

THE GREENHOUSE BEET

Welcome to the Holiday Edition of The Greenhouse Beet!

December brings a magical atmosphere, encouraging us to celebrate the diverse traditions that bind our community. As we unite to honor the various festivities of the season, flowers and plants play a vital role in all our celebrations.

In this edition, we will delve into the captivating ways our gardens reflect these cultural traditions through stunning floral arrangements. From the Yule festivities that fill our hearts with joy to the cheerful poinsettias symbolizing Christmas, and the beautiful blue and white blooms that enhance Hanukkah celebrations, we hope to inspire you to transform your gardens and homes into delightful, festive havens.

Wishing you a holiday season as beautiful and uplifting as the gardens we cherish.

Happy Holidays!

December Meeting Minutes

December 7th, 2024

Last Meeting of 2024!

- Exciting donation from the Bonsai Society!
- Welcome to our new green family members!
- Greenhouse Director Christina reports smooth operations.
- Work groups are energetic and prepping for the upcoming sale:
 - Monday: Plant clinic, repotting, fig cuttings, aloe divisions, and selecting tomato varieties.
 - Tuesday: Working on spider plant cuttings.
 - Wednesday: Plumbing tasks and caring for south-end potting benches.
 - Thursday: Coleus cuttings and elephant ear donations.
 - Friday: Dividing Boston ferns.
 - Saturday: Propagating lavender, spider plants, jade plants, and sorting donated plants.
 - Sunday: Cutting hydrangeas, asters, and sunflowers for kids, seeking more perennials.
 - Herb Group: Focusing on begonias and spider plant cuttings .
- IRS Update: The IRS 1023 Easy Application is submitted and fee paid.
- Pest Vigilance: Watch over designated greenhouse areas weekly to keep pests away.
- Greenhouse Plans: Awaiting grant info for a new greenhouse; We are working with the town for security upgrades like a digital lock and Wifi with cameras.
- Aim for 80% attendance with your group; leaders are ready to support if needed.
- Event Dates: Hawthorne School program from March 24 to April 4.
- Upcoming Presentations:
 - February: Robyn on vegetable gardening.
 - March: Marilyn on body care gardens.
 - April: Miriam on seed growing with lamps.
- Diversity Reminder: Encourage kindness and respect within the community.
- Next Month: Anna will present the plant of the month!

Let's conclude 2024 with gratitude and excitement for the year ahead!

Happy gardening, everyone!

Floral Design Class



Scan or Contact for more info on Senior Citizen Waiver:



Bursar Office: 201-447-7105

BursarOffice@bergen.edu

GCT's Horticultural Director, Christina Mackensen, earned her Associate Degree in Horticulture in 2010 from Bergen Community College. During her studies, she had the privilege of taking a course with Dr. Steven Fischer, the lead professor in the horticulture department. Dr. Fischer is known for his exceptional talent, patience, and supportive nature, especially in his Floral Design class. For those eager to tap into their creative side and master the art of floral design, Christina enthusiastically endorses the Floral Design Class at Bergen Community College for Spring 2025. Under Dr. Fischer's expert guidance, students explore a variety of plants, floral supplies, and essential design techniques necessary for crafting stunning flower arrangements. The hands-on lab experiences allows students to create both seasonal and non-seasonal arrangements suitable for various occasions. An added bonus was that students can take home the gorgeous arrangements they craft during class. Classes are scheduled every Friday from 9:25 AM to 3:00 PM, starting February 7th and ending May 2nd. Tuition is waived for seniors, who only need to pay a small fee of approximately \$62 to cover registration and fees. This course presented a fantastic opportunity for anyone looking to dive into floral artistry and enhance their homes with the beauty of nature.

Plant of the Month: Piper Ornatum

Piper ornatum, a tropical vine from the Piperaceae family, is celebrated for its striking heart-shaped leaves featuring green, white, and pink variegation. Native to Southeast Asia, it thrives in warm, humid conditions, making it suitable for indoor growth in temperate areas. Care includes well-draining soil, consistent moisture, and indirect sunlight. Its ornamental beauty enhances aesthetics, adding an exotic touch to homes and gardens, showcasing the diversity of tropical plants.



HISTORY OF THE POINSETTIA

With its vibrant red and green foliage, the poinsettia has become an enduring symbol of the holiday season. Native to Mexico, this plant, scientifically known as *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, boasts a rich history that dates back centuries before it adorned festive homes worldwide.

The Aztecs, who were among the first to cultivate poinsettias, called the plant "Cuetlaxochitl", (pronounced "kwet-la-SHO-she). They used it for practical purposes, such as extracting a red dye from its bracts and utilizing sap to treat fevers. The plant was also revered for its symbolism, representing purity and the new life of warriors who had died in battle.

The modern association of poinsettias with Christmas began in the 16th century in Mexico, where legend tells of a poor girl named Pepita. Unable to afford a gift for the celebration of Jesus's birth, she was inspired by an angel to pick weeds from the roadside. When placed at the church altar, the weeds miraculously bloomed into vibrant red poinsettias, which became known as "Flores de Noche Buena," or "Flowers of the Holy Night."

The poinsettia's journey to the United States is credited to Joel Roberts Poinsett, a diplomat from the United States and amateur botanist. In the early 19th century, while serving as the first U.S. Minister to Mexico, Poinsett encountered the plant and was captivated by its beauty. He shipped several specimens to his greenhouse in South Carolina, where he propagated them, sparking an interest that would grow into a national obsession. In honor of his efforts, the plant was named "poinsettia."

Today, poinsettias are celebrated annually on December 12th, known as National Poinsettia Day, in remembrance of Poinsett's death. The plant's popularity has soared worldwide, with more than 100 varieties in a spectrum of colors, from traditional red to pink, white, and even marbled. While the poinsettia's connection to Christmas is strongest in the United States, its colorful history and cultural significance continue to enchant people globally.



Caring for your poinsettia year-round

The legend of the poinsettia

Blossoms of Light:

Celebrating Hanukkah

Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights, is a time of joy, celebration, and togetherness, often accompanied by beautifully decorated homes. While menorahs and dreidels are traditional symbols of Hanukkah, incorporating flowers into your holiday décor can add a fresh and elegant touch. In many cultures, flowers symbolize purity and beauty, and they can enhance the festive atmosphere with their vibrant colors and natural fragrance.

When selecting flowers for Hanukkah, consider blooms in shades of blue, white, and silver, which reflect the traditional colors of the holiday. White lilies, roses, and orchids can serve as the perfect base for your arrangements, symbolizing purity and light. Adding blue irises or hydrangeas can bring in the iconic Hanukkah blue, while silver accents, such as eucalyptus leaves or silver-painted pinecones, can add a touch of sparkle reminiscent of the festival's glowing candles.



To create a cohesive and festive ambiance, consider placing floral arrangements around the home in strategic spots. Use a centerpiece on the dining table to draw attention and serve as a talking point during meals. Smaller bouquets on windowsills or mantelpieces can enhance the overall decor without overwhelming the space. For a more personalized touch, incorporate elements like dreidels or small menorahs into your arrangements, or wrap vases with ribbons in Hanukkah colors.

By thoughtfully choosing and arranging flowers, you can create a warm and inviting environment that honors tradition while embracing the natural beauty of the season. Whether hosting a gathering or simply enjoying a quiet evening at home, floral decorations can help illuminate the spirit of Hanukkah, bringing light and joy to all who celebrate.



Want to make this beautiful wreath?
Check out [This tutorial from Blooms by the Box](#)

[HANUKKAH SALVIA](#)

[A HANUKKAH TRIBUTE TO "FAITHFUL" PLANTS & GARDENS](#)

SEEDS FOR SALE: [A HANUKKAH THEMED GARDEN](#)



Celebrating Kwanzaa: The Harvest Festival

As December rolls around, many of us prepare for the joyous holiday season filled with traditions and family gatherings. Among these celebrations is Kwanzaa, a vibrant cultural festival that honors African heritage and its profound connection to community, history, and the earth.

Established in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, Kwanzaa spans from December 26th to January 1st, emphasizing unity and cultural pride through its core principles, known as the Nguzo Saba. At the heart of Kwanzaa is its celebration of the first fruits of the harvest, a theme that resonates deeply with gardening and farming. This connection not only highlights the agricultural roots of many African cultures but also serves as a reminder of our relationship with nature and the land.

During Kwanzaa, the principle of Ujima, or collective work and responsibility, encourages communities to come together to cultivate and sustain their gardens and farms. This principle underscores the importance of shared efforts in nurturing the earth, ensuring that everyone can benefit from its bounty.

Gardening and farming during Kwanzaa can be a meaningful way to celebrate the festival's values. By engaging in these activities, families and communities can connect with their heritage, promote sustainability, and share the fruits of their labor. Whether it's planting a communal garden or hosting a harvest celebration, these practices enhance the spirit of Kwanzaa, fostering unity and appreciation for the earth's gifts.

As we embrace this festive season, let us remember Kwanzaa's lessons of community and stewardship, and how they enrich our lives and the land we cherish.

Want to learn more? Check out these articles:
[Kwanzaa: About Flowers](#)
[Kwanzaa in the Community Garden](#)

Evergreen Embrace:

The Timeless Symbolism of Holly and Evergreens

As the winter solstice approaches, communities worldwide prepare to celebrate Yule, a festival steeped in ancient traditions and vibrant customs. Among the most iconic symbols of this season are the evergreen trees and holly, which have become synonymous with holiday cheer. But what are the origins of these beloved plants, and how did they come to represent the spirit of Yule?

The use of evergreens during Yule dates back to ancient pagan rituals. As winter cast its long shadows, the sight of green foliage brought hope and a reminder of life amidst the cold, barren landscape. The Druids, for example, revered the mistletoe and holly for their protective qualities and believed they held magical properties. Holly, with its bright red berries and spiky leaves, was thought to ward off evil spirits and bring good fortune to homes.

In many cultures, the practice of bringing evergreen boughs into the home was also a way to celebrate the return of the sun. The Yule log, traditionally made from sturdy oak, was decorated with holly and ivy, symbolizing the triumph of light over darkness. Families would gather around the fire, sharing stories and feasting as they awaited the rebirth of the sun.

As Christianity spread across Europe, many Yule traditions were absorbed into Christmas celebrations. The evergreen became a symbol of eternal life, while holly was often associated with the crown of thorns worn by Christ, blending ancient pagan customs with new religious meanings.

Today, the charm of Yule continues to flourish, with evergreen trees and holly adorning homes, streets, and public spaces. The act of decorating a Christmas tree, once a Yule tradition, has evolved into a cherished family activity that brings people together. Whether it's hanging ornaments or stringing lights, the spirit of Yule endures, reminding us of the joy and warmth of the season.

HOW TO GROW HOLLY

CHOOSING AND PLANTING EVERGREENS

THE TOUGHEST OF THE TOUGH: EVERGREENS





GARDEN GIGGLES

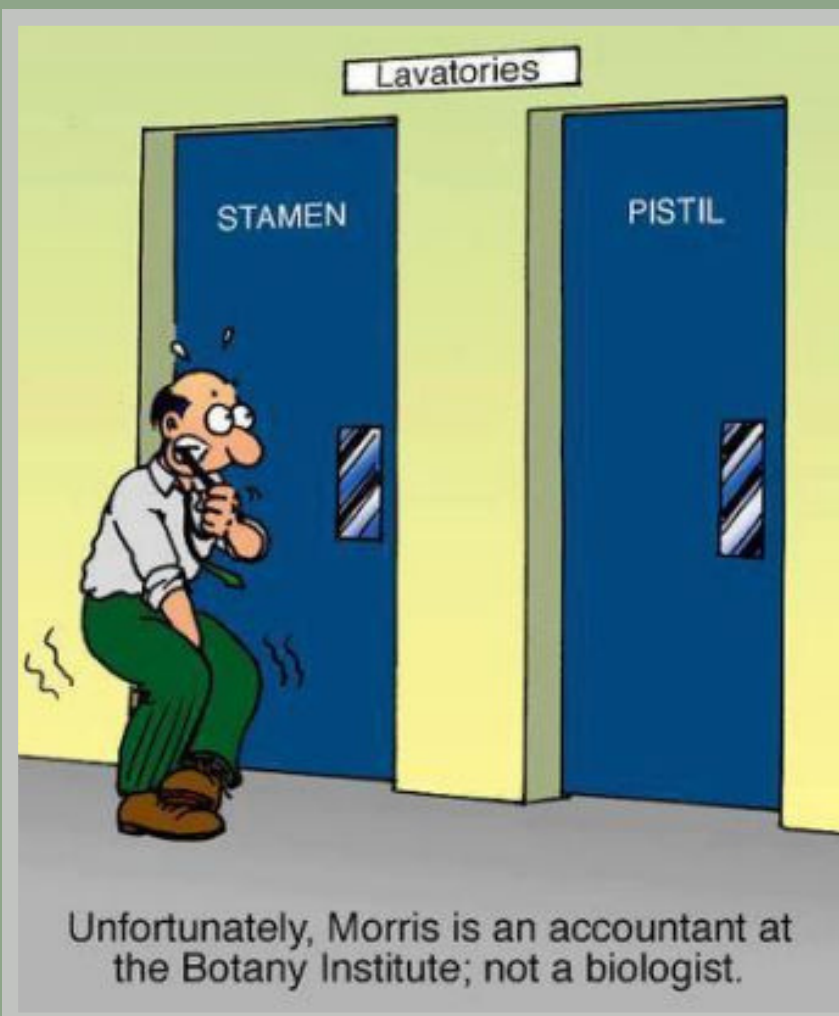
Welcome to our "Garden Giggles" page,
your go-to source for gardening humor!



**Who is a Christmas
Tree's Favorite
Singer?**
*SPRUCE
Springsteen!*



**Why does the Grinch
enjoy gardening?**
*Because he has a
GREEN thumb!*



**Why did the
gardener quit his
job just before
the holidays?**
He found his
celery wasn't big
enough to support
his *thyme* off!



**Why did Santa
plant a garden?**

Because he likes to
ho, ho, ho.



**Why did the
menorah visit the
garden?**

It wanted to see if the
plants needed a little
more "light" to grow!

[Got more garden jokes for us? Lettuce know!](#)

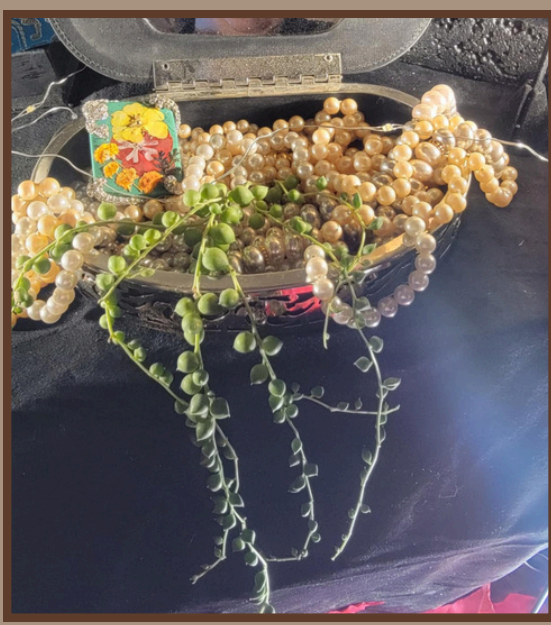
SKYLANDS HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE



Skylands Manor, situated within the NJ Botanical Gardens in Ringwood, recently transformed its halls into an enchanting holiday destination by hosting a festive open house. This event welcomed various garden clubs to showcase their creative talents by allowing them to decorate various rooms throughout the manor. The theme for the 2024 Season was “the Gilded Age”, a nod to the house’s build year of 1924.

Among the skilled decorators was our very own Robyn Lowenthal, who led a team from the Garden Club of Teaneck in creating an unforgettable center hall display. The theme paid homage to the roaring twenties, infused with a distinctive botanical flair. The team cleverly employed preserved flowers to fashion stunning clothing and accessories, including resin earrings, dried and pressed floral embellishments, and even a whimsical moss chair. The crowning piece was an evergreen gown that mesmerized visitors with its elegance and creativity, prompting many to return for additional photos!

This spectacular display honored the beauty of nature and showcased the artistry and innovation of the decorators, leaving a lasting impression on all who saw it.





GARDEN READING



Make an Adorable Broken Pot Fairy Garden in 4 Easy Steps

By [Viveka Neveln](#), Better Homes and Gardens, Aug 2019



Transform a broken clay pot into a charming fairy garden in just an hour!

Here's a quick guide ([read the full article HERE](#)):

What You'll Need:

Hand trowel
Hammer
Broken terra-cotta pot
Silicone adhesive or sculpting clay
Potting soil
Small plants or succulents
Moss

Instructions:

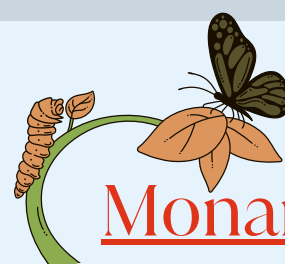
Arrange Pieces: Position the broken pot pieces for height. Secure with adhesive and let dry.
Fill with Soil: Add potting soil in the crevices, pat down, and lightly water.
Make Steps: Break smaller pieces for steps, arrange them in the soil.
Add Plants and Accessories: Plant succulents and fill gaps with moss and mini decorations.

Tip: Choose plants with similar care needs for your fairy garden!



Safety Tip:

If breaking a pot to use for this project, fill it with cardboard or foam first. Gently use a hammer to break it into smaller pieces, keeping the back wall intact. Always be cautious of sharp edges.



Monarch butterfly proposed for Endangered Species Act Protection

In response to a decade of advocacy, the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) has proposed classifying [monarch butterflies](#) as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Once abundant, their population has plummeted by 90% in recent decades, with the latest counts revealing one of the smallest populations recorded. The proposal, which includes species-specific protections and the designation of critical habitat, was published in the Federal Register, initiating a 90-day public comment period through March 12, 2025.

The monarch butterfly is unique in its two-way migration, traveling thousands of miles to wintering sites in California and the Sierra Madre Mountains of Mexico. Unlike other butterflies that can withstand cold winters in various life stages, monarchs must migrate to survive. Their migration is guided by environmental signals, and they can cover incredible distances using air currents and thermals.

Fish and Wildlife Service Director Martha Williams emphasized the resilience of monarchs and the importance of public involvement in conservation efforts. Strategies to support their recovery include ensuring access to milkweed and nectar plants. The monarch butterfly's enchanting lifecycle has captivated many, making its preservation a shared responsibility for future generations.

The proposed listing aims to enhance conservation efforts while addressing threats such as habitat loss, insecticides, and climate change. In total, 4,395 acres of critical habitat are suggested across several California counties, which will provide essential resting areas during winter. The wildlife service is collaborating with various partners, including Native American tribes and NGOs, to implement effective conservation initiatives for the monarch butterfly.



WANT MORE GARDENING KNOWLEDGE?

[DIY Vertical Gardens](#)

[6 Reasons Why Your Snake Plant is Drooping](#)

[The People Growing their own Toilet Paper](#)

WHAT’S GROWING ON AROUND US?

local gardening events

NYC Parks and ReC Virtual Class, FREE

Facing Climate Change as Urban Gardeners Dec 18 6pm

Virtual Discussion focused on overcoming climate despair through community gardening and preparedness workshops. Participants will discover their roles and the importance of collaboration in building resilience against climate change.

Jenkins Arboretum & Gardens Virtual Class, Free

Third Thursday Talks: Evergreen Trees Dec 19, 2024 7pm

Learn the identifying features, cultural requirements, and uses of an array of native evergreens that will enhance the appearance and ecological value of your property.

GlenWild Garden Center, Bloomingdale, NJ

Make a Holiday/Winter Centerpiece Dec 20 4pm \$40pp

Create your own evergreen centerpiece for Christmas Dinner or holiday parties with fresh evergreens, pine cones and more.

Holland Ridge Farms - Cream Ridge, NJ Adm Fee

U Pick Tulips Winter Wonderland Through 12/30/24

This holiday event features over 30,000 illuminated tulips, a windmill, and twinkling lights. Enjoy food trucks, a holiday market, live music, fresh-cut tulips, u-plant tulip bulbs, and a magical Santa photo experience, along with crafts and activities for children in Santa’s workshop.

NJ Society of Native Plants Virtual Class, Free

Growing Native Plants in Small Spaces Jan 8 2025 7pm

This talk explains how to grow native plants in very small spaces and cover horticultural techniques such as Natural Design

GCT UPCOMING EVENTS:

Annual Holiday Party,
Dec 18, 2024 7pm
Richard Rodda Center

General Member Meeting
Sat Feb 1, 10AM
Richard Rodda Center

General Member Meeting
Sat March 1, 10AM
Richard Rodda Center

****Upcoming Presentations**:**
February: Robyn on veggie
gardening.

March: Marilyn on gardens for
body care.

April: Miriam on seed-growing
tips and dahlias!

Save the dates: March 24 to
April 4 for the Hawthorne
School program.

Reach out to sow your stories, feature your favorite plant,
or sprinkle some wisdom and insight to all members!

Let's grow together!

Garden Club
Contact Information

Website: [the Garden Club of Teaneck](#)

Facebook: [facebook.com/GardenClubofTeaneck](#)

Email: gardenclubofteaneck@gmail.com

Location: [Directions and Map](#)



Editor’s
Notes:

Thanks for reading this holiday issue of our newsletter! Your support means the world to us! Get ready for our next edition where we’ll dig into winter sowing and outsmarting pesky greenhouse critters—your garden will thank you! Wishing you a holiday season bursting with joy, peace, and unforgettable moments. Happy holidays and garden glee!