

OVER THE GARDEN FENCE

December 2018

Events

- January 28—Master Gardener Meeting and yearly celebration Potluck
- January 25—Deadline to recertify for all Master Gardeners
- January 30—New Master Gardener Training classes start



Traditional Holiday Plants—*Sandra Mason, Illinois*

Plants are a part of most of our celebrations and rituals throughout the year. Christmas, the Winter Solstice, and Kwanza bring in plants that are distinctive to the season.

The most common holiday plant is the bright red poinsettia. Poinsettia is native to Mexico where it has long been associated with the Christmas season. Mexicans believed the plants were symbolic of the Star of Bethlehem and traditionally would take the flowers to church on Christmas Eve.

The Egyptians, Romans and Druids all used decorated trees in winter celebrations long before the beginnings of Christianity. Egyptians in celebrating the winter solstice brought green date palms into their homes as a symbol of "life triumphant over death". The winter solstice, December 21, has the shortest daylight of the year after that date, daylight increases, using greenery to celebrate was the solution. Most historians agree that the use of an evergreen tree as part of the Christian Christmas celebrations started about 400 years ago in Germany.

As a holiday decoration, mistletoe is one of the oldest in common use. Mistletoe was widely used centuries before Christmas as a religious symbol in pagan rituals. The ancient Druids of Britain regarded mistletoe as sacred and believed it had both magical powers and medicinal properties. Mistletoe was so sacred to the Druids that if two enemies met beneath a tree on which mistletoe was growing, they would lay down their weapons, exchange greetings and observe a 24 hour truce. Maybe we need to hang more mistletoe around the world.

Until the 20th century the herb rosemary was a very popular Christmas plant, right up there with holly and mistletoe. Why rosemary fell out of favor as a Christmas plant is a mystery. But the plant is making a comeback in wreaths and topiaries. An offering of rosemary signifies love and remembrance. And a sprig in your stew is quite tasty too.



BUGS AND BLOOMS



Mistletoe, *phoradendron leucarpum*, is a parasitic plant, growing on a wide variety of host trees (although not in SE Ohio), sometimes causing side effects such as reduced growth, stunting and loss of infested outer branches. Once a mistletoe plant is established on its host,

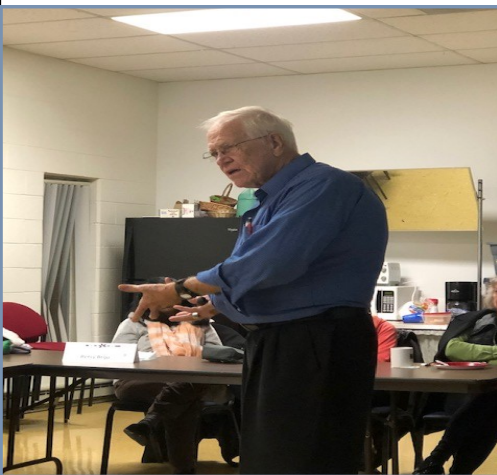


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DECEMBER GARDEN

- Finish garden clean up
- Enjoy gardening magazines and start planning for next year
- Put up deer fencing
- Leave hints on good gardening gifts that people can give you
- Enjoy the fruits of your labor. Put your feet up and tell yourself what a good gardener you are.



Richard Dean, Emeritus

Plant of the Month



Amaryllis sp.

Amaryllis, native to Peru and South Africa, are popular gifts, often given as a bulb or potted plant. The bulb will send up a 1-2 foot leafless stalk, and will start to bloom 6-8 weeks after the bulb is planted. The Greek word *amarysso* means 'sparkle' and the 4-10" trumpet shaped blossoms, can last up to 3 weeks. They can also be cut and put in a vase.

If you know how to get amaryllis to re-bloom, submit it for the Plant of the Month to brown.6000@osu.edu

2019 Master Gardeners Officers

January 28th will be the first meeting of 2019 and will be our Master Gardener Celebration for 2018.

Our new co-presidents for 2019-2020 are Betsy Brijun and Lina Howison.

Our new co-secretaries for 2019-2020 are Rhonda Koch and Zella Nisely.

Our treasurer will, happily, remain Heather Grove.

Ed Brown will continue on as our overworked Extension Representative.

The new training class will start on January 30, 2019.

Thank you all for all your work and have a great holiday

Digging Deeper

At our November 26th meeting, Dr. Richard Dean gave a presentation about the history and development of the Ohio University Emeriti Park. The park, which was dedicated in 2000, is located on 4 acres along South Green and is situated on the former bed of the Hocking River. The park includes a pond, picturesque flower bed, fountains and a waterfall. Benches provide visitors a place to rest and a decorative gazebo is available for a number of activities. Dr. Dean's presentation included information on the development of the park as a place of memorials for individuals or groups who have played a significant role at Ohio University. He also spoke about the new informational kiosk which will be included to allow an interactive history. At the present time the Emeriti Committee is trying to increase the current size of the park by including the adjoining 3 acres.