

Horticulture News!

January Gardening Tips from the Horticulture Committee

Martha Pendergast, Horticulture Committee Chair

” To receive the full value of joy you must have someone to share it with.”

Mark Twain

Hello January 2024!

Well, we're in it now, aren't we? January, "the dead of winter" as they say but have you noticed, if you look closely outside, there are signs of life in the midst of the freezing wind-filled, sunless days. The Rhododendron buds are full and just waiting for the right time to burst. Sure, the plants look half-dead with leaves shriveled up and branches looking stiff enough to snap in the slightest breeze but that's a survival mechanism to preserve water from being lost through the leaves. In time they will plump up again and, in a few weeks, open for all to admire. If you look at the base of many perennials like yarrow and heuchera and hummingbird mint, you can see what's called basal growth: the wee beginnings of this year's plants. Not sure about you but I have seen massive flocks of portly robins covering my Juniper and Cedar trees chowing down on the berries. I saw a few fortunate squirrels gathering leftovers from the feeding frenzy, on the boughs and on the ground. On some days the song birds are filling the air with sweet music. They know Spring will be here. We know Mother Nature won't let us down in the long run. We just hope it's not too long a run!

Mark Twain said "to receive the full value of Joy you must have someone to share it with" This quote is on the inside cover of "The Joy of Cooking" which I found during a fabulous January activity called "clearing out old stuff" and I realized I have three different editions of this same cookbook (and it's not even one I use much!) and had to choose which to keep and which to donate. Sure, Mr. Twain's sentiment applies to cooking and I'm a true foodie but I thought this is also true of our gardening. We work hard planning, tending to, correcting problems with and studying our gardens. Isn't it great when you find someone to share it with; a fellow gardener who, like you, gets excited about the gorgeous Lily pics in a catalogue and wants to share experiences and knowledge regarding their horticulture world? This is JOY and you are my peeps.

Martha, Hort Chair

Have a good gardening tip you'd like to share? Drop your suggestion in the "Horticulture Tip of the Month Jar" at the Flower of the Month table.

Have a plant in your garden that you would like to display? Exhibit at the Flower of the Month program! Our table is set up each month at the back of the room for members to display their horticulture and yes, arboriculture, including: flowers, shrubs, herbs, vegetables, fruits and trees and to compare notes with other gardeners. Come early to the meeting and we will help you set up your entry with glass vases ready and index cards available for you to tell us the Botanical Name and Common Name of your entry. Add the cultivar name if you know it! Be sure to put your name on the back. Select your entries with good form, condition and color and after the meeting come check your card to see your score of a possible 5 points! Check page 25 of your yearbook for additional info on the Flower of the Month program. Even if you are not submitting an entry,

stop by to see the beautiful entries from fellow members and to say Hi. We love talking about and sharing Horticulture!

Flower of the Month News- Let's make the first Flower of the Month exhibit a beautiful display of indoor and outdoor horticulture! Clip evergreen or deciduous tree branches or perennial with winter interest, snip indoor plant leaves, look up their identity and bring them in on February 5th. The meeting starts at noon so please aim for about 11:00 to deliver your entries. We like to get everything set up before the meeting starts, for all to enjoy! Multiple entries are encouraged. Don't forget to come back after the meeting to pick up your things and check your score. Points are given for proper identification (Botanical and Common Name) and good condition, color and entrant's name on the back. Cards and helpers from the Horticulture Committee are available at the Flower of the Month table to make submitting entries easy and fun!

The Spring Swap- Will take place May 10th at the Cultural Center at the Museum on the Green and will include some of the plants exhibited at Flower of the Month program. Have a favorite plant (indoors or out) that you can divide and share? Please label and bring it! This is a Members Only, no-charge event. Bring a plant, take a plant. There is no charge and no RSVP is required. It's all about making connections with fellow gardeners in the Club. This is a great way for members to get to know each other, to compare notes and share our love of horticulture as well as some great plants! Please label the Botanical and Common name of your donated plant (a horticulture learning opportunity!).

Tip of the Month- Those catalogues that keep coming and online gardening sites you like to visit make a great study tool for plants **you may already have!** Read about their ideal growing conditions (light, water and fertilizers) and good companion plants. Make a list of your plants that may need a change of some kind for greater vigor and beautiful display.

We hope you enjoy the rest of your January days!
FGC Horticulture Committee