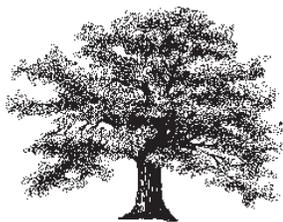


Trevoze



Horticultural Society

Our 95th Year

DECEMBER 2018 NEWSLETTER



THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM

Holiday Get Together December 18

Please join your fellow THS members for a Holiday celebration filled with good friends and good food on Tuesday evening, December 18 at 7 PM. As you know, our December meeting is our BIG social event of the year so dust off your Santa hats and red tights! Please bring something sweet or savory to share with all of your garden club friends! Betty will be supplying all paper products.



As usual, there will be NO JANUARY GENERAL MEETING. There will be an executive board meeting on January 22, 2019 from 1-3 PM at St. Ephrem Catholic Church. Articles for the February 2019 newsletter are due by February 1, 2019.



Please send all correspondence to Karen Wychock at kwychock@verizon.net. See you on December 18 with your Santa hat on!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Philadelphia is best known as the "City of Brotherly Love," but it is also "America's Garden Capitol" offering more than 30 gardens within 30 miles.

REFRESHMENTS

December: Traditionally everyone brings something to eat or drink for the December meeting. I shall supply the paper goods.



MERRY CHRISTMAS

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GARDEN CHATTER YOUR DECEMBER "TO DO" LIST

- Scout the yard for evergreen cuttings, holly berries, dried pods and any other natural materials you can use for decorating.
- Dig a hole ahead of time and store soil in a warm spot if you plan to use a live evergreen as a Christmas tree. Cover the hole with a board so no one falls in.
- If you didn't already do it, make wind-breaks for border-line-hardy broadleaf evergreens, erect barriers over plants that have been flattened in the past by snow and ice sliding off nearby roofs, and wrap hardware cloth or similar protection around the base of young trees and shrubs to protect from rodents gnawing.
- Prevent frost cracks on thin-barked trees such as maples and fruit trees by wrapping trunks with tree wrap or by painting them white latex paint.
- Poinsettias should be unsleeved in the store, but they should be sleeved on the way home to protect from cold wind. Make sure water can drain out of poinsettia pots so the roots don't rot (use a tray underneath).
- Check out the garden centers for many other colorful live-plant options besides poinsettias, such as ornamental peppers, kalanchoe, cyclamen, bromeliads, 'Diamond Frost' euphorbia, ever blooming mini-cactus.



- Last chance to get those last few spring-flowering bulbs in the ground.
- Last chance to get the hoses, pots, ornaments and statuary inside before winter damage threatens.
- Pot up more amaryllis, paperwhites or pre-chilled hyacinths for winter blooms inside.
- Clean and store lawn mower and garden tools for the winter if you didn't do it last month.
- Assess how gardens fared this past new year and make plans for improvements next season.
- After Christmas, cut branches off your tree and interlock them around the base of roses or other tender plants for winter insulation. Chip/shred the branches as mulch in spring. Cut and dry the trunks for future firewood.
- Check your seed supply to make a list of what you'll need to order/buy new for the coming season.
- If your indoor air is so dry that houseplants are suffering, consider buying a room humidifier. Those are more effective than sitting plants on pebble- and water-filled trays. Also keep houseplants away from heat vents and cold drafts near an outside door.
- Make your Christmas list of gardening goodies.
- George Weigel (george@georgeweigel.net)



HANDS ON HISTORY



THE TREVOSE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

The Trevoise Horticultural Society is celebrating its 95th birthday this year. In celebration of this occasion we will be sharing its history with you each month this year. We hope that you enjoy the read!

Chapter 10

As a club THS has enjoyed many honors and awards. In 1983, the National Council of State Garden Clubs, Inc. honored THS for fifty years of continual membership.

THS is a member of the Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania. Until recently we were members of District I. Due to the growth and the District's wide



geographical range, THS is now part of the newly formed District XI.

In 1995 GCFP honored THS with an "Award of Special Recognition" for their years of community service, staging an annual Standard Flower Show, presenting well-rounded creative programs in all aspects of gardening. This made THS very proud.

Three of our Flower Shows have won the National Purple Rosette Award for being a superior flower show, the best in the State of Pennsylvania: 1984 "Quilting Frame of Flowers," 1997 "In the Dreams of a Child," and 1999 "The Bounty of Bucks County." Several THS members help by compiling and preparing "The Book of Evidence" used in competing for this award.

The Laurel Awards are presented to deserving members each year at the Annual Luncheon.

THS was just one of three garden clubs in District I that had contributed to the National Endowment Fund for four consecutive years. In 1993 the contribution was sent in memory of Dr. Erich F. Meitzner, who had passed away the previous year. He had been a very active member, along with wife Virginia, since 1939. He last served as President of THS in 1991, after having previously served in this role in 1961-62 and 1978-79. The club remembers Erich and Virginia with great fondness and gratitude for their contributions. Erich shared his considerable horticultural knowledge with THS members, often giving interesting lectures at the monthly meetings and winning many blue ribbons with his specialty: dahlias. Virginia was co-chairman of the 1991 Flower Show with Arnold Young. A special award at each flower show is the "Erich and Virginia Meitzner Award," which is presented to the member who wins the most ribbons in the dahlia class. Virginia was named a Lifetime Member and enjoys attending the annual Flower Show all the way from central New Jersey.

Other Flower Show Special Awards include the Dorothy Hoffman Novice Award, The Rachel Schwarz Award for pressed flower design, The Joseph Caravan Award for window sill class, and the Arnold Young Award as previously mentioned.

In 1992 a memorial tree was dedicated by THS members to the memory of Elaine Heins, wife of Lou Heins, who has moved to Alaska where he has become the mayor of the town of Tenakee Springs. He is a past president of Trevoise (1972-1973), and Elaine was our first woman president. Lou returned to Pennsylvania periodically to visit.

THE HISTORY AND LEGEND OF THE POINSETTIA (EUPHORBIA PULCHERRIMA)

Poinsettia plants are native to Central America, especially an area of southern Mexico known as 'Taxco del Alarcon' where they flower during the winter. The ancient Aztecs called them 'cuetlaxochitl'. The Aztecs had many uses for them including using the flowers (actually special types of leaves known as bracts rather than being flowers) to make a purple dye for clothes and cosmetics and the milky white sap was made into a medicine to treat fevers. (Today we call the sap latex!)

The poinsettia was made widely known because of a man called Joel Roberts Poinsett (that's why we call them Poinsettia!). He was the first Ambassador from the USA to Mexico in 1825. Poinsett had some greenhouses on his plantations in South Carolina, and while visiting the Taxco area in 1828, he became very interested in the plants. He immediately sent some of the plants back to South Carolina, where he began growing the plants and sending them to friends and botanical gardens.

One of the friends he sent plants to was John Bartram of Philadelphia. At the first Philadelphia flower show, Robert Buist, a plants-man from Pennsylvania saw the flower and he was probably the first person to have sold the poinsettias under their botanical, or Latin name, name 'Euphorbia pulcherrima' (it means, 'the most beautiful Euphorbia'). They were first sold as cut flowers. It was only in the early



1900s that they were sold as whole plants for landscaping and pot plants. The Ecke family from Southern California were one of, if not, the first to sell them as whole plants and they're still the main producer of the plants in the USA. It is thought that they became known as Poinsettia in the mid 1830s when people found out who had first brought them to America from Mexico.

There is an old Mexican legend about how Poinsettias and Christmas come together, it goes like this:

There was once a poor Mexican girl called Pepita who had no present to give the baby Jesus at the Christmas Eve Services. As Pepita walked to the chapel, sadly, her cousin Pedro tried to cheer her up. "Pepita," he said, "I'm sure that even the smallest gift, given by someone who loves him will make Jesus Happy."

Pepita didn't know what she could give, so she picked a small handful of weeds from the roadside and made them into a small bouquet. She felt embarrassed because she could only give this small present to Jesus. As she walked through the chapel to the altar, she remembered what Pedro had said. She began to feel better, knelt down and put the bouquet at the bottom of the nativity scene. Suddenly, the bouquet of weeds burst into bright red flowers, and everyone who saw them were sure they had seen a miracle. From that day on, the bright red flowers were known as the 'Flores de Noche Buena', or 'Flowers of the Holy Night.'

The shape of the poinsettia flower and leaves are sometimes thought as a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem which led the Wise Men to Jesus. The red colored leaves symbolize the blood of Christ. The white leaves represent his purity.



CHRISTMAS CACTUS (SCHLUMBERGERA X BUCKLEYI)

VS.

THANKSGIVING CACTUS (SCHLUMBERGERA TRUNCATA)



LEGEND has it the Christmas Cactus dates back many years to the land now known as Bolivia and a Jesuit missionary, Father Jose, who labored endlessly to convert the natives there. He had come across the Andes Mountains from the city of Lim nearly a year before. But he felt the people of this village on the edge of the great jungle were still suspicious. He had cared for the sick and shown the natives how to improve their simple dwellings, which leaked dismally in the rainy season. Most important, he had attempted to teach them the story of the Bible, especially the life of Jesus, though much seemed to be beyond their comprehension. He had told them about the beautifully decorated altars in cities during holidays, yet here it was Christmas Eve and he was on his knees alone in front of his rude altar. Then he heard voices singing a familiar hymn he had taught his flock. He turned to see a procession of the village children carrying armfuls of blooming green branches (which we now know as the Christmas Cactus) that they had gathered in the jungle for the Christ Child. Father Jose joyfully gave thanks for this hopeful budding of Christianity. Today the Christmas cactus still blooms each winter with its message of faith and hope.

The Schlumbergera is a small genus of cacti with 6-9 species found in the coastal mountains of south-eastern Brazil. Plants grow on trees or rocks in habitats that are generally shady with high humidity, and can be quite different in appearance from their desert-dwelling cousins. Most species of Schlumbergera have stems which resemble leaf-like pads joined one to the other and flowers which appear from areoles at the

joints and tips of the stems. Two species have cylindrical stems more similar to other cacti.

Common names for these cacti generally refer to their flowering season. In the Northern Hemisphere, they are called Christmas cactus, Thanksgiving cactus, crab cactus and holiday cactus. In Brazil, the genus is referred to as Flor de Maio (May flower), reflecting the period in which they flower in the Southern Hemisphere. Most of the popular houseplants are cultivars of Schlumbergera, with flowers in white, pink, yellow, orange, red or purple. The cultivars of Schlumbergera fall into two main groups:

THANKSGIVING CACTUS (SCHLUMBERGERA TRUNCATA)

This group of flowering cacti was originally hybridized by William Buckley in Rio de Janeiro about 1840. The genus was named after a Belgian horticulturist, Frederick Schlumberger. The Truncata Group contains all cultivars with features derived mainly from the species *S. truncata*: stem segments with **pointed teeth**; **flowers held more or less horizontally**, usually above the horizontal, whose upper side is differently shaped from the lower side (zygomorphic); and pollen which is yellow. They generally flower earlier than members of the Buckleyi Group and, although common names are not applied consistently, may be distinguished as Thanksgiving cactus, crab cactus or claw cactus.



CHRISTMAS CACTUS (SCHLUMBERGERA X BUCKLEYI)

The Buckleyi Group contains all cultivars with at least some features clearly showing inheritance from *S. russelliana*: **stem segments with rounded, more symmetrical teeth**; **more or less symmetrical (regular) flowers which hang down, below the horizontal**; and pollen which is pink. They generally flower later than members of the Truncata Group and are more likely to be called Christmas cactus.



THE CHRISTMAS TREE

For many of us, a tinsel-decked tree is a holiday essential. But why do we put decorated firs in our homes? Here's everything you need to know:

How did the custom start?

As with many Christmas traditions, its roots go back to pagan times. Some Northern European pagans believed that the sun was a god and that he went through a yearly period of ill health in winter. They put up evergreen boughs on the winter solstice, around Dec. 21, the shortest day of the year — the evergreens reminding them of all the greenery that would grow again when the sun god regained his strength and spring arrived. Ancient Egyptians followed a similar tradition, adorning their homes with green palm fronds to mark the return of Ra, a hawk-headed god who wore the sun as a blazing crown. And ancient Romans used fir trees to decorate their temples during Saturnalia, a winter festival in honor of Saturn, the god of agriculture. Early Christian theologian Tertullian wasn't a fan; in the 2nd century, he told his fellow believers to leave the plants and trees to the heathens, "over whom the fires of hell are imminent."

When did Christians get on board?

That's a matter of ongoing dispute. The Eastern European cities of Tallinn and Riga both claim to have hosted the first Christmas tree: Tallinn in 1441, Riga in 1510. Each city says the Brotherhood of Blackheads — an association of local unmarried merchants, shipowners, and foreigners in Livonia (now modern-day Estonia and Latvia) — erected a tree in their town square over Christmas, danced around it, and then set it alight. Around the same time, medieval Germans were incorporating evergreens into their own Christmastime rituals, via the "Paradise Tree": an apple-adorned fir that represented the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden. But Christmas trees didn't make it into the home until Martin Luther, the founder of the Protestant Reformation, supposedly experienced a very special yuletide "vision" in 1536.

What did Luther see?

The German theologian was taking a nighttime stroll through a pine forest near his home in Wittenberg



when he glanced up and was awestruck by the thousands of stars twinkling through the branches. The wondrous sight reminded him of Jesus departing heaven for Earth at Christmas, and Luther raced home to recreate the holy scene for his family — dragging a tree into their parlor and decorating its branches with lighted candles. Other Germans started covering their own Christmas firs with gingerbread, gilded apples, and other trinkets. Some preferred to deck a single yew branch with colored paper and ribbons, a ritual witnessed by English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1798. "Under this bough," wrote Coleridge, children and parents exchange presents "with kisses and embraces."

When did the trees arrive in the U.S.?

They were brought to Pennsylvania by German settlers and may have even played a part in the Revolutionary War. Legend has it that as George Washington was crossing the Delaware River on Dec. 25, 1776, Hessian mercenaries fighting for the British were busy decorating trees and getting drunk. Suffice to say, they were in no state to fight the ensuing battle, and lost. But Christmas trees didn't become de rigueur among fashionable society until they were granted the royal seal of approval. In 1848, the Illustrated London News published a sketch of Queen Victoria's Christmas tree at Windsor Castle, a gift from her German consort, Prince Albert. The image was reprinted in Philadelphia's Godfrey's Lady's Book, with the queen's crown and Albert's mustache removed to make it look more "American." East Coast ladies went wild for the heartwarming scene — and Christmas trees became a staple of the American home.

What about decorations?

Thomas Edison's assistant, Edward Johnson, was the bright spark who dreamed up electric Christmas tree lights. In 1882, not long after Edison had invented the light bulb, Johnson hung a string of 80 red, white, and blue bulbs on the tree in his New York City home and invited journalists to come and gawk at the illuminations. Some four decades later, on Dec. 24, 1923, President Calvin Coolidge lit the National Christmas Tree, a 48-foot balsam fir decorated with 2,500 colored bulbs. Department of Commerce official Frederick Feiker had conceived the ceremony, hoping it would boost the burgeoning electricity industry. It did, and started a custom that's been observed by the White House every year since — except during World War II.

2018 THS CALENDAR

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS
START AT 7 PM

THS December 18, 2018
THS Holiday Get Together

2019 THS CALENDAR (TENTATIVE)

Executive Board Meetings
January 22, April 9, July 9 and September 10



Regular Monthly Meetings
February 19
"Backyard Birds and Bird Feeding"

March 19
"Butterfly Gardening and Insects"

April 16
May 21
June 18
July 16
August 6
September 17
October 15
November 19
December 17

THS Flower Show
August 16-17, 2019



2019 DISTRICT CALENDAR

December 7-9, 2019
*Old York Road Garden Club
House Tour of the Historic Richard Wall
House Museum*

December 14, 2018
*Norristown Garden Club
Holiday House Tour
(SOLD OUT)*

March 2-10, 2019
PHS Flower Show



March 20, 2019
*District XI Meeting
Spotted Lantern Fly*
GIANT, Willow Grove

May 1, 2019
District XI Meeting
GIANT, Willow Grove





TO PARTICIPATE IN THE LITTLE SHOW!

DECEMBER LITTLE SHOW

DESIGN - DASHING THROUGH THE SNOW!

1. Dashing through the snow - with a dash of color!
2. Anything Goes!

HORTICULTURE

3. Ilex opaca (American Holly), berried, 1 branch
4. Ilex opaca (American Holly), not berried, 1 branch
5. Ilex verticillata, (Winterberry), 1 branch
6. Christmas cactus, in bloom, any size pot
7. African violet, in bloom, single or double flowered
8. Amaryllis, in bloom, any size pot
9. Any other blooming plant, pot 6" or less
10. Any other blooming plant, pot over 6"
11. Any foliage plant, pot 6" or less
12. Any foliage plant, pot over 6"



2018 THS OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

OFFICERS

President, Betty Sykes
 First Vice President, Hazel Downes
 Second Vice President, Ron Cliggett
 Treasurer, Lenis Van Aken
 Auditor, Dee Crawford
 Recording Secretary
 Aurea Almazan, General Meetings
 Lenis Van Aken, Executive Meetings
 Corresponding Secretary, Karen Wychock
 Co-Corresponding Secretary
 Alice Szarek, Helen Soll
 Members at Large (4)
 Choony Choi, Rae Glasgow, Jack Lee
 and Mary Ann Wolf

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Adviser: Sally Irons
 District XI Representative:
 Karen Wychock
 Flower Show: Karen Wychock
 Membership: Ruth Kurtz
 Membership List: Karen Wychock
 Greeters: Choony Choi, Rae Glasgow
 Historian: Sally Irons
 Little Show: Ruth Dorn, MaryAnn Wolf
 and Ron Cliggett
 Little Show Judges: Ruth Aumann, Choony Choi
 and Rae Glasgow
 Publicity: Marie Cartwright
 Scholarship: Jack Lee
 Awards: Unfilled
 Ways and Means: Unfilled
 Picnic: Sally Irons, Rae Glasgow
 Spotlight: Hazel Downes