

TAKOMA HORTICULTURAL CLUB
Newsletter for February 2009
www.takomahort.org

WELCOME to the Takoma Horticultural Club (THC) monthly newsletter, which we hope is a useful resource for you about Club news, events and garden-related items of interest.

Upcoming THC Events

**Takoma Hort Club Monthly Meeting and Talk
Wednesday, February 18, 2009**

Our next meeting is on February 18th. For more information about the meeting, please check our website as the date nears (www.takomahort.org). Also, check the THC Listserve for more details.

Report on Past THC Events by Carole Galati

Takoma Horticultural Club's Winter Potluck Is a Warm Winner-- Again! What a wonderful Potluck and plant exchange we had! Over 25 people came together Wednesday, January 21, at Heffner, sharing great food, assorted plants, objects d'garden and information. We laughed, talked, ate too much, and paid dues!! Kit Gage, our new THC President, introduced herself and talked about the storm water project she is involved in. More about that later. The club leaders will be having a planning session soon, so if you have ideas for future meetings and/or energy and time to get more involved in the club, please let us know. Thanks to all who helped put together this warm winter event, especially Taffy and Anne.

Membership Update

Please welcome new member, James Kocornik-Mina, who joined in January.

It's Time to Renew Your Annual THC Membership for 2009!

THC membership runs from January 1 to December 31 of each year. Your 2009 annual THC Club dues in the amount of \$12 are due in full by January 31st. If you haven't done so already please mail a \$12 check, made out to THC, to: Carole Galati; 106 Melbourne Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20901. Or, if you want to show your long term commitment to THC (and never have a dues check to write again) please make your check out for \$125 and become a Lifetime member.

Our membership lists about 180 names. Forty-six are current 2009 members, 20 are Lifetime members, and the rest need to renew. If you are one of the 110 "2008" members, please activate your 2009 membership ASAP by paying your

\$12 annual dues or by paying \$125 to become a Lifetime member as noted above. For information about membership visit www.takomahort.org and click on the "Join THC" link. Questions? Contact Carole Galati at cagalati@rcn.com.

IN THE GARDEN: "Caring for Holiday Plants AFTER The Holidays." By Madeline Caliendo

I love holiday plants—***Pointsettias, Thanksgiving and Christmas Cacti, Cyclamen, and Amaryllis and Paperwhites.*** But what do we do with them after the holidays? Here's a quick and dirty guide to help with that pressing question.

Pointsettia

To me Christmas is just not Christmas without a poinsettia (and a red one at that...none of those new fancy painted colors for me!). Unfortunately, though, I have NOT had any luck getting poinsettias to re-bloom. To be frank, it is a challenging process and not for the weak at heart, so I compost my poinsettias after the season ends. For the more strong-willed among us, however, here are some tips if you want to try to get your poinsettias to re-bloom.

In or about early March cut the stems back leaving about 5" to stimulate new growth. Water as you did during the holidays, but also begin fertilize about once a month with 20-20-20 fertilizer. Re-pot the poinsettia in or about early summer. Make sure your pot is at least 3" larger in diameter and has good drainage. Place the re-potted plant in a sunny spot and water generously and often. Rotate the plant monthly and once growth starts make sure to pinch of the shoots to encourage branching. As it grows, hope for the best, and if it re-blooms, ENJOY!

Holiday Cacti (Thanksgiving and Christmas)

I thought holiday cacti were all Christmas cactus, until I attended a talk at the Takoma Hort Club given by Joan O'Rourke. I always thought my holiday cacti were Christmas cacti, but they were in fact Thanksgiving cacti that bloomed—you guessed it—closer in time to Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving cacti are (*Schlumbergera truncate* or *Zygocactus* hybrids) and Christmas cactus are (*Schlumbergera bridgessi*). To my untrained eyes, the two look virtually identical, but according to those in the know, the there are differences. The Christmas cactus has rounded lobes on its leaves and the Thanksgiving cactus are pointed. The Thanksgiving cactus, which is actually more prevalent in the flower growing industry, comes in a rainbow of colors. The Christmas cactus only comes in red. What to do with the beauties once they finish blooming? Keep them until next year for the next show-stopping bloom of flowers! I think the unusual cascading leaves are attractive in their own right, but once it blooms again you will be in heaven. What I do is put the plants outside

once it gets warm and keep them out until they mid-late October, as they like cold nights. ENJOY!

Cyclamen

Cyclamens will re-bloom, but it does take a little work. Here are some tips on how from the Dutch Growers Gardens Center in Saskatoon. First, as blooms fade, pinch them off at the base and when you water, fertilize the plant at half strength with 15-30-15 fertilizer every 4 weeks, until new leaves appear.

Next, when the new leaves fade, stop fertilizing the plant and gradually decrease watering so the corm will go dormant. Once the corm is dormant, let the soil dry out completely and then place the plant in a cool, dark place for 6-12 week hibernation. After the rest period, remove the corm from the pot and replant it in new, fresh soil. About 1/3 to 1/2 of the corm should be planted above the soil's surface. When new leaves appear, fertilize monthly with 15-30-15 until flower buds form. ENJOY!

Amaryllis

I discovered Amaryllis about ten years ago, and have loved them ever since. Many people treat amaryllis bulbs as annuals and compost the bulb after flowering ends. However, good quality bulbs can be pricey, especially for the rarer varieties so you might want to try to get it to re-bloom next year. I know many fellow gardeners who do and who say it is easy to do. Here are some tips on how.

Regularly water and fertilize your amaryllis and make sure it gets lots of sun. In or about late spring, move your amaryllis outside; just make sure to water it regularly as it likes wet soil. Some people I know leave it in the pot outside and it re-blooms just fine. Others remove it from the pot and plant it in the garden. If you replant it, makes sure to leave about 1/3 of the bulb above the soil line.

Give your amaryllis bulbs as much sun, water and fertilizer as reasonably possible. The more leaves that grow out during this period the better, as this will help nourish the bulb for later flowering. In late summer or early fall (before it freezes) bring the amaryllis indoors. When digging it up make sure to remove the soil from the bulb and cut off the foliage, leaving about 1". Then, put the bulb in a cool, dark place with good air movement until you are ready to pot it up for re-blooming. It takes about eight weeks to re-bloom, so plan accordingly if you want to time the blooms. ENJOY!

Paperwhites

People either love or hate paperwhites, due to their powerful and distinct scent. I am in the "love" camp, but unfortunately, there is not much to do with the bulbs

after flowering other than add them to the compost pile. The goods news are bulbs are inexpensive so replacement next season won't break your bank.

****Any budding garden writers among us? Would you like to do a little research or share your expertise/experience by writing a short article (500 words or so) for the newsletter? Is there a particular plant or flower you love? Want to tell us about it so that we might want to grow and enjoy it too? If so, send Madeline Caliendo, the Newsletter Editor, an email at vivaitaliana@gmail.com**

Selected Upcoming Garden-Related Events in the Community

Orchids through Darwin's Eyes Through April 26, 10:00am–5:00pm

Smithsonian, National Museum of Natural History, Washington, DC
Explore the alluring world of orchids through the eyes of Darwin and those he influenced - naturalists, horticulturists, and scientists who continue to find new insights and curious surprises while working with these captivating plants in greenhouses, laboratories, and in the wild.
Fee: \$0/Free. Registration is not required.
For more information: www.gardens.si.edu or call 202.633.1000.

Spring Display: Garden Elements Through April 12, 10:00am-5:00pm

Brookside Gardens, 1800 Glenallan Ave., Wheaton MD
It will seem like spring in January when the conservatories will be filled with flowering plants that prefer the cool temperatures and short days of winter. Greenhouse snapdragons, tall stately, and fragrant, will be combined with other tropical and garden plants, such as cymbidium orchids, stock, florist geraniums, and petunias, to create scenes of welcome color and delightful fragrance. Accenting the flowers will be cast cement leaf ornaments and hypertufa trough containers created by the gardening staff. These natural garden ornaments and planters will be colored and planted in both bold and understated ways.
Fee: \$0/Free. Preregistration is not required.
For more information, call 301.962.1400 or go to www.brooksidegardens.org.

Spring Display: Garden Elements Through April 12, 10:00am-5:00pm

Brookside Gardens, 1800 Glenallan Ave., Wheaton MD
It will seem like spring in January when the conservatories will be filled with flowering plants that prefer the cool temperatures and short days of winter. Greenhouse snapdragons, tall stately, and fragrant, will be combined with other tropical and garden plants, such as cymbidium orchids, stock, florist geraniums, and petunias, to create scenes of welcome color and delightful fragrance. Accenting the flowers will be cast cement leaf ornaments and hypertufa trough

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For more information, call 301.962.1400 or go to www.brooksidegardens.org.

City of Trees

February 6, 12:00noon-1:30pm

U.S Botanic Garden, National Mall, Washington, DC

Join the author and illustrator of *City of Trees: The Complete Field Guide to the Trees of Washington, D.C.* for a slide lecture on the history and botanic diversity of the capital city's trees. Author Melanie Choukas-Bradley will highlight the history of Washington's trees from George Washington and Thomas Jefferson's time to the present day. Learn how Washington, DC came to be known as the "City of Trees" and why our historic canopy is more essential than ever in the 21st century. Polly Alexander will share art from the book and describe the artistic process behind her hundreds of botanical drawings.

Fee: \$0/Free. Preregistration is suggested.

For more information: www.usbg.org or call 202.225.8333.

Full Moon Hike

February 9, 7:00-9:00pm

US National Arboretum, 3501 New York Avenue, NE, Washington, DC

This five-mile-long, mildly strenuous hike is a magical trip through moonlit gardens, meadows and woods. Discover how the striking landscape of the arboretum changes under the moon and stars of the night sky. Your guide will share points of special interest and seasonal highlights. This is a brisk walk over often hilly and uneven terrain, so wear good walking shoes. Held rain or shine. Not recommended for children.

Fee: \$19 (\$15 FONA). Preregistration is required.

For more information: www.usna.usda.gov or call 202.245.4521.

SECOND ANNUAL ROOTING DC URBAN GARDENING FORUM

Saturday, February 21, 2009 at DC Historical Society, FREE!

801 K St. NW at Mt. Vernon Square. For further details, call 202 383-1850 or go to the website, www.historydc.org.

Are you a community gardener in Washington, DC? A teacher with a schoolyard garden? A member of a garden club or block club interested in beautifying your Neighborhood? Involved with a non-profit leading a gardening program? Or, are you interested to get involved with such community projects? If so, you are invited to attend this forum designed to bring DC gardeners together to reconnect!

Join us to share resources and foster partnerships between groups and individuals who are working toward common goals through gardening. Come see how your work fits into the big picture of creating a greener, healthier DC!

Please email us at rootingdcforum@gmail.com for information on how to register in advance (recommended), and for updates on topics, sponsors and other details.

Learn Dirt-Cheap Gardening Tricks: 1-Day Conference
The 9th Annual MD Master Gardener's Mini-Conference: "Back to Basics: Gardening Success for Less"
Feb. 21, 2009, 8:30 am-2:45 pm.

ALL ARE WELCOME! Will be held at the Montgomery County Cooperative Extension Office, 18410 Muncaster Rd, Derwood, MD. Master Gardeners of Montgomery County will teach other home gardeners cost-cutting gardening techniques such as starting plants from seeds, vegetable gardening, selecting plants and rejuvenating the garden by pruning and dividing. Advance registration is \$45 and includes a box lunch. Bring a friend and the cost is \$80 for two. Gift certificates are also available. For registration information call 202-549-4942, visit online at www.extension.umd.edu/local/Montgomery or email mgminiconference@gmail.com. Participants can choose to attend three workshops out of nine options taught by Master Gardeners, as well as two "lunch-and-learn" sessions on installing rain barrels and planting salad tables. Other topics cover making your yard pest proof, planting herbs, and choosing conifers.

SPIN-Gardening Workshop at the Turkey Thicket Recreation Center in Brookland, DC SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2009 , Cost \$40 includes Guide and lunch.

Rooting DC/America the Beautiful Fund will be hosting a day long SPIN-Gardening Workshop

What is SPIN-Gardening? SPIN-Gardening is a do-it-yourself vegetable food production system that enables you to grow a steady and dependable supply of vegetables that have all the quality of farm-grown and all the convenience of store-bought. It shows you how to adapt the professional sub-acre farming techniques of SPIN-Farming® to your home outdoor space or community garden plot by working part-time or full time, working alone or with family, friends or a like-minded group. All that is required is a modest investment in gear and a radically new understanding of what it means to be a home gardener. Best of all, it can be implemented wherever you happen to live!

There is a \$40 registration fee that includes the cost of the SPIN-Gardening Guide to get you growing and lunch. WE ONLY HAVE ROOM FOR 100 PEOPLE so Email us at dcspingardeningworkshop@gmail.com to save your spot!!

It is our goal to make 20 scholarships available for this workshop. If you would like to sponsor a scholarship by contributing \$40, You can donate online here (Please write SPIN Scholarship 2009 in the comments) or you can mail a check or money order made out to America the Beautiful Fund (please write SPIN Scholarship 2009 in the notes) to 725 15th St.NW, Suite 605, Washington, DC 20005

**Washington Gardener Magazine's Day at the Capital Home & Garden Show
Saturday, February 28th 10am-9pm, Dulles, VA**

Washington Gardener Magazine has partnered with the spring Capital Home & Garden Show taking place February 26-March 1 at the Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly, VA. "Washington Gardener Magazine Day" at the show will be Saturday, February 28 and will feature several expert garden speakers talking about topics ranging from growing vegetables to making rain barrels. All talks are specifically tailored to the local DC-region gardener. For details, visit: capitalhomeshow.com or www.WashingtonGardener.com.

**Washington Gardener Magazine's Trip to the Philadelphia Flower Show
Wednesday, March 4th 10:00am-10:00 pm, departing Silver Spring, MD and
Dunn Loring, VA**

Daytrip in style to the Philadelphia Flower Show. This year's theme is "Bella Italia." The event itself features demonstration gardens, cooking classes, plant competitions, Philadelphia Green exhibits, and much more. For more information, contact Cheval Force Opp, gardentours@gmail.com, 703-395-1501. Directions and details at www.WashingtonGardener.com or chevalsgardentours.com.

**Maryland Horticultural Society's Winter Workshop
Saturday Feb 28th from 9 to 3:30**

Workshop will be conducted by internationally acclaimed garden designer, Gordon Hayward. The cost for the day including lunch and refreshments at The Sheppard Pratt Conference Center in Baltimore, MD is \$129. Registration is open to the public. Register early (in January) as registration closes when full. Hayward's latest book, Art and the Gardener is wonderful. Those interested in registering may visit www.mdhorticulture.org or call 410-821-5561.

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