



Evergreen Garden Club Newsletter

The Wild Iris

Volume 18, Issue 16 January 2007

A Word from the President..

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EGC 2005-2006

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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 Fire & Rescue Station on Bergen Parkway 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

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Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!

How wonderful it is to live in Colorado in the winter!

I hope all of you have been able to enjoy this special winter wonderland, even if only by viewing it from your windows. I hope we will come to remember any inconveniences these holiday snowstorms may have caused with humor, reminiscing on what a challenge it was to create our holiday meals without fresh produce or laughing about how the packages, which should have been under our trees, did not arrive until after New Years. And even, for a few of you, recalling what a unique experience it was to celebrate Christmas Eve at DIA!

And I am sure I will come to find humor in the fact that I took great care and much time to fasten swags and bows on all of my garden solar lights and statuary, fashion centerpieces from greens and pinecones for my patio tables and fill my garden pots with holiday greenery only to all my efforts immediately buried under several feet of snow. So much for outdoor holiday decorating and adding winter garden interest!

Both the snow and a bout of the flu forced me to do something very rare -- spend time at home. And during this "down time," I did something I vowed never to do -- write New Year's Resolutions. Naturally, my list contained some items about gardening. However, my gardening resolutions were not about what I wanted to accomplish in my garden, but about putting gardening in a proper perspective.

I enjoy just about every gardening chore whether it's moving rocks, building walls and patios, putting in beds, weeding and then watering my entire creation by hand. (OK, to be truthful, I hate rewinding the 500 feet of hose I use to water my garden often leaving it unwound all summer to trip over.) This joy of gardening is a wondrous thing, but sometimes I don't know when to stop and end up with an aching back, knees and as many sore body parts as you can think of. And sometimes I feel defeated when my garden efforts do not result in the beauty I envisioned. Also, because I am rarely at home during the day, I compensate by working in my garden like a crazed nocturnal creature before dawn and after dark (with the aid of outdoor lights.)

(Continued on page 3)

January 9, 2007 Hydroponics Gardening

Hydroponics vegetable gardening makes just such a thing possible. Hydroponics is a system of growing plants without soil where nutrients are dissolved in water and fed directly to the plants' roots. Come learn more about this intriguing idea as we explore the techniques, materials and equipment involved

in hydroponics gardening.

The meeting begins at 9:30 am at the **Fire & Rescue Station on Bergen Parkway**. Remember to bring your plants, cuttings, pots, maybe some Valentine's Day items for the World Gardening Table...and your coffee mug. See you there!

Garden Club News

2007 - Happy New Year!

New Member Profile—Welcome Irene Brenner!



I moved to Evergreen from Redondo Beach, California five months ago. In Redondo we lived about a half mile from the ocean. I was a member of three garden groups. My favorite was the Bromeliad Club. Also belonged to the Riviera Garden Club and the Succulent and Cacti Club. Because of the marine layer and our coolish summers we could grow fuchsias, all types of ferns, begonias, bromeliads and succulents. My favorite tree in the yard was Bahinia (the Hong Kong orchid tree) in a fuchsia color which usually blooms toward October when the remainder of the garden is starting to go into its rest period. The dependable flowering plants were my 20 hibiscus bushes in different colors (mostly yellow, hot pink and white), Agapanthus and daylilies. Regards, Irene Brenner

January Hospitality Committee

Marilyn Kaussner, Pam Hinish, Lucille Nelson, Tricia Scott, Karen MacFarquhar, Kathy Anderson, Connie Staponski. Thank you!

In Memoriam

Two dear friends Miriam Marshall a charter member of Evergreen Garden Club & Lyn Gilliland an active member of several years. Two dear ladies who delighted in their marriages, children, homes, and gardens. They shall be missed always, and will remain in the hearts and minds of their garden club friends.

Louise Mounsey

On Christmas Day, Peggy and Dale Fetchenhier's mother Norma Asheim died at their home surrounded by her family. Since Norma's heart surgery in July, Peggy and Dale have been tending and caring for her while she was in the hospital, at Life Care and at their home. When they brought Norma home for the last time, as she was sitting looking out the dining room window she described the winter scene of the pond, trees and snow as "heaven".

Sometimes gardeners tend people. The same hands that work the soil and care for the plants are hands that bathe, dress and feed a person. The same heart that loves the work of gardening and the beauty of the garden loves the work of taking care of a beautiful person. Norma was a beautiful person and caring for her brought joy to our friends Peggy and Dale. She will be missed. Karla Briggs



Over The Garden Fence

By Karla Briggs

SNOW, SNOW, SNOW

There is snow on the garden and that is the best Christmas gift a gardener in Colorado could receive. Snow not only provides much needed winter moisture to our gardens, it also provides an isolative barrier against wind and cold, and helps maintain a constant ground temperature. Winter desiccation is the number one killer of plants in our area. Mulching helps protect plants throughout the winter months, but snow is like the icing on the cake.

Hopefully our temperatures will remain cold through January and February and most of the snow will remain in place. Gardens with northern or western exposures have a better chance of keeping all that insulation until spring. Southern and eastern exposed gardens will probably lose some or most of the snow with sun, warmer temperatures and wind.

This may sound a bit Martha Stewart'ish I know; however, when decks, porches or walkways are shoveled, all that snow can be put on the gardens to add moisture and protection for the plants. If the garden is located too far from the deck or walkway, I have been known to walk snow shovels full across the yard.

When a garden has snow cover there is no need for winter watering. Yea! Once the snow has melted or blown away, you should go back to the winter watering schedule: if there is no natural moisture for more than two to three weeks, pick a day with temperatures above freezing and soak the garden or plant for about five minutes. Watering should be done mid-morning to allow the moisture to seep into the ground before temperatures fall in the afternoon and evening. If you water too late in the day you run the risk of a layer of ice forming on the surface of the garden that no air or moisture can penetrate. When you are done watering, remember to drain and store the garden hose in a place that keeps it from freezing. A frozen garden hose is not a good thing.



The only drawback to having a thick blanket of snow on our gardens is that the voles can be running rampant beneath the snow cover, eating or girdling plants. That is why this fall I cut back the garden severely, not wanting to leave any food for them to forage. Using tree wrap or chicken wire can protect the trunks of trees and little fence around a shrub offers some protection, although the voles can burrow underneath the fence to get to the base of the shrub. The root systems are on their own as far as fending off voles. My dogs are doing a pretty good job of alerting me to winter vole activity, wherever they sniff or dig indicates voles at work.

I am filling in a lot of holes where the dogs have been vole hunting, so I am preparing myself for the inevitable spring surprise of vole damage.

Mother Nature has done much of our winter gardening work for us this year and I am grateful. Besides the blanket of insulation on the gardens, the beauty of our snow covered landscape is unsurpassed.

Happy New Year! Karla Briggs

Home Grown Greens Indoors... you can do it !!

By Julaine Kennedy
www.ageoldorganic.com

Imagine basil, cilantro, specialty lettuce mixes, tomatoes, green beans, peas and much more --- fresh every day, 365 days a year, right in your own home. I am amazed at how many families are discovering a better way to provide fresh herbs, vegetables and fruits.



Current trade magazines feature several hydroponic growing systems that are economical and efficient for the homeowner. This system pictured left is a 2.5 sq. ft. system with six pots just waiting to be at your service. Your gardening skills will make this project so much fun. Kids love watching their own plant grow. No more weeds to pull, and animals to fence out while trying to grow healthy robust veggies in our 65 day frost free season. Add one

of these growing boxes to your houseplant collection for a luscious plant corner.

Advantages of Hydroponics Gardening:

- * Hydroponics is often the best crop production method in remote areas that lack suitable soil, such as Antarctica, space stations, space colonies, or short growing seasons such as Evergreen!
- * Hydroponics is excellent for plant teaching and research.
- * No soil is required.
- * Soil borne diseases are virtually eliminated.
- * Weeds are virtually eliminated.
- * Edible crops are not contaminated with soil.
- * Water use can be substantially less than with outdoor irrigation of soil-grown crops.

Jeremy and his staff at **The Big Tomato Hydroponic and Garden Center** will fill you in on the nuts & bolts of hydroponic gardening at our January 9th meeting. You will see the systems in action and learn how to keep them producing fresh greens and herbs. It is just the right time to help get us through another winter.

Reminder Concerning Parking at Our Monthly Meetings

Please keep in mind that Evergreen Fire Rescue is providing temporary close-in parking spaces for those members who would experience difficulty in walking from spaces further from the entrance to the building. These spaces are marked with orange cones which you can pull in between to park. For members who are carrying large items into the meeting, such as decorations, food, or world gardening items, you may pull up to the entrance at the front of the building to unload and carry your items in, then move your vehicle to a parking space when you are finished. Thank you for your cooperation and for your thoughtful consideration the needs of other members.

Evergreen Garden Club
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***Celebrating our
41th Anniversary***

Denver Botanic Gardens Schedule of Events

**January in the Gardens,
Panayoti Kelaidis, Director of Outreach**
www.denverbotanicgardens.org

I recall when one of my colleagues took a winter's leave one year to work at a greenhouse in Antarctica. She was amazed at how vital and popular the tiny greenhouse was: day in, day out dozens of scientists and other workers would sidle their way into the humid, lush atmosphere to simply sit and absorb the magic of photosynthesizing plants, yearning for a bit of greenery. She realized that her greenhouse was a lifeline. Humanity needs green, not only because we are dependent directly and indirectly on plants for our very sustenance, but for our very soul, perhaps.

In January, most Denverites yearn for a tropical vacation. For those of us who haven't saved up quite enough vacation leave, might I suggest a compact escape to paradise at Denver Botanic Gardens' Boettcher Memorial Conservatory? If ever there was a perfect time to visit, it's now: When the nights are always frosty and the days are brown and gray, and there is always lots of parking along York Street. Give yourself a gift of luscious greenness! Like the scientists in Antarctica, we may need the lustrous verdance of the plant kingdom for our psyches as much as we do for carbohydrates for our bodies and the oxygen that plants produce for our lungs.

There is really no single way to tour the Conservatory and Cloud Forest Tree exhibits. If you are on a schedule, a quick dash through just to enjoy the artistic sweep of colors and textures will do just fine. I suggest you swing out, and give yourself a luxurious hour or more. There are so many thousands of plants that have been growing superbly for so many years now, and such infinite care and patience has been expended by staff to create a vibrant, four-dimensional work of art that is never the same from minute to minute and day to day. Take note of the epiphytic bromeliads and orchids that have been placed on trunks and walls throughout. Notice how meticulously everything has been labeled, groomed and cared for.

Henri Rousseau has attained a great reputation for lush tropical landscape paintings that he based on his visits to conservatories in Paris. Take a page (or canvas) from him, and paint yourself a tropical vacation the next time you drive by and admire our diamond-like faceted conservatory, the gem of the city and Denver Botanic Gardens.