Christmas plant, representing more than 85% of the potted plants sold during the holiday season. When buying them, choose plants with deep green foliage and completely colored bracts (the modified leaves that people think are flowers). Make sure the true flowers, which are at the base of the bracts, are green- or red-tipped and look fresh. If they are, the bloom will last longer.

At home, put the plants in a sunny spot. If you plan to keep the pots wrapped in foil, place saucers under the plants and punch holes in the foil to drain excess water. Water only when the plants are dry. Poinsettias thrive in daytime temperatures of 60 to 70 degrees and as low as 55 degrees at night. If the temperature is too high, they won't last as long. Keep them away from windows and heaters.



The amaryllis bulb, which originated in South America, is one of the easiest bulbs to bring to bloom. Select large, firm bulbs, and use a pot with good drainage; plant the bulbs with their lower third below the soil line and place them in a sunny, warm location. After planting, firm the soil around the bulbs so they are secure. Water sparingly until the first shoots appear, then continue to water whenever the soil is dry, and fertilize monthly. Once the bulbs have flowered, within six to eight weeks, move them to a cooler location with less direct sunlight to help prolong the flowering period.

After the amaryllis has finished blooming, place it in a sunny window and continue to water and feed monthly.

During the summer, bulbs may be placed outside in a semi-shady location (keep them in their containers). Once the leaves begin to turn yellow, stop fertilizing and cut back on watering. In early September, before the first frost, bring the amaryllis indoors. Move the bulbs to a cool, dry (do not water them during this phase) and dark location until new growth emerges, usually within two months. This is a good time to either re-pot your amaryllis if needed (usually every three to four years) or add some new potting mix to the top 2 inches of soil, combined with a granular fertilizer. As in the previous year, place all of the bulbs in a sunny position, water and fertilize. This simple cycle of care will keep your amaryllis magnificent for years to come.

*(Continued on pg. 7)*

# HORTICULTURE

(Continued from Horticulture pg.6)



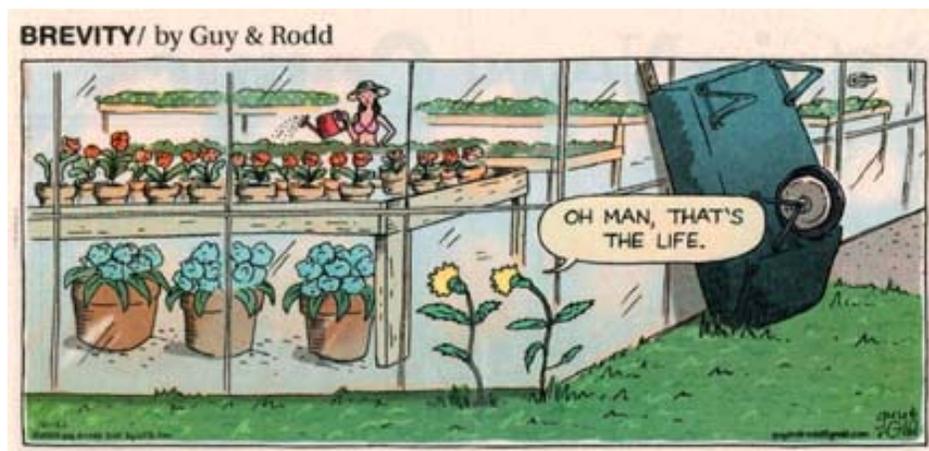
The Christmas cactus, a favorite houseplant originally from Brazil, does best when grown in potting mixes formulated for cactuses and succulents. It thrives in bright, indirect light during the winter and prefers a cool temperature, around 60 degrees. To maintain a humidity level of 50% to 60%, put a vase of water near the plant. Keep it away from drafty doors and heating vents.

If buds start dropping, it could be due to cold, lack of humidity, insufficient or excessive sunlight, or overwatering. The rule of thumb is "less is more" -- water the cactus only when it's bone-dry.

If you want your Christmas cactus to re-bloom after the holiday season, give it a month's rest. Place it in a cool room (50 degrees) and water minimally. In spring, place it in a bright room and begin to water it. After the danger of frost has passed, the cactus can be taken outside to a shady or semi-shady location. In September, bring it back indoors, reduce the watering and cover it for 12 hours each night until buds start to appear. Once buds develop, uncover the cactus and begin to water more frequently. This plant thrives when rootbound, so re-pot only when absolutely necessary (a good time is late winter). Prune your cactus after it blooms to help encourage healthier and more expansive growth.

That doesn't sound so difficult, does it? Now you can enjoy your holiday plants long after you've put away the rest of your decorations.

Fran Sorin is the host of a weekly gardening radio show for Infinity Broadcasting. She last wrote about enjoying your fall garden.



Submitted by Karla

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## **Denver Botanic Gardens Schedule of Events** [www.denverbotanicgardens.org](http://www.denverbotanicgardens.org)

### 2005-2006 Blossoms of Light

Every evening from December 3, 2005 through January 22, 2006, Denver Botanic Gardens turns into a winter wonderland as it is blanketed in dazzling holiday lights which highlight the natural beauty of the Gardens.

Over 1 million colorful lights draped in elegant designs will illuminate the plants and hardscapes throughout more than 17 acres of the Gardens. A variety of entertainment will be held each evening in the Garden Pavilion outdoor heated tent, Mitchell Hall and also strolling around the gardens. See the sparkling lights magically transformed into shimmering snowflakes through the lenses of our new 3-D HoloSpex glasses.

Indoors in Gates Lobby Court, a captivating display of seasonal plants will be on display. Piping hot beverages will accompany savory snack offerings. There will be a concession stand inside the Main Building in December and January. A vendor will be selling roasted nuts at the entrance of the Romantic Gardens each evening in December and Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays in January. The Gardens' Conservatory will be closed during Blossoms of Light.

Blossoms of Light is also the place to get great holiday gifts.

The Broomfield Choir will be performing on Dec. 13th. Performance times are 6:30 & 8pm