A New Year - A New Garden

Welcome back Readers! Well, this is that time of year, isn’t it? The outdoor garden is still resting—waiting for Spring. The indoor plants are pleasant, but still no match. My green thumb is itching—I need to dig!

As I write this, I’m still pondering last season’s garden. The usual stuff - what worked well and what didn’t meet my expectations. I’ll strive to do it better this year!

This Fall we saw the emergence of baby squirrels (triplets were born to our backyard Mama Squirrel) and have enjoyed watching them learn so much including how to maneuver the snowy tree branches.

This Fall I also started some rose cuttings from my wife’s great-grandfather’s 60-year old rose bushes. The starts seem to be doing well. It is pretty neat to be a part of extending a family legacy, which is such a part of this area. We have two other rose starts from this gentleman’s plants that are looking great. Sigh, being a small part of life’s renewal is nice.

While waiting for Spring, watch your indoor plants for critters, trim and protect your outdoor plants and bunker in for the remainder of Winter!

Yes, Spring is only a couple months away - start planning now. What are you going to do different this year? - Marty

Planning Your Garden - Map It Out!

Developing a master garden plan and mapping it out can save you a lot of time, energy and money. It will give you a definite direction for your garden or landscape - and will give you a detailed map so you know the location of your plants. This way you won’t dig into existing bulbs while planting new ones, and you won’t have to worry about planting small annuals too close to large perennials. It can help when rotating your garden crops each year. Plus, it brings cheer to any gardener during the too long winter months. (cont. pg. 3)
Flower of the Month

- Carnation: Perennial; blooms all summer.
- Good for cutting; disease resistant.
- Prefers full sun and well-drained soil.
- Violet: Perennial; blooms until fall.
- Easy care; naturalizes well.
- Prefers filtered shade and acidic soil.

Critter Control - They’re Creepy & They’re Crawly!

Why is it that spiders suddenly seem to appear from nowhere inside your home during Winter? They don’t particularly like being inside—it’s too clean and they don’t have much to munch on. However, they may be seeking a warmer place (like the rest of us), looking for a mate, or they just come piggy-backing in on you or the dog.

Most spiders found in the home are not dangerous, and certainly not very cute. If you want to be sure what kind of spider you have hiding in your bathtub, you can capture it (yes, it needs to be intact) throw it in your car trunk and take it for a ride to your local Extension Office for identification.

Eliminating this critter from your home can be tricky. You can do nothing and most will probably wander off on their own and die or become dormant. You can “catch and release” them outside and hope they forget how to get back inside. Pesticides are not a good idea to use inside your home, so if you want to “terminate” them you should use a rolled up newspaper. Your best bet is to keep your doors closed, windows shut, and seal up any cracks—this makes it harder for them to gain entry. “Little Miss Muffet” would be proud!

Ask Marty Column

“I received two beautiful poinsettias for Christmas - now what do I do?” - Ellen (The Dalles, Oregon)

You survived the holidays and so can your poinsettias! Continue to grow them in a bright, sunny location, then once the danger of frost has passed, put them outdoors in dappled light or you can leave them in that sunny spot indoors. Water and fertilize them to keep the plant actively growing. Cut it back in early July leaving several strong stems - but don’t prune after that. If you kept it outdoors, wash it carefully before bringing it back inside around September. Starting late September, expose the poinsettia to short, sunny days and long, dark nights to trigger flower formation. Continue to water the soil when the surface feels dry and fertilize at half strength about every six weeks. Within six to eight weeks the red bracts should begin to appear again. Continue to give the poinsettia short, sunny days and long, dark nights until the bracts are colored fully. Then put the poinsettia in a bright location permanently.

Farm-Fresh Tips & Tidbits

- Here’s a handy project you can start now: Cut newspaper into 1” or 2” wide strips. Place seeds and a drop of nontoxic white glue onto the strips at the correct interval for planting. After the glue dries, roll up the strips and store until planting time. When the time is right, place the rolls of seeds in the garden, cover with soil, and water. The newspaper will disintegrate and your seedlings will be nicely spaced.

- Save those fallen branches this Winter - use for decorative purposes or make woodchips for mulch.

- If you can’t safely brush off snow or ice after each snowfall, let it melt on its own so as not to damage the plant.

- If you’re not sure which types of birds will visit your Winter birdfeeder, your best bet is to use black-oil sunflower seed and suet, which are high calorie energy sources for a variety of species.

- Time to recycle your Christmas tree!
Garden Chore Checklist

- Check with local retail garden or nursery stores for seeds and seed catalogs, and begin planning this year’s garden.
- Have a soil test performed on your garden plot. (Contact your local Extension Office to find out how.)
- Monitor houseplants for correct water and fertilizer; guard against insect infestations; clean dust from leaves.
- Reapply or redistribute mulches that have blown away from your flower beds during Winter.
- Plant some dwarf annual flowers inside for houseplants: coleus, impatiens, seedling geraniums.
- Tune up your lawn mower and garden equipment before the busy season begins.
- Make a cold-frame or hotbed to start early vegetables or flowers.
- Make plans for an herb bed, for cooking and for interest in the landscape: parsley, sage, chives, lavender.
- Don’t forget to water landscape plants that are tucked away underneath wide eaves and in other sites shielded from rain.
- Gather branches of quince, forsythia, and flowering cherries; bring them inside to force early bloom.

Planning Your Garden (cont.)

One of the best ways to plan a garden is to make a map using grid paper and drawing it to scale. You can look up the space requirements for the vegetables you’re interested in growing on seed packets, in seed catalogs, etc. Draw the vegetables in on the map along with the planting dates - this will help you remember when and where to plant your crops. Once you’ve got all this mapped out on paper, the next step is to plan on when you’d like to start those seeds or bulbs. Since the fire is cozy and television is a minor distraction, why not plan starting things six to eight weeks before it is time for the plants to hit the ground. Your growing guide on the seed packets will give you the indoor starting information. Keep in mind your own local growing environment when doing starts indoors. Indoor starts can give you a big jump on outdoor plantings and something to work with inside while the ground thaws for Spring. Off to the drawing board!

Garden Humor

Help Me Out Readers!

Due to the high demand for garden humor, Garden Highlights finds its stock depleted. If you want to save humor for future gardeners, you need to act now! We need to restock our shelves with your best gardening jokes and other humorous observations. We need your help now so readers will have a supply of your funniest thoughts. Send all bits of humor you can spare (in this season of sharing) to Garden Highlights at the email or mailing address given on the back page of this newsletter! Sorry, jokes are NOT tax deductible, but you may receive a free gift for your submission!

The Many Joys of Gardening

“January is the quietest month in the garden. But just because it looks quiet doesn’t mean that nothing is happening. The soil, open to the sky, absorbs the pure rainfall while microorganisms convert tilled-under fodder into useful nutrients for the next crop of plants. The feasting earthworms tunnel along, aerating the soil and preparing it to welcome the seeds and bare roots to come.”

- Rosalie Muller Wright

“Bare branches of each tree on this chilly January morn look so cold, so forlorn. Gray skies dip ever so low left from yesterday’s dusting of snow. Yet in the heart of each tree waiting for each who wait to see new life as warm sun and breeze will blow, like magic, unlock springs sap to flow, buds, new leaves, then blooms will grow.”

- Nelda Hartmann

“From December to March, there are for many of us three gardens - the garden outdoors, the garden of pots and bowls in the house, and the garden of the mind’s eye.”

- Katherine S. White

“Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle...a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light, a bud straining to unfurl. And the anticipation nurtures our dream.”

- Barbara Winkler
LURING HUMMINGBIRDS: Start planning your hummingbird garden with some of these plants. Hummingbirds are attracted by bright colors and bee-friendly shapes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Botanical Name</th>
<th>Hardiness Zone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coral Bells</td>
<td>Heuchera sanguinea</td>
<td>3 to 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foxglove</td>
<td>Digitalis spp.</td>
<td>3 to 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosta</td>
<td>Hosta spp.</td>
<td>3 to 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning Glory</td>
<td>Ipomoea spp.</td>
<td>All (Annual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petunia</td>
<td>Petunia spp.</td>
<td>All (Annual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snapdragon</td>
<td>Antirrhinum majus</td>
<td>All (Annual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet Honeysuckle</td>
<td>Lonicera semperviresens</td>
<td>4 to 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Columbine</td>
<td>Aquilegia formosa</td>
<td>4 to 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DID YOU KNOW? A hummingbird may visit 1500 to 3000 flowers each day.

Readers - “I got to thinking about something I wrote about in the front page article of this edition of Garden Highlights. I noted the starting of my wife’s great-grandfather’s roses. Another thought came to mind from a comment made in our Nov./Dec. issue by Jean of our ‘Reader Profile’ article. She commented that we are all no more than three generations removed from the soil.

My granddad was a man of the land in Greece and my wife’s Irish grandfather was a farmer. My thought is: Have we carried on the theory of the ‘only three generations removed from the soil’? I really like to think so. I’m carrying on my grandfather’s Greek legacy and my wife’s Irish legacy by keeping those roses growing into the future.

My wife, her mother, my mother, my grandfather have all played a part in what I’d like to do for tomorrow.

What would you like to do?”

- Marty

“Let no one think that real gardening is a bucolic and meditative occupation. It is an insatiable passion, like everything else to which man gives his heart.”

- Karel Capek, The Gardener’s Year, 1931

Fellow Gardeners: Our gardens are done for the season and we’re no longer able to plant extra and donate surplus produce to our local food banks. They still need our help! Please donate non-perishable items to your local food bank.

“For more information on articles in this issue, or on gardening in general, contact your local ‘OSU Extension Office/Master Gardener™ Program’. They have a wealth of knowledge to share!

I welcome hearing from you about Garden Highlights! Please pass along any gardening tips, jokes, stories or local events (two months in advance please) you would like to share. If you would like to be featured in ‘Reader Profile’, please write or email with your contact information. I’ll use some of your submissions in future issues of Garden Highlights. Readers who are selected will receive a free gift! Send me your pearls of wisdom!”

‘till then - Marty

“The scent of the rose remains in the hand that gives the rose!”

Support Local Farmers! Buy Local!

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