

DIG THIS!



ExeterAreaGardenClub.org

The Newsletter of the Exeter Area Garden Club

November/December 2011

>>>> **Have you checked our website for Promise Tree updates?** <<<<

Buy yourself an early holiday gift from the Tree!

Details in *Ways & Means* section below...

President's Message

LuAnn Faber

Hello Gardeners,

The winter season is off to an interesting start – eight inches of snow in October! I suppose my plants would have enjoyed the protection of that snow blanket, if it had not caught them by surprise. The day before the storm they were standing tall, some still in bloom. I don't need to tell you what they looked like after all that wet, heavy snow. I could swear my garden phlox shot me a look of reproach as I dug away the snow to belatedly cut back their broken stems. And my green peppers paid me back for my tardiness by turning to slime in my hands as I pulled them up.

But not to worry; winter is the time for gardeners to plan for a better season next year. And first on my list will be to take care of fall cleanup in a more timely manner. I've already started my wish list of plants to be purchased next spring and have ordered several new gardening books on Amazon. At Becky Mitchell's suggestion, I've subscribed to *The American Gardener*. This proves that gardeners can be just as busy in the winter as they are during the growing season, with the added benefit of never having to clean garden dirt out of under their nails.

Our committees have lots of interesting and festive activities planned for November and December. Read your *Dig This* carefully so you don't miss out on anything. As usual, Horticulture and Environment & Conservation have provided us with informative articles. And check out the update on our Promise Tree – there are some fun holiday activities available.

I'm very pleased to announce that *Dig This* has a new editor ... Hazel Reed-Goldstein. She's very ably taken over the helm with this issue. Hazel recently joined EAGC and has already made herself at home. If you haven't already met her, be sure to introduce yourself at the next gathering.

Since we don't have a General Meeting in December, I hope to see many of you at the Holiday Luncheon. For those I don't see, I hope you share a tranquil, joyful holiday with those you love.

LuAnn

'All gardeners live in beautiful places, because they make them so.'

~ Joseph Joubert

Civic Beautification

Nance Jordan, Pat Szostak & Melanie McGrail

Our next project will be the making of two (2) Topiary Trees and two (2) wreaths for the Exeter Historical Society and one (1) wreath for The American Independence Museum. We will be meeting at the EHS, Tuesday, Nov. 29, 2011, at 9:30 a.m. Eight volunteers have offered their services but if you would like to be on our "call list" (10 is ideal), please let me know by Friday the 25th. We have such a fun time getting the decorations for the town of Exeter underway. Thanks in advance, Nance Jordan 778-8204

Design

Donna Wilson & Connie Gilmore

The Meals-on-Wheels holiday favors workshop will be held on Wed., Nov. 30, from 9:30-noon at Donna Wilson's house, 3 Balsam Way, Stratham. Thank you to everyone who signed up at the October general meeting. I will send out a reminder email, with directions to my house, about a week before we meet. Please bring scissors, clippers and a glue gun (if you own one).

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The Dec. 14 holiday design class is full. Please call Donna @ 778-1290 to check for cancellations.

Herbs

Lynda Broadbent & Patti Elwell

The Herb Group is preparing for their festive *Holiday Luncheon*, to be held at the Marriott Wentworth by the Sea Hotel on December 15th at 11:30 a.m. Each attendee is asked to bring a \$10 wrapped gift for a gift exchange. At this time there is a waiting list for anyone wishing to attend.



Please call Lynda Broadbent at 772-6264 to be added to the waiting list.

Membership

Susan Canada & Mimi Brett

We are delighted to welcome new member Hazel Reed-Goldstein, who lives in Stratham. Hazel joined the Garden Club at our last meeting and is interested in being on the Herb Committee and the Newsletter. Please add her information to your Yearbook:

Hazel Reed-Goldstein
6 Elton Avenue, Stratham, NH 03885
herg@hotmail.com
366-1565

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Yearbook corrections

Please make note of the following corrections to the Yearbook:

Susan Canada -- 772-3876

Shirley Phillips -- sphill26@yahoo.com

LuAnn Faber -- 3 Hillside Avenue and jimfaber@comcast.net

Mary Trio -- maryct3@comcast.net

CHRISTMAS TREES

What to look for when choosing a Christmas tree:

Types of needles - Spruces and firs have short needles and pines have long needles. What is important, however, is the tree's needle-holding ability. Spruces will lose their needles more readily than pines.

Freshness - Look for a tree that is healthy and green with few browning needles. A fresh tree has needles that are pliable and, when broken and squeezed, will exude pitch.

Shape – This is up to you, but be aware of the sturdiness of the branches. Also consider that ornaments may get lost in a too full tree.

Popular evergreens that are suitable for Christmas trees:

Balsam Fir – Balsam is the most reasonably priced cut tree, dark green with a silvery cast, pyramidal and very fragrant when cut. Balsams have short flat needles that are long lasting.

Fraser Fir - Similar to the balsam fir, dark green needles -- This tree has excellent needle retention and a nice scent.

Colorado Blue Spruce - Dark green to blue color, with stiff needles that can scratch. They have good needle retention, but don't like warm rooms.

Douglas Fir - Full dark green to blue. It holds its needles well and is very fragrant.

Norway Spruce - Pretty tree with poor needle retention.

Scotch Pine - The Scotch Pine has lasting aroma. Its branches are stiff with ridged dark green needles that hold for weeks and don't drop when dry.

White Pine – White Pine retains its blue/green needles well, but has little or no fragrance, making it favorable for people with scent allergies. It is a full, old-fashioned tree, but the branches are not stiff enough for heavy ornaments.

How to care for your Christmas tree:

Your tree needs water within 4 hours of being cut, otherwise a scab will form and no water will be taken up.

No additives of any kind will make it last longer.

Keep your tree away from sources of heat and keep it watered; an easy way to water - get a long tube (aquarium supply or hardware store) and fit a funnel to it. Place the end of the tube in the stand and wind the funnel end up inside the tree, but with easy access. When you need to water, pour the water through the funnel, down the tube, into the reservoir. There is no need to lie on the floor to check the water level!



TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

It may seem as if this year winter did not sneak up on us; it pounced on us with a vengeance. Believe it or not, there is still time to plant bulbs, especially the larger ones, and many mail order suppliers are offering sale prices. One of my favorite sources (alas, their sale ends Nov.11) is Old House Gardens in Ann Arbor, MI. My first *Dig This* tip is that you sign up for their online newsletter for some good reading and solid advice.

DAHLIA TUBER TECHNIQUE

The latest issue reviewed the procedures to follow if you want to save dahlia tubers for re-planting in the spring (and, let me add, sharing at our plant auction!). Don't dig too early. Wait until frost has left the tops a black mess (that just happened in my garden), and then wait another week or so for the tubers to fully mature. Cut off the stalks a few inches above the ground, and carefully loosen the soil at least a foot away from the stalks. Dig gently to harvest all the tubers. Label each clump and hang them upside down in a cool, dry place for no more than a day or two.

The usual technique for storing the tubers is to pack them in peat moss, vermiculite, wood shavings or similar coarse, dry medium, and store them in plastic bags or boxes. Ideal storage conditions are cool (40-50 degrees), dark, and dry. Check them from time to time, releasing any condensation that could cause rot. If the tubers are shriveling, sprinkle on some water. The OHG newsletter also describes a storage technique that I have used with some success. This involves wrapping a dried tuber in plastic wrap. If you have had success with other techniques, please share!

SLOW GARDENING

Old House Gardens also tipped me off to a new book, [Slow Gardening](#) by Felder Rushing. I checked Rushing out online (www.felderrushing.net), and in spite of a jokey tone that usually doesn't sit well with me, I think I may have to get his book. I find his notion of a four season, fully mobile truck garden -- a vintage pickup bed made into a complete garden -- very appealing. Tenets of his Slow Gardening approach include:

Try to keep stress and pressure out of your garden. "Your garden provides natural opportunities to ...step off the treadmill."

"You don't have to be an expert to garden, or even work very hard. Even a small potted plant can help you to focus on the 'here and now' of everyday living."

Grow plants -- "native or well-adapted -- that like your climate and provide something for you and local wildlife through all seasons. Include plants for evening enjoyment, and at least a little home-grown food."

Whether you garden on ten acres or a patio, the last point is a very good one. Your horticulture committee stands ready if you need plant suggestions. Finally, you already adhere to one of Rushing's tenets: "Get together...Gardeners have always been a sharing tribe."

Becky Mitchell

Ginna Thoma, award winning floral designer and owner of *designs by ginna*, will speak about seasonal floral design at the joint meeting of EAGC and the Rye Driftwood Garden Club on Tuesday, November 15. The meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. at the Rye Congregational Church.

Promise Tree Project

The Promise Tree has been an early success. Thank you, Connie, for suggesting it. Let's keep it going strong by adding your promises if you have not already done so. Continue shopping the tree at each meeting, as it keeps changing its leaves. The get-togethers have been lots of fun. Tasty and new holiday events are planned. Visit the club web-site for updates.



Thank you for those who have contributed and purchased leaves.

Members may still add leaves and purchase leaves. Contact Dianna Thompson at 778-8371.

Website

Patti Elwell

The one-woman Website Committee is excited to have new member, Maxine Forward, joining the team! Maxine has experience working with websites so you can watch for even more exciting things from your internet connection!

Be sure to check the website regularly as new information is being added all the time about programs, the promise tree, and area activities.

Please contact Patti Elwell at 778-1659 or pmelwell@comcast.net if you need help accessing the *Members Only* pages to see recipes, promise tree dates, the members list, etc. If you only use your computer for email, be daring and go on the internet to check out the EAGC Website at www.exeterareagardenclub.org !!

Items of Interest

Exeter Hospital's Art Wall is in bloom for the month of November with the photography of club member Terri Donsker. Terri is presenting a solo exhibit, "Flora," featuring flower portraits and lush garden landscapes.

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On December 1, 2 and 3, the Evergreen Fair 2011 "Gardener's Holiday Getaway", features 50 juried artists & craftsmen & live musical performances at the UNH-MUB, 83 Main St. in Durham, NH. Admission is free. More info at www.facebook.com/EvergreenFair?sk=info or 934-6248.

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Need help identifying a tree? Try Leafsnap.com, an electronic field guide for leaf identification. Users download an "app" to their iPhone or iPad, and then use that same device to take a picture of the leaf in question. Leafsnap will provide identification based on the picture you submit. It's only available for Apple products, but other versions are in development.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

November 15, 9:30 a.m. (Tuesday at Rye Congregational Church)	Joint Meeting with Rye Driftwood Garden Club. Ginna Thoma, "Floral Designing".
November 18, 19 and 20	19th Festival of Trees at the Urban Forestry Center , 45 Elwyn Rd., Portsmouth, NH.
November 19 th : Winter Farmers Market 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. & Winter Crafts Market 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.	Wentworth Greenhouses, 141 Rollins Road, Rollinsford , NH
November 29, 9:30 a.m.	Assembly of holiday decorations for Exeter Historical Society at EHS, 47 Front St. in Exeter
November 30, 9:30-noon	Meals-on-Wheels holiday favors workshop at Donna Wilson's house, 3 Balsam Way, Stratham.
December 15 th , 11:30 a.m.	Holiday Luncheon sponsored by the Herb Group at Wentworth by the Sea in Rye

This newsletter was edited by Hazel Reed-Goldstein. The next DIG THIS will be sent in early January, 2012.
All submissions for that newsletter are due by January 9.

If winter is slumber and spring is birth, and summer is life, then autumn rounds out to be reflection. It's a time of year when the leaves are down and the harvest is in and the perennials are gone. Mother Earth just closed up the drapes on another year and it's time to reflect on what's come before.
- Mitchell Burgess



Exeter Area Garden Club
Membership Registration
2011/2012

www.ExeterAreaGardenClub.org

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

Town: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Committee sign-up:

Requirement of membership – see our website at
(http://exeterareagardenclub.org/Page_2_F2LR.html) for details.

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Awards | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality | <input type="checkbox"/> Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civic Beautification | <input type="checkbox"/> Horticulture | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Design | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Ways & Means |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment & Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Website | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Herbs | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Yearbook |

Level:

- Single Membership \$25 Couple Membership \$30

If you have any questions, please call membership co-chairs:
Susan Canada: 772-3876 or Mimi Brett: 770-3405

Please make checks out to Exeter Area Garden Club and mail with your
completed registration form to:

Susan Canada
47 Bunker Hill Ave
Stratham, NH 03885