

TAKOMA HORTICULTURAL CLUB
Newsletter for December 2008
www.takomahort.org

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

Upcoming THC Events

Mark your calendars for Wednesday night January 21.st This is the night of THC's Annual Potluck Dinner and Indoor Plant Exchange at Heffner Park. Stay tuned for more details about the event on the Takoma Hort list-serve, our THC website (www.takomahort.org) and the January newsletter. Our own Taffy Turner is the point person for this event. Stay tuned for more information. You WON'T want to miss it! For more info email Taffy.Turner@earthlink.net

Announcements

Volunteer(s) needed! Can you help? THC has lots of past Newsletters in hard copy and on disc that need to be converted into PDF files so our THC Webmaster, Karen Helfert, can easily upload them onto our website. Doing so will help preserve our THC history via an online archive and make the information in those Newsletters—which are cock full of great information-- accessible to all. Are you IT savvy? Can you take on this project in 2009? If so, send an email to Madeline at vivaitaliana@gmail.com to discuss. Thanks!

Report on Past THC Events

On Wednesday, November 19th at our regular monthly THC meeting, Joan O'Rourke, from Friends of Brookside Gardens, gave THC an informative and fun talk and demonstration on tips for success with houseplants. We learned many things, but perhaps one of those most important is NOT to over-water indoor plants. At this meeting, THC raffled off some great door prizes to attendees including two sets of tickets to Brookside's "Garden of Lights" festival (which THC helps sponsor), an orchid, a local tree ID book, a small garden cart and more. Joan herself very generously raffled off about 10 houseplants that she brought to show us and to demonstrate simple propagation techniques.

Following up on the meeting, Susan Harris did a fun round-up of the best houseplants, with care suggestions in the comments and posted it to her blog at:

http://www.gardenrant.com/my_weblog/2008/11/top-ten-housepl.html

A fun time was had by all. THC members also voted in the 2009 slate of officers at the November meeting. A list of 2009 Officers will be posted in the January 2009 Newsletter. Thanks to all who brought snacks to share. It was a scrumptious spread that included delicious home-baked cookies and many savory treats. We hope you can make our next THC event, the January 2009 Potluck Dinner and Indoor Plant Exchange on Wednesday evening January 21st! Mark your calendars!

Membership Update

Welcome to our Newest Members!

Please welcome: Taalib-Din A. Uqhad, Becky Lavash and Milford Sprecher. We encourage all members, including our newest ones, to take full advantage of all our THC Club has to offer. Please check out our website regularly for ongoing events, meetings and other information at www.takomahort.org.

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 THC Club dues in the amount of \$12 are due in full by January 31st. Renewing THC membership is easy. You can:

- Bring a check for \$12 to our Potluck/Indoor plant exchange on January 21st; or,
- Mail a \$12 check, made out to THC, to: Carole Galati; 106 Melbourne Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20901.

To join the THC as a new member, please go to our website at <http://www.takomahort.org/membership/index.html> to download the membership form. Please complete the form and mail it with your \$12 check made out to "THC" to Carole Galati at the above address. Do you have questions about membership or want to check on your membership status? Contact Carole Galati at cagalati@rcn.com.

Also, tired of writing that annual dues check? No problem. Become a Lifetime THC Member for only \$125.00. You will never have to fuss with dues again! Hope to see you at our Members-Only Potluck on January 21, 2009!

Not yet a THC member? Still need to renew your 2008 membership? Visit: <http://www.takomahort.org/membership/index.html> for details. Questions about membership? Contact Carole Galati at cagalati@rcn.com.

In The Garden: "Inexpensive Holiday Gifts For and From the Gardener" By Madeline Caliendo

At this time of year it is common to think about gift-giving. We give gifts to family, friends, acquaintances, party hosts, service providers, and others to say "thank you" for the many ways they have enriched our lives.

As gardeners, it makes sense that we might want to use gardening, or the bounty of gardens, as a theme in our gift giving. Here are some thoughts about how to do that so the gift is thoughtful yet inexpensive, especially in these tight economic times.

The Gift of Time: One option is to give someone the gift of your time. You can make a festive home-made gift certificate stating what the service (the gift of your time you are gifting. Depending on how skilled a gardener you are; or what the needs of the gift recipient might be, ideas might be...

- "X" (you fill in the number) hours for a garden/landscaping consult;
- "X" hours of leaf raking;
- "X" hours of help getting the garden ready for spring;
- An offer to set up an informal/inexpensive compost pile out back
- "X" hours for a tutorial on indoor seed starting, weeding, composting, etc.

The sky is the limit on this. Be innovative. We gardeners have a lot to offer! I know when I was a new gardener I would have truly appreciated one-on-one help/guidance with even the most basic garden tasks. Also, as people age or develop mobility limitations, giving the gift of time in the garden will likely be very much appreciated.

The Gift of the Garden's Bounty:

Our gardens are so beautiful, even now when it is cold outside. Last year as a hostess gift, I gathered a variety of greens and berries from my garden and that of neighbors (ask first!) and bundled them into a beautiful bouquet with a lush elegant ribbon. I adorned the bouquet with miniature holiday ornaments, pine-cones, cinnamon sticks and other fragrant items and made a simple hook for the bouquet, so there was also the option of hanging it. The hostess LOVED it! It is not only beautiful but says a lot that you took the time to do it. The whole project took me about 20 minutes, but looked very classy and elegant.

Another gift of the garden's bounty is to make food or personal use products from items in the gardens. For example, if you have Rosemary in your garden you can whip up an easy Winter Rosemary Salt Scrub for use in the bath. Just put the homemade scrub in a pretty jar (even recycle a jar you have on hand) and cap it off with a pretty ribbon, festive cloth and homemade gift card with instructions on how to use and you are set. Here is an easy recipe for Winter Rosemary Salt Scrub from the web:

<http://www.marigoldlane.com/naturalbeauty/lavenderscrub.html>

Winter Rosemary Salt Scrub

- ¾ cup sea salt or table salt
- ½ cup jojoba oil
- 4 drops rosemary essential oil

Mix ingredients to make a paste. Rub onto your body before taking a shower, scrubbing vigorously. Leave the mixture on your body for a minute or two before rinsing off. You should feel tingly all over and your skin may turn red where you scrubbed it. Don't worry this is normal. Just remember to avoid sensitive skin areas though, such as your face and neck.

Or, for the bakers' among us, how about whipping up a savory loaf of Rosemary Bread? Here's a recipe from the web at <http://allrecipes.com/Recipe/Delicious-Rosemary-Bread/Detail.aspx>

Rosemary Bread

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon white sugar
- 1 cup warm water
- 1 (.25 ounce) package active dry yeast
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons butter, softened
- 2 tablespoons rosemary
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 3 cups bread flour
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 egg, beaten (optional)

Directions:

1. Dissolve the sugar in warm water in a medium bowl, and mix in the yeast. When yeast is bubbly, mix in salt, butter, 1 tablespoon rosemary, and Italian seasoning. Mix in 2 cups flour. Gradually add remaining flour to form workable dough, and knead 10 to 12 minutes.
2. Coat the inside of a large bowl with olive oil. Place dough in bowl, cover, and allow to rise 1 hour in a warm location.
3. Punch down dough, and divide in half. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Lightly grease paper. Shape dough into 2 round loaves, and place on the baking sheet. Sprinkle with remaining rosemary. Cover, and allow to rise 1 hour, or until doubled in size.
4. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).
5. Brush loaves with egg. Bake 15 to 20 minutes in the preheated oven, or until golden brown.

You can wrap the bread (after you put it in plastic or other protective covering) with an old scarf, scrap of fabric, pretty paper, etc. Add a ribbon and a homemade gift card and you're set.

Maybe you're into canning? If not, why not give it a try. It is fun and easy! The gift of preserved edibles from the garden is much loved and appreciated. Here is a recipe from the web for a jar of ginger pear jam. It is delicious and easy to make. You'll find it at: <http://www.cooks.com>

Ginger Pear Jam

3 medium pears
1 c. crushed pineapple
4 c. sugar
2 oz. crystallized ginger, chopped
3 tsp. Pectin

Peel and core pears, chop. Mix pectin with 1 cup sugar, add to pears, pineapple and ginger. Bring to a boil, add remaining sugar. Bring back to a boil and boil one minute. Skim and pour into clean, sterilized jars. Process in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes. If pectin is not available, combine all ingredients and cook until thick and jam comes off spoon in sheets.

For information about canning all different kinds of bounty from the garden, farmer's market, your local grocery store or food COOP, go to <http://www.freshpreserving.com/>. Home canned items make a wonderful gift.

If you give any of these ideas a try, let me know how it goes. I'd love to hear about it! Happy holidays and happy gift giving to all you from all of us here at THC!

****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? If so, send Madeline Caliendo, the Newsletter Editor, an email at vivaitaliana@gmail.com**

Selected Upcoming Garden-Related Events in the Community

Windows to Wonderland Exhibit

Through January 4, 2009, 10:00am–5:00pm

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

This year the U.S. Botanic Garden's annual winter exhibit, Windows to Wonderland, celebrates the world of human imagination. Plan now to include a trip to our garden train exhibit. Sojourn along with the trains as they chug through village and countryside visiting the much loved locales of favorite childhood stories. Next to the train garden, one of Washington's largest indoor holiday trees provides the setting for Tuesday and Thursday evening performances of seasonal music. Amidst riverine pathways and pools of blooming poinsettias and other holiday plants you'll discover our collection of National Mall Landmarks. These replicas are handcrafted from natural plant materials and so fanciful you'll have to see them to believe them.

Fee: \$0/Free. Registration is not required.

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

The Garden of Lights at Brookside Gardens

November 28th thru January 4th, 2009 (Open every night except Dec 24 and 25), "The Garden of Lights" Holiday Display," Brookside Gardens, Wheaton, MD. Hours 5:30pm to 9:00pm, last car admitted 8:30pm. For more information: (301) 962-1400.

10th Annual Takoma Park Alternative Gift Fair

(Co-sponsored by Friends of Sligo Park)

December 6, 2008, 2008 12-4pm

310 Tulip Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912

Take care of all of your holiday shopping needs and possibly help some green charities. Sometimes the most thoughtful gift you can give someone is a donation to charity in their honor. Alternative gifts fill a direct and tangible need, like books for children in transitional housing, water for a family in Haiti, help for a local struggling family. a garden plot for a hungry family, etc.

For more information: aggwinc@yahoo.com

Holiday Wreath-Making Workshop

December 6, 9:00am-12:00pm and December 7, 1:00-4:00pm

Arboretum Lobby, United States National Arboretum, 3501 New York Avenue, NE, Washington, DC

Create a designer-quality wreath with instruction and inspiration from the arboretum's expert floral designers. You will learn the techniques you need to create a unique, long-lasting wreath, and be able to use your skills for many years and wreaths to come. They supply an extensive selection of fresh cut plant materials and other supplies. Please bring pruning shears if you have them.

Fee: \$59 (FONA \$47). Registration is required.

Details: usna.usda.gov or call 202.245.2726.

A Longwood Gardens Christmas

November 27, 2008-January 11, 2009, 9:00am-9:00pm

Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, PA

Dazzling floral displays, stunning trees, holiday music, 500,000 outdoor lights, dancing fountains and ice skating under the stars are just a few of the highlights of the popular Longwood Gardens Christmas. New this year admission will be by Timed Ticket only, with tickets issued for specific dates and times.

Fee: \$16 for adults, \$14 for seniors (age 62+), \$6 for students (ages 5-22), and free for ages 4 and under. Preregistration is recommended.

For more information: www.longwoodgardens.org or call 610.388.1000.

Holiday Greens Sale

December 6, 10:00am-4:00pm

Adkins Arboretum, 12610 Eveland Road, P.O. Box 100, Ridgely, MD

A beautiful Eastern Shore holiday begins with decorations from the Shore's woods and meadows. Visit Adkins Arboretum's annual Holiday Greens Sale and deck the halls with nature's renewable resources, including fresh local greens, decorated wreaths, swags, roping, boxwood trees and other natural decorations.

Fee: \$0/Free. Registration is not required.

For more information: www.adkinsarboretum.org or call 410.634.2847.

Make this Holiday Season Beautiful Workshop

December 6, 10:00am

Viette Nurseries, 994 Long Meadow Road, Rt. 608 North, Fishersville, VA

Create with Sam Harris from Sam Harris Designs. Innovative ideas for sprucing up your garland using different types of greens; fresh table top "trees" using fruits and greens; how to bring holiday grandeur to your chandelier; make your wreath more three-dimensional; create a tiny garden landscape on your dining room table. After the workshop, enjoy refreshments and tour the Viette's beautiful home decorated for Christmas. Fee: \$40. Preregistration is required.

For details, call 800.575.5538 or visit www.viette.com.

Gardeners' Holiday Open House: The Enchanted Forest

December 7, 12:00noon-4:00pm

4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria, VA

Enjoy a day of holiday fun in the garden: make crafty holiday-inspired-creations, listen to seasonal music, enjoy free refreshments, and view the beautiful decorations fashioned by our talented volunteers and staff. This festive day is for gardeners of all ages, individuals, and families.

Fee: \$0/Free. Preregistration is not required.

For more information: www.greenspring.org or call 703.642.5173.

The Gardens of Portugal

December 8, 7:00-9:00pm

Silver Spring Library, 8901 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, MD

Join the Silver Spring Garden Club for a presentation and "taste" of the Gardens of Portugal. The club is planning a trip to visit them in person next April and this preview event and the trip itself are open to the public.

Fee: \$0/Free. Registration is not required.

For more information: groups.yahoo.com/group/SilverSpringGardenClub or call 301.588.6894.

Fabulous Holiday Centerpiece Talk & Workshop at Hillwood Museum & Gardens

December 10, 10:00am to 12:30pm.

Learn about Hillwood's holiday floral decorations on a walk through the Mansion and then join floral designer Adrienne Summers in making your own festive holiday arrangement to take home. All supplies provided. Limited to 20 participants.

Fee: \$35. For more information: www.hillwoodmuseum.org/ or call 202.686.5807.

American Horticultural Society's Holiday Party

December 11, 6:00pm

River Farm, 7931 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria, VA

Celebrate the accomplishments and successes of 2008 with food, music, and general merriment.

Fee: \$0/Free. Must RSVP by December 8.

For details: visit www.ahs.org or call 703.768.5700 ext. 114.

Mixed Greens Wreath Workshop at Brookside Gardens--With Stephanie Oberle

December 12, 10:00am-12:00pm or December 13, 10:00am-12:00pm.

Visitors Center Adult Workshop at Brookside Gardens

1800 Glenallan Avenue, Wheaton, MD 20902

Bored with boxwood? This year, we're mixing it up with a variety of freshly cut and fragrant greens to decorate your door. We'll use a straw base and florist's pins to make a lush wreath that will last through the holidays. Fee includes all materials. FEE: \$45. For more information call 301-962-1400 or visit www.brooksidegardens.org

US Botanic Garden--Holiday Wreath Workshop

December 13, 10:30 to 12:30pm and 1:30pm to 3:30pm

Create a beautiful and fragrant wreath for your door or mantle. USBG will provide a mix of lush evergreens, pinecones, and ribbon. Feel free to bring any berries or additional decorations for your wreath. Please bring your own pruners to the workshop. The workshops are taught by Katie Palm, USBG Public Programs Specialist. Fee: \$40.00. To register, call the U.S. Botanic Garden at (202) 225-1116 or visit the online event registration at

www.usbg.gov/education/events.<http://www.ahs.org/>

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