



Evergreen Garden Club

The Wild Iris Volume 18, Issue 11 January 2006

A Word from the Presidents...

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
brucebethf@comcast.net

The warm, comfortable van from the Seniors' Resource Center transported 20 Garden Club members to view the Denver Botanic Gardens "Blossoms of Light" on December 13, 2005. We enjoyed walking through the gardens to see the myriad of colored and white lights adorning the trees, shrubs and garden arbors. The weather for the evening was perfect for an outdoor event – brisk, but not too cold for hardy folk from Evergreen. Three Tomatoes catering service had set up a table for us with hot cider and cocoa, and an assortment of yummy cookies. Tables and chairs for good conversation were nearby. The evening meeting was a nice change from the programs that Nan Spence and Kathi Grider have planned for the year. A big thank-you goes to them for planning such a well-thought out evening that went without a hitch.

Thank you again, Joan, for sending out all the e-mails to keep us

Membership Meeting - January 10, 2006 Fire Wise Landscaping

The Evergreen Garden Club will hold its January monthly meeting at the new Evergreen Fire and Rescue Training Center in Bergen Park in order to find out about FireWise landscaping.

Members and guests will gather at the Center at 9:30 a.m. for a program by Rocco Snart, Wildfire Mitigation Specialist for Jefferson County Office of Emergency Management,

informed about the Blossoms of Light trip.

We are very grateful to Beth Feldkamp, Karla Briggs, and Liz Hamilton for the high quality newsletter written so faithfully every month. The information is so valuable for mountain gardening. This kind of information is generally hard to come by. Obviously all are spending hours creating this wonderful tool for the rest of us. Beth took over as editor when Melinda moved to Santa Fe two years ago. Karla joined her about a year ago. Thank you, Beth, Karla, Liz, and all who contribute your valuable gardening knowledge.

Jean & Meredith

Happy New Year!

and Evergreen Fire and Rescue representatives. These fire prevention experts will show ways to create a "defensible space around homes by using FireWise plant materials and landscaping methods which can be aesthetically pleasing and add to property value while reducing potential wildfire danger.

See you there!



Garden Club News

Go Grammy Grow

By Tricia Scott



On December 26th (Boxing Day to us from an English/Canadian background) I received a call that I have been expecting for a fair amount of time...my Grandmother had passed away that day. Grammy was older than most of us ever expect to live. Growing up we were told she was a few years younger than my Grandfather. We were also told that her health was questionable at best and to behave ourselves while visiting.... read-sit on your hands and be good!

When my Grandfather passed away over twenty years ago we realized over time that my Grandmother's finances etc. needed to be attended to by all of us grandchildren. Much to our surprise upon opening her safety deposit box contents were two interesting documents-the first being her marriage license, which did make my grandmother the age (Born in 1899) we had been told. The second document was a handwritten baptismal certificate that had her birth date as 1894. Grammy had aged five years in a matter of seconds! The story does not end there. My eldest sister in trying to make funeral arrangements this past week contacted the mortuary .The person she spoke to wanted to be sure that the Annie Hazel Downer (Grammy) was the same person on her paperwork for the plot by confirming date of birth-April 1st 1891. My sister made her repeat the date three times. At this moment as I write it is possible that my Grammy was 114 years of age at her death-the girl born on April Fools day had fooled us all.

At this moment you may be wondering how this article got into our garden newsletter...well I am here to say that my Grandmother's ONLY physical exercise was gardening. Of course you must conclude by the above info my Grandmother was a bit obsessed with her vanity-so her gardening outfit was quite a shade different than mine. She would don a lovely dress and put over it a stylish fabric full length apron- coordinating with her dress and garden in her HIGH HEELS. Yes, she seemed to intuitively know about lawn aeration! A woman before her time!

My Grandfather was also passionate about gardening as well...but at the time I think he was just the brawn behind her whims. His own death came after an incredibly hot day of weeding in their garden - heart attack. I like to think this may be why my garden tends to be a bit on the weedy side-I am saving myself from harm.

Their garden could have been in any garden magazine. The only faux pas was their mutual love of garden elves...like the Travelocity guy! I understand in some cultures (Tell me where!) these elves are respected as garden ornaments. I guess for me why they do not appeal to me is that my grandparents would speak of them as if they were human-yes; I agree there must be therapy for that. I did not get the point. From what I hear we should have kept them-EBAY!

My Grammy was also obsessed with her lawn...very non-Colorado! We used to call it Blade-Talk. If we needed to get off an uncomfortable subject (like- how's that boyfriend of yours?) we would quickly make a Blade comment ie. "The grass seems greener than our last visit." That could launch us into a lengthy discussion of the latest fertilizing technique or how much rain we had been receiving and the loser-boyfriend-chat would fade like a flower in intense sunlight.

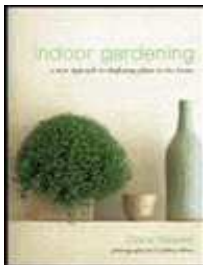
To make this story about my Grammy come to a point, what I am saying is that it is okay to be an individual in your garden. It is also okay to be obsessed and quirky. The love my Grammy had for her garden drove her for many years to be alert and busy. The next time someone criticizes you for being that way you are, you are welcome to tell my Grammy's story. After all how many people do we know who may have lived to 114 possibly because of a hobby?



Over The Garden Fence *By Julaine Kennedy*

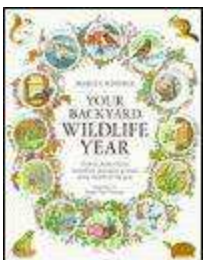
Dark Winter has arrived. A recent email from Nolan Doeskan, Colorado State Climatologist gave me chills as I thought about this time of year. Cold, bone chilling winds and temperatures that keep the earth's crust frozen. Winter's short days affect me the most. We (some of you more than me) wake up to the dull dark winter mornings and complete our daily chores in the dark. Even our powerful mountain sunshine lacks energy to sustain milder overnight temperature.

Gardeners do survive winter. Some turn to winter sports and holidays in warmer climates. Many find solace nurturing plants on the windowsill. Others have well equipped greenhouses that provide a reprieve to **Dark Winter**. Research shows that we all will benefit from full spectrum lights to raise our libido during short winter days. For many years plants grown under the same type of light have been happier and healthier. My advice to all of you is to include one or more of the following books for your winter reading. You have the opportunity to relax, enjoy our love of gardening from between the book covers that will share our passion for living and breathing life in the midst of **Dark Winter**.



Indoor Gardening, Diana Yakeley is a interior and garden designer who will bright new light to indoor gardening. This would be a great time of year to explore her ideas about displaying plants.

Tabletop Gardens brings the outdoor garden inside for everyone. Depending on your decorating style Rosemary McCreary offers many indoor gardening projects. All you need is her creative ideas coupled with great photography, instructions and practical advice. Our love of gardening takes on a new beginning with this book. The hardcover book is available at Denver Botanic Garden gift shop and Storey Books will release the paperback edition in March 2006.



Your Backyard Wildlife Year is a good book to read during the dark days of winter. Marcus Schneck's enthusiasm for wildlife gardening will brighten a winter day. There are projects to consider and a month-by-month workbook. He also includes a checklist by regions with profiles of wildlife visitors that you can look for in your backyard.

Have you ever wanted to improve on the garden and wildlife photos you take? The practical, yet simple advice may be just the answer for your desires. Look for this book in the library and at used bookstores. It's a winter treasure to enjoy and share with others.

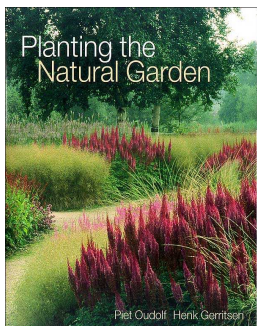
Garden Your City is a delightful book that will create enthusiasm and hope for the coming garden season. Barbara Hoben-Feldt is a volunteer with the City of New York Parks and Recreation and the founder and director of Friends of Pier 84's Manhattan Botanical Garden. Don't let her location dissuade you from finding this book soon.

(Continued on pg. 4)

(Continued from *Over the Garden Fence* pf. 3)

You will learn more about the importance of city/community gardening, good gardening practices and how to utilize your space to its best advantage. Like the 'big city' our mountain community represents variety of lifestyles. Many of our residents have the opportunity to care for large natural areas. We also are known for being a bedroom community of apartments, condos and homes whose inhabitants spend a great deal of time 'down the hill' yet prefer to live in the mountains for it's beauty and serenity. Many of us never want to leave the mountains and downsize to stay here. We still love nature and digging in the dirt. Hopefully Feldt's suggestions for window boxes, terraces, our community gardens and public land areas will inspired you.

My last gift of reading comes from several naturalist garden books that have inspired many private and public garden designs. Piet Oudolf is considered a leader in the garden landscape design known as the "European Wave". We see this movement being incorporated in many gardens in Colorado. Denver Botanic Gardens, local public landscapes have embraced his style to create a garden that can look wild but be tame at the heart. **Planting the Natural Garden** and newer titles **Gardening with**



Grasses, Designing with Plants, Dream Plants for the Natural Garden can occupy your bedside table for several weeks! Mountain gardeners will gain a lot from reading portions of the design concept and then soaking in the photograph and description in these books. All books are available at many area bookstores and libraries.

Winter is a great time stroll through professional winter gardenscape; especially **Denver Botanic Gardens**, Hudson Gardens and Events Center at 6115 South Santa Fe Drive, Littleton, CO 80120, and the **Dam Garden** located in the part below Evergreen **Metro District and Evergreen Parks & Recreation District** (Colorado Special Districts). Our club under the direction of Peggy and Dale

Fetchenhier has worked with member volunteers to design, plant and continuously maintain the garden. They studied the location's microclimates (unique and variable, I understand) soil profile, and other criteria and then researched high altitude plants that would survive and prosper. What a tribute to EGC and the community.

No doubt a garden displays it elaborate beauty during its growing season. But there is a lots to learn about gardening during the winter. Enjoy the season of **Dark Winter** with good reading, trips to explore warmer climates and plan for spring with visits to gardens that expose their strong bones. It may be the start of a new plan for our garden dreams.

Julaine Kennedy

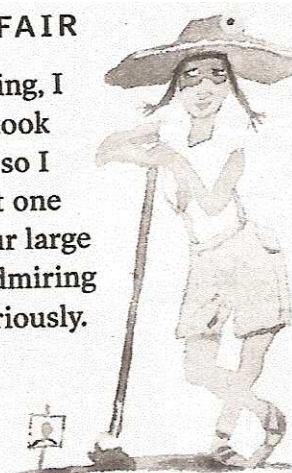
IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

After completing a course in organic gardening, I couldn't wait to start planting. My husband took our three children on a weekend canoe trip, so I could have two uninterrupted days. The first one I spent preparing the soil, shaping it into four large raised beds. As I stood resting on my hoe, admiring my work, I noticed a neighbor eyeing me curiously.

"I'm starting a garden," I explained.

"Oh," he said, sounding relieved. "I thought you'd just buried your family."

BETTY CARTER



Submitted by Jean Todd

HORTICULTURE

CHRISTMAS CACTUS

Schlumbergera Cactaceae is the botanical name for a much beloved plant otherwise known as the Christmas Cactus. The plant got its common name due to the fact that it blooms during the Christmas season, although I have heard many tales of this plant blooming at Thanksgiving and Easter as well. The schlumbergera specimens we grow as houseplants are most likely hybrids of the true species. The original species is a jungle cactus that grows in moist tropical forests in pockets of leaf debris in the crooks of tree branches. There is where we will begin our lesson on growing this interesting and beautiful plant.

As with most house plants, recreating the natural habitat is the best way to grow a healthy plant. Jungle cacti require indirect light especially during the spring, summer and fall. The flower buds start to form in early fall and flowering is initiated by the restricted light of the shortening days. Once the plant begins to flower, keep it in a room with little or no artificial light, as this will encourage full flowering. The schlumbergera can also be forced to bloom earlier by restricting the amount of light in early fall. Be careful not to restrict too much light or the flower buds will drop off before they have a chance to bloom. Normal room temperatures are fine for growing, but the plant absolutely will not tolerate freezing. The plants can be moved outdoors to a shady spot during the summer months but they need to be brought indoors well before the nights turn cold in our area.

Schlumbergera puts on new growth from early spring to early fall and needs to be watered regularly during that time. Never let the plant stand in water. Allow the surface soil to dry out in between watering. After the plant is done flowering, reduce the amount of water until the new growth starts to appear. Because the plant naturally grows in a humid climate and our climate is so dry, it is helpful to mist the plant occasionally. Fertilize the plant every two weeks except during the period between the end of flowering and the beginning of new growth. Use a high potassium fertilizer such as Miracle Grow for Tomatoes. The plant requires repotting only when its roots become too crowded in the existing pot. Plant cacti in a well draining soil mixture. Schlumbergera grow well in hanging baskets because the branches can hang down and not get squished or broken.

Schlumbergera are easy to propagate from cuttings. Break off a section of stem consisting of two or more segments, allow it to dry out and stick it in the soil deep enough to prevent the cutting from flopping over and coming out of the soil. Put several cuttings in one pot and care for the babies as you would an adult plant, same light, water and fertilizer. The plant can be grown from seed but it takes three or four years before they germinate. I don't know any gardener willing to wait that long; most of us want to see results in our lifetime.

Schlumbergera are easy keepers, the most common problem is the flower buds dropping off. This can be caused by over or under watering, changes in temperature, or moving the plant's position so the buds have to turn around to face the light source. Also, bumping into or dropping the plant from a great height will cause the buds to fall off. I once heard of someone dropping their plant while attempting to hang it back up after she gave it a shower to remove dust and increase the humidity. What a mess that poor woman had to clean up.

The Christmas Cactus stem segments can have rounded notches or a sharp point edge (like a crab claw), depending on the species. The cactus flowers are a tiered petal arrangement and the color of the blooms range from a deep red to an almost pure white. I have heard tell of a yellow flower but I have yet to get my hands on one. The plant has tiny areoles in the notches along the edges of the segments and sometimes little bristly hairs are growing there as well. A bigger areole is at the tip of the end segment on each stem and the flowers bud from these terminal areoles. Each areole can produce a single bloom or a pair of blooms. The blooms last for a few days but the plant will flower for several weeks.

(Continued on pg. 6)

(Continued from Horticulture pr. 5)

The Christmas Cactus is a favorite plant of the boys living at Forest Heights Lodge. This year each boy received a plant to care for, a gift from the Evergreen Garden Club. Peggy and Dale Fetchenhier, Beth Feldkamp, Bev Wickland and I presented the plants to the boys along with instructions for their care. The boys had such great questions and a fierce determination to be good gardeners. There is a plant living at the lodge that was a gift many years ago, its age is unknown but it continues to grow and represent the relationship of gardeners to boys. I love that plants do more than grow and bloom: they bring us together and that, my friends, is a gift.

Happy New Year,

Karla Briggs

In My Garden

December 22, 2005

**Western Mountains and High Plains
By John Cretti Denver, CO**

A Present for the Birds

As Nature's food supply becomes less plentiful in late fall and early winter, it's a great time to attract birds and other wildlife to your landscape. Be it a live tree or a well-anchored cut one, you can keep our feathered friends content throughout winter.

Birds aren't the only ones who will enjoy a "food tree." This is a great family project, too. The kids like to participate in decorating the tree for the birds. Since natural food sources become more scarce in the winter, it's the spirit of the season to give to wildlife as well. Groceries for birds can be items you already have in your pantry, or you can use traditional bird foods, such as suet and a variety of seeds.

Stringing Garland

If kids are helping, use foods for the garland that are easy for them to handle, such as grapes, cranberries, and popcorn. Start stringing garland a few days before you plan to decorate the tree. Keep the unfinished strings of fruit in the refrigerator so the berries will stay fresh. Other foods that can be easily strung include blueberries, grapes, raisins, and pieces of apples.

You can use nylon fishing line for stringing garlands because it is easy to thread and less likely to tangle. Hang the ropes of garland carefully, and trim off extra line so the birds will not get caught in them. When the food has been eaten, remove the line and string on more fruit.

Other Edible Decorations

You can make simple decorations from pine cones stuffed with peanut butter and suet. Mix 2 parts peanut butter with 1 part suet or canned lard. For some extra protein, coat the pine cones in birdseed; just spread the peanut butter mix on the inside of the scales of the cone with a knife. Then roll the cone in a large bowl of birdseed. Wrap some florist wire around the cone and tie it to the tree.

You can even hollow out orange or grapefruit halves and make little cups to hold birdseed, small pieces of fruit, suet, and peanut butter. Slice the orange or grapefruit in half and cut out the bulk of the flesh with a coring knife. To make a handle for hanging the cup, poke the ends of an 8-inch length of stiff florist wire through the skin about 1/2 inch from the rim on opposite ends of the cup.



Recycle your Christmas tree by placing it outside and decorating it for wildlife

Evergreen Garden Club
PO Box 1393
Evergreen, Colorado 80437
www.evergreengardenclub.org



*Celebrating our
40th Anniversary*

Denver Botanic Gardens Schedule of www.denverbotanicgardens.org

Free Day Jan. 16th Martin Luther King.

Blossoms of Lights until Jan. 22, 2006