



“What’s Growing On...”

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**RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
ON THE RADIO**

For agriculture news and horticultural tips, listen to me, Pam Burton, on the RCE Agricultural Program on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday on SNJ Today AM 1240 announcing local workshops, seminars, and horticultural tips.

From The Desk of Pam Burton

Meet the family!

December 2015 launches a year-long celebration of 100 years of Cooperative Extension in Cumberland County and we will be hosting events throughout 2016 to celebrate the 100th year anniversary. There are three units within the RCE and they include Agriculture, 4-H and Snap Ed. The Agriculture personnel are agents Jim Johnson, Wes Kline and Sal Mangiafico. Tammy Commander is the Ag Secretary and holds us all together, and I work with Rutgers Master Gardeners of Cumberland County and home horticulture.

The 4-H program includes Julie Karavan, 4-H agent along with 3 program assistants, Donna Griebau, Cheryl McCormick and Cindy Hetzell. Two 4-H secretaries work alongside them and they are Nancy Spinelli and MaryAnn Maslanik.

SnapEd includes two program associates, Susan McKenna (also a Master Gardener!) and Jane Vohringer.

We certainly cannot forget our maintenance person, Alice, who is also a 4-H leader.

The home horticulture and Rutgers Master Gardeners theme of 2016 is “The Power of Pollinators” and to honor that we will begin to renovate our gardens at the RCE into public Demonstration Gardens where Rutgers Fact Sheets can come to life.

And so it goes...

Rutgers Cooperative Extension 100 Years of Service in Cumberland County



The Basics of Beekeeping

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Cumberland County and the South Jersey Beekeepers Association will be offering "The Basics of Beekeeping" course beginning Saturday, February 6, 2016. The course will be held for six consecutive Saturday mornings from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM. Classes will be held at the Extension Education Center, 291 Morton Ave., Millville, NJ 08332-9776. The course fee will be \$95.00, which includes the text "Beekeeping Basics" and membership in the New Jersey Beekeepers Association. The course will be taught by Ned Morgan, President of the South Jersey Beekeepers Association and will cover a variety of topics.

Deadline for registration is Friday, January 29, 2016. Pre-registration and payment is required as we will not guarantee a seat or materials for walk-in registrants. To register for the class today, email your request prior to January 29, 2016 to Ned Morgan at: ned.morgan@comcast.net, or call the Extension Education Center at 856-451-2800 x1.



Alternative to a Traditional Christmas Tree

If you are limited in space and simply do not have the room for a live or artificial Christmas tree, consider these alternatives.

Many stores offer rosemary topiaries in the shape of a tree and the bonus is the added piney scent of the faux Christmas Tree. You can also sneak a few sprigs into your holiday dishes and then look forward to planting the tender perennial in the spring. In the meantime, rosemary prefers to be kept on the dry side, so take care not to overwater it. They enjoy an inside environment that is cool and brightly lit.

A Norfolk Island Pine can be substituted as an alternative for a more traditional tree. The Norfolk Island Pine has a sparse look with wide open branches and enjoys a space with bright indirect light and cool temperatures with evenly moist soil. It can be kept as a houseplant long after the holiday memories have faded.

Resources:

University of Florida; <http://okeechobee.ifas.ufl.edu/News%20columns/Tabletop%20Christmas%20Trees.htm>

University of Maryland; <http://extension.umd.edu/learn/rosemary-care-indoors>

University of Illinois; <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/cfiv/homeowners/011222.html>

University of Florida; <http://okeechobee.ifas.ufl.edu/News%20columns/Tabletop%20Christmas%20Trees.htm>

Iowa State University; <http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews/1999/11-5-1999/holplants.html>

Do's & Don't of Cyclamen Care

Whether you receive a cyclamen for Christmas or Valentines, the do's and don'ts for getting the most out of the blooming plant remain the same.

- Do keep it in a cool place with daytime temperatures below 68 degrees and nighttime around 50 degrees.
- Don't place it near heat vents
- Do wait until the soil dries out and then give the cyclamen a thorough watering allowing the plant to drain out over a sink
- Don't water the center of the plant
- Do provide as much light as possible
- Do provide air movement around the pot
- Do fertilize your cyclamen according to the label
- Do deadhead
- Don't tug too hard on dead flowers or leaves
- Do enjoy your cyclamen!



Resources:

Clemson University; <http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/indoor/flowering/hgic1564.html>

University of Minnesota Extension Service; <http://www.extension.umn.edu/yardandgarden/ygbriefs/h145cyclamen.html>

University of Florida; <http://okeechobee.ifas.ufl.edu/News%20columns/New.Holiday.Greens.htm>

Iowa State University; <http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews/1999/11-5-1999/holplants.html>

Leek and Potato Soup Marie Nicke

- 1 lb. fresh leeks, washed, cut into ½ inch pieces
- 3 medium-sized potatoes, peeled, cut into ½ inch pieces
- 1 medium sized onion, peeled, cut into ½ inch pieces
- 1 celery stalk, washed, cut into ½ inch pieces
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled, finely chopped
- 3-4 pints hot vegetable stock (bought stock cubes are ideal)
- 2 oz. unsalted butter
- Double cream
- Salt & Pepper

In a suitable saucepan, heat the butter until hot, but do not brown. Add the leek, celery, garlic and onion. Saute until vegetables soften, but do not brown. Add the potatoes, and a little stock (to prevent potatoes from sticking to the saucepan.) Cook gently until potatoes start to soften. Add the rest of the hot stock, simmer for around 35-45 minutes until the potatoes are soft and cooked. Blend the soup using a food processor or hand blender. When smooth, the cream can be added if desired. Season to taste.

Marie is a Certified Master Gardener. She teaches an annual wreath-making class that has become a tradition for people to attend, and all are guaranteed to go home with a fresh green holiday wreath and some good laughs throughout the day. She is a "go to" person who "gets things done" and helps out at almost every event. Marie is a seasoned "pepper-picker" and has assisted with the field trials at the RAREC farm for years. She lives on her farm and has beautiful gardens that she tends to herself.

MASTER GARDENER OVERVIEW

I. Introduction

The Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) Master Gardener program is a volunteer program offered in New Jersey through Rutgers Cooperative Extension, NJ Agriculture Experiment Station (NJAES), and Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, in cooperation with the individual county government. The program is designed to increase the availability of University-based information to local communities and individuals through trained adult volunteers known as Rutgers Master Gardeners.

II. Program Objectives

- Expand the research and educational capacity of RCE in order to provide research-based home grounds information through a network of trained volunteers.
- Develop and enhance community programs related to horticulture and environmental stewardship. These programs are educational in nature and may involve environmental improvements, horticultural therapy projects, community and school gardening projects, or other programs as determined by local need.
- The Rutgers Master Gardener Program is a volunteer network designed to assist RCE faculty and staff in managing local Master Gardener activities and programs.
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III. Who is a Rutgers Master Gardener?

A Master Gardener is an adult 18 and older who has a sincere desire to help others and a strong interest in home grounds, including gardening, horticulture, and the environment. He or she is a member of the local community interested in expanding his or her personal knowledge with a willingness and dedication to then serve as a volunteer for Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

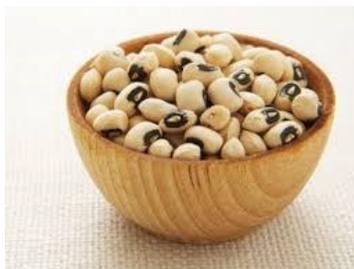
New Year's Traditions

The traditions of New Year's Day vary from country to country but many include a theme of renewal by banishing the old year's evil spirits and getting a fresh start. A door is left ajar for the old year to escape, or a shutter is left open for the new year to enter. In Japan sacred twists of rice straw rope are hung over the doorway to prevent malevolent spirits from entering the house.

There is a southern tradition of eating black-eyed peas on New Year's day. I'm telling you ahead of time so you can add them to your grocery list! Because it is said that those who eat this lentil on New Year's Day will have good luck for the upcoming year and by showing their humility in eating the black-eyed peas which is both inexpensive and modest will save themselves from the wrath of the heavens. They are on my shopping list.

Resource:

Swathmore; <http://www.swarthmore.edu/Humanities/pschmid1/array/convolute3/shimenawa.html>



Eastern Bluebirds

Rutgers Fact Sheet 34 entitled New Jersey Forest Stewardship Series: Build Bird Nest Boxes Practice Standards provides very specific nest box requirements by bird species. Likewise, there are very specific suggestions for attracting eastern bluebirds to your yard, but if you are lucky enough to have them, the extra consideration is well worth the effort. I have seen them as early as February in years past and they are always a harbinger of spring.

Eastern Bluebirds are known as "forest edge" species because they prefer a habitat of open grasslands and scattered trees for perching, nesting and feeding. There has been a reduction in these natural food and shelter resources, and that has been one theory of why there has been a decline in the bluebird population. One of the ways that you can help with this effort is to spend some of the winter months constructing bluebird nest boxes. As part of the New Jersey Forest Stewardship Series there is a Rutgers Fact Sheet 34 entitled Build Bird Nest Boxes with specific instructions for constructing bluebird nest boxes.

It's recommended that the new nest boxes be installed by February to attract migrating bluebirds. Place the boxes at least 100 feet from treelines so as to avoid predators as well as 4 to 6 feet above the ground and it's best to place the box away from the prevailing winds for protection. Keep a vigilant watch and remove any starling or sparrow nests. Leave the boxes up year round and at the end of each nesting remove the nesting materials.

Bluebirds enjoy a space that has perches or shrubs and trees nearby and an available source of water. Fruits comprise of more than 30% of the bluebird's diet, and they are very dependent on persistent fruits in the winter. Plan your home landscaping accordingly by choosing tree and shrub species that will retain fruit through the winter.

In researching this topic I read that Eastern bluebirds are very social but are territorial as well and will defend the nesting and territory during the breeding season, and I found this to be true when I personally got a bit too close to the nest for the momma bluebird's comfort and she let me know it in an up close and personal way.

Resources:

University of Michigan; http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/accounts/Sialia_sialis/

PennState Extension; <http://extension.psu.edu/natural-resources/wildlife/landscaping-for-wildlife/pa-wildlife-3-managing-habitat-for-eastern-bluebirds>

University of Kentucky; <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/for/for52/for52.htm>

Fairfax County Public Schools; http://www.fcps.edu/islandcreekes/ecology/eastern_bluebird.htm



Edgeworthia

Edgeworthia chrysantha or more commonly referred to as Paperbush is an early spring bloomer. Edgeworthia provides year round interest with some noteworthy wintery attributes. Edgeworthia has showy reddish brown smooth bark and it flowers during the winter months. The flowers are reported to smell sweet like Gardenia but a bit spicier. I have had the pleasure of smelling the flowers of Edgeworthia and can assure you that it is exquisite. Edgeworthia flowers when the stems are bare, which accentuates the beauty of the bark and flowers even more. The florets themselves are tiny, but when gathered enmass they make a stunning bouquet.

This is a great shrub for a woodland or shady border planting and is best planted in Spring. Edgeworthia prefers light shade with moist well drained soil that contains plenty of organic matter. It is hardy in zones 7 through 9 and is native to China where it grows along stream banks and on the edge of woodlands. This multi-stemmed shrub has a rounded growth habit and at maturity reaches about 7 feet high and wide. It makes an excellent specimen plant or as an accent at the back of the border. It requires very little pruning and has few pest issues.

The common name of Paperbush refers to the high grade paper products made from the woody bark and stem of the plant. Not only does Edgeworthia provide distinct winter interest, it is also a four season plant by sporting beautiful bluish elongated 5 inch leaves with silvery undertones in the spring and summer. The foliage seems to hold droplets of water during spring showers. In the fall, the leaves drop to show the silhouette of a beautifully structured plant.

If your site analysis provides a well drained soil and requires a shrub that can tolerate shade strongly consider Edgeworthia for your landscaping options with its' four season appeal .

Resources:

University System of Georgia; <http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension/cobb/anr/Documents/EDGEWORTHIA-PAPYRUFERA.pdf>

North Carolina State University; <http://extensiongardener.ces.ncsu.edu/extgardener-edgeworthia-lends-blooms-and-fragrance-to-winter/>

University of Tennessee; <http://utgardens.tennessee.edu/pom/edgeworthia.htm>

University of Georgia or the University System of Georgia.
<http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension/cobb/anr/Documents/paperbush.pdf>



Fourth Season Gardening

The gardens are winterized, the leaves have been mulched and there's a chill in the air. But that doesn't mean our gardens are sterile with no life or beauty. The fourth season of winter brings with it a variety of interests in the landscape that may require us to look a bit harder, but it's worth the effort. When planning your landscaping keep winter interest in mind and pay attention to the path of the winter sun and the wind exposure for the site selection.

The most obvious example of a splash during cold winter days is the berries of the *Ilex verticillata*, Winterberry. The bold bright red berries on the branches bared of leaves make a stunning display when clumped together alongside a pond or stream. The small shrub *Callicarpa americana* or Beautyberry produces magenta berries clustered along the graceful stems and is perfect as a specimen shrub. The berries also provide the added bonus of food for foraging animals and birds during the winter months. There are examples of both of these plants at the Extension Education Center.

Perhaps more subtle than the berries is the pattern and texture of the bark. On my wish list for the RCE are two deciduous tree, *Betula nigra*, River birch, which sports golden reddish-brown bark and a yellow-twig dogwood, *Cornus sericea* 'Flaviramea' so once the leaves have fallen, there remains the fourth season interest. When the leaves have fallen, take note of the interesting structure of the contorted and gnarly branches of deciduous trees and shrubs.

Evergreens provide the foundation of a garden especially during a winter wonderland with snow gracing their branches. We have a beautiful specimen of a Weeping Norway Spruce, *Picea abies* 'Pendula', in the Japanese Garden at the Extension Center which provides a backbone and focal point to the garden. Short needle and long needle evergreens are available in color choices and can add hues of greens, yellows or blues to your garden in the winter.

Hardscaping can be your answer to a focal point in your garden for winter interest. A trellis, fence, arbor or sculpture can take on a different look in the winterscape. Fill your weather resistant container with winter greenery, berries and twigs instead of going empty. The butterfly garden at the Extension Center has several benches and a birdbath that take center stage once the garden is winterized.

Liriope is one winter interest perennial that we have at the Extension Center and we are planning on adding some tall grasses that will complement the four season public demonstration gardens.

Resources:

<http://ocean.njaes.rutgers.edu/documents/ChecklistforJanuary.pdf>

Penn State University; <http://extension.psu.edu/franklin/news/2012/year-round-landscaping>

Ohio State University; <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/1000/1143.html>

Clemson Cooperative Extension; http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/hot_topics/2010/01winter_interest.html



Holly Society of America – 67th Annual Meeting

Submitted by Jane Christy

The 67th Annual Holly Society of America Meeting was held on Rutgers University's campus, from Wed., Oct. 22 – 25, 2014. Host was Bruce Crawford, Rutgers Gardens Director who oversees the 189 acre outdoor teaching classroom, horticultural research facility, and arboretum on Rutgers' campus.

The Rutgers Holly Collection was the focus of this four-day meeting. Begun in the 1950s, Dr. Elwin Orton started the *Ilex Opaca* breeding programs. He often worked very closely with Millville's Dan Fenton at the local Holly Farm. Dr. Orton's selections (including Dan Fenton, Jersey Princess, Jersey Delight and Jersey Knight) comprise one of the largest collections of American Hollies in the U. S. The collection also includes Wolf #15, Millville, Long Island, Goldie, and many others.

The HSA attendees used the Rutgers Inn and Conference Center for its housing, meeting, holly sprig contest, nursery plant auction, and banquet.

Tours that are always scheduled on Thursday and Friday of area nurseries and gardens are always popular events. On Thursday we visited Pleasant Run Nursery, which was formerly Princeton Nurseries, and Grounds for Sculpture. Friday was mostly devoted to the 30 acres of Rutgers Gardens. In addition we were guests of private collections in Mendham and another in Nutley.

Saturday is set aside for education, the plant auction, and the awards banquet. Educational speakers were:

- Dr. Elwin Orton gave the official welcome.
- Dr. Thomas Molnar, professor, presented an update on the Hazelnut breeding program, a proposed new industry for New Jersey. The end goal is to produce a pest-free plant farmers can grow the world market wants. He reported, "The makers of Nutella, Ferrara said they will buy all the hazelnuts we can produce." A test farm in Southern N. J. is Cumberland Nursery.
- Bruce Crawford, announced the future master planning of Rutgers gardens, the redesign of the Holly collection, and plans for a future Rutgers Botanical garden.
- Larry Kuser, owner of the 350 acre Wholesale Fernbrook Nursery, focused on "Looking at *Ilex Opaca* from the viewpoint of a field grower." He talked about deer resistant plants, (Red Beauty) and explained the various benefits of several of his cultivars. It's interesting to note that Red Beauty does not need a male to pollinate.
- Charles Hinkle, of Scott Arboretum, Swarthmore, PA, (original family of the Scott Paper Corporation). Hinkle explained that the Arboretum was formed in 1929 and had started with lilacs, peonies, and magnolias. Today the Arboretum's collections of hollies, magnolias, and oaks have gained recognition in the North American Plant Collections Consortium.
- Steve Kristoph, Rutgers Professor of Plant Materials gave a power point presentation of outstanding hollies.

Always favorite events during the meetings are the sprig contest and nurserymen auction. Each year one hundred plus sprigs are exhibited for judging. The plant auction is always held during Saturday afternoon. Culmination of the meeting is the awards banquet.

This year, 2015, the 68th Annual Holly Society of America's meeting was held in Hunt Valley, Maryland from Oct. 28 to Nov. 1.

In 2016, the meeting will take place at Myrtle Beach, S. C.

Please visit HSA's web site: Hollysocam.org. for more information on the upcoming meetings. Or, you may contact Jane Christy, 856 825-0066.

Call or visit for free Rutgers Fact Sheet 1151Hollies in New Jersey; Edith Wallace, Ph.D., Master Gardener, Passaic County, Elaine Fogerty Barbour, Passaic County Agricultural Assistant



Osage-oranges a/k/a Hedge Apples

These trees are often seen used in hedge rows. They are probably most well-known for the large, gnarly, knobby, green fruit that the female trees produce and drop in or around September. One person's trash is another person's treasure and while many people consider the fruits as an ugly nuisance, many others have been known to collect them and use them for ornamental purposes. I've seen a pile of them used in a wooden bowl in a colonial style décor. I would recommend gloving up when handling the osage-orange fruits as they are covered with a sticky substance that may irritate the skin.

I happen to err on the side of really liking the look of the gnarly fruit, but there is more to the tree than just that. It's a member of the mulberry family and I am fascinated by the historic significance of the osage-orange where its' uses followed the path of European settlement on this continent and the rise of traditional agriculture. The common name 'Osage-orange' comes from the fact that the Osage Indians lived in the mid-western region. Samples of Osage-orange were the first tree samples sent to President Jefferson in 1804 by Meriwether Lewis, during his expedition to the west with William Clark.

Early settlers used the hard dense wood of the osage-orange tree for archery bows and handles, whereas the durable and decay-resistant orange heartwood was perfect for wheel hubs, fence posts, and railroad ties. The bark of the small tree was used for tanning leather and dyeing clothes and baskets.

Although there are some spineless cultivars available, generally speaking the dioecious Osage-orange has spines and our industrious early settlers purposely planted the trees as living fences on their property. When pruned, the trees formed thick hedges that were nearly impenetrable because of the numerous spines on the branches. This practice caught on and with it so did the spread of the osage-orange. The idea of planting Osage oranges as barriers died out with the introduction of barbed wire for fencing however, remnants of the old Osage orange hedges still linger on many Mid-western farms today.

So, if you stop to pick up the osage-orange fruits to decorate your home, give a nod to our ancestors who had many different uses for the osage-orange tree.

Resources:

Clemson University; <http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/tyk/2009/tyk12.html>

University of Georgia; <http://warnell.forestry.uga.edu/service/library/index.php3?docID=174&docHistory%5B%5D=2>

University of Illinois; <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/dmp/palette/061022.html>

Iowa State University;
<http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews/1997/10-10-1997/hedgeapple.html>



OVERWINTERING OUTDOOR CONTAINERS

Recently, a client asked about the best way to overwinter her beautiful and very large outdoor containers with plants.

There are actually several options available and the one you choose depends on your individual situation. The goal is to provide protection to the root and crown of the containerized trees by making sure to prevent the soil mass from freezing and to maintain the moisture in the soil over the winter. It is important in any of these options to make certain that the container has drainage holes.

One option is to sink the pot and all into the soil in a protected area of the garden. Water them in and add six to twelve inches of mulch. This method will help protect the roots with the moderating effects of the surrounding soil. Be certain to check the pots each month and water if needed.

Option one was not practical for this client because of the size and weight of her pots, but option 2 may be doable for her. If you cannot sink the pots into the ground, then try to cluster them together on the north or east side of the house, placing the smaller pots inside the cluster and the larger pots on the outside of the cluster. It's preferable to put them on the ground versus a paved surface to avoid freezing and thawing of the soil. Again, water and mulch accordingly making certain that you mulch over the tops of the pots to lessen the impact of root killing temperature fluctuations. Check every two weeks and water as necessary.

Option three is to move the containerized plants into an unheated garage. Be sure to again check the moisture frequently and water when needed.

Option four is to actually wrap the pot with burlap, an old blanket or bubble wrap and stuff straw between the pot and the wrapping for insulation. While this might look a bit odd, it will help safeguard the roots as much as possible.

One last note, if your containers held annuals remove the potting soil and add that to your compost pile so you can start with fresh soil in the spring. Be sure to clean your pots before putting them away for storage!

Resources:

University of Illinois Extension; <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/obrien/sites/www.extension.iastate.edu/files/obrien/Horticulture%20Oct%2015%20Overwintering%20Potted%20Plants.pdf>

Colorado State University Extension; <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/ptlk/2028.html>

Ohio State University Extension; <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/1000/1254.html>

University of Illinois Extension; <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/containergardening/overwintering.cfm>

Gram's Paperwhite Narcissus bulbs

The love of nature runs deep in my family and one of the earliest memories I have is of my Gram forcing paperwhites for the holidays. This was always a surefire way to beat those winter blues! They do not need a cold chill to force them into bloom so they are relatively easy to force indoors.

There are several varieties of paperwhites available commercially, and you should choose healthy bulbs with no soft spots or signs of discoloration and store them in a cool, dry place until time to plant.

Depending on the variety and the growing conditions, it can take anywhere from four to six weeks after planting to bloom, so plan accordingly if you want flowers for the holidays. I recommend several plantings of bulbs every two weeks from late fall through the holiday season. The blooms will produce star like white flowers on a tall stalk with a wonderful scent and they will last anywhere from 1 to 3 weeks depending on the variety and growing conditions.

There are two methods of forcing paperwhites. The first method of forcing the bulbs is to place about 2 inches of pre-washed stones in the bottom of the container. I like to use a clear container so you can see the decorative stones. Carefully place the bulbs on the stones. They can be touching each other. Place a few more stones around them to keep the bulbs in place and their roots will grow into the stones. Add just enough water to bring it to the basal root plate of the bulbs and maintain it at this level. This method works well with a mason jar and one single bulb as a thoughtful holiday idea.

The second method is to use planting medium in a container that is 3 to 4 inches deep and has drainage holes. Plant the bulbs with the top slightly below the rim. Part of the fun is seeing the papery dark color of the bulb itself. After planting, water thoroughly and keep moist. I used the larger soup can covered in brown paper with a twine bow for a country style look.

Once planted using either method, initially place the paperwhites in a window area with southern exposure. Low light will produce a lanky plant! However, once the plant begins to flower move them to the coolest part of your home to prolong the flowering of the plant. Throughout the growing period you want to add just enough water so it reaches the base of the bulbs, but not too much so that it sits in water as this will cause rot. You'll probably need to replenish the water every two or three days to maintain this level of water. Don't fertilize.

Paperwhites can grow up to 2 inches per day! If the stems get too lanky, I have added a support next to the stem or I have cut the blooms of the paperwhites to use as cut flowers and they are stunning in a vase. As a final note, the majority of resources I checked advised to discard the bulbs after the holiday.

Resources:

North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service; <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/hil/hil-8530.html>

Purdue University; http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/wrg_paperwhite.html

Union County College; http://faculty.ucc.edu/biology-ombrello/pow/paperwhite_narcissus.htm

Iowa State University; <http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews/2007/11-7/Paperwhites.html>



Planning your vegetable garden

I never tire of pouring through the seed catalogs planning what crops I will put in for this year's harvest. There are four Rutgers Fact Sheets that will help you with this process and they are:

- Planning a Vegetable Garden, FS 787
- Mail Order Vegetable Seed Sources for the New Jersey Gardener, FS 1163
- Varieties for New Jersey Vegetable Gardens, FS 681
- Starting Vegetable seeds Indoors, FS 787

There are many details to take into consideration as you are armchair gardening, but by taking the time to plan ahead, you will be able to get the highest yield possible from your home garden, no matter what the size. It's helpful to make a listing of the vegetables you'd like to grow and then put the plan on paper. This will allow you to make the best use of your available garden space and will save you time when it comes to planting your seeds and transplants. Remember to include the space between and within rows, the varieties of crops, and which are seeded or transplants. By putting your ideas to paper, you will be able to tell if you have enough garden space for the crops you wish to grow – if you are like me, I always want to grow many more vegetables and crops than the size of my actual garden allows. It also helps to rotate the crops of similar vegetables so they are not planted in the same location in consecutive years. Also be sure to plan for the tallest crops on the north side of the garden to avoid shading the lower growing plants. Don't sacrifice appropriate spacing to try to fit in more plants. There needs to be good air movement through the garden to help dry the moisture on the plant leaves.

By planning your garden ahead you will allow yourself plenty of time to place your seed order early and hopefully that will help ensure that you get the varieties of vegetables that you want in your garden for the upcoming season. I'm sure you have a few tried and true varieties of plants that you would never consider changing, but it's also a good idea to include some of the newer disease resistant varieties of vegetables, as well as adding a few heirloom varieties to your garden space for diversification. While I'm planning my garden in the cold winter weather, I make a listing of any supplies I will need and make sure I buy them ahead so I am ready to plant when the weather turns. I enjoy trellises in my garden, so I make sure I am well-stocked with cedar poles and twine.

Many gardeners enjoy the act of planning their garden well in advance and have a variety of ways to do the research. Whether you enjoy poring over seed catalogs, watching the gardening channel or developing your pinterest garden board, you will be able to reap the harvest of your enjoyable time well spent in the planning phase of your gardens.





Tool Time

We all have our favorite garden tool and no doubt some great garden stories to go hand-in-hand with the trusted tool. Good-quality garden tools are an investment that can be handed down through generations if properly cared for and an important step in that process is the overwintering of your tools. Wear safety goggles and leather garden gloves for these tasks.

Clean & Sterilize: This overwintering task will be made easier if you use best practices throughout the season by keeping your tools clean after each use. Before putting them away for the winter, use a wire brush to make sure all of the soil, plant debris and sap are removed and scrub the blades and the handles. Use sandpaper to remove any rust and consider dipping your tools in a solution of 10 parts water to 1 part bleach and dry thoroughly. As a reminder when you are working with any diseased plants throughout the year always disinfect your contaminated pruners!

Sharpen: Tools will work more safely and efficiently with sharp edges and winter is a great season for that task. Make sure you wear safety goggles and heavy leather gloves when using a hand file, whetstone or belt sander. Some of the tools that will welcome a sharp edge include knives, hoes, shovels, pruners, chisels, shears, and scissors.

Oil: After sharpening the tools, coat the metal surfaces, including moving parts with WD-40 to help prevent rust. Lightly sand any wooden parts with rough edges and treat them to a protective layer of linseed oil to prevent drying and splitting of the handles.

Store: You will be doing yourself a springtime favor if you take the time to put away your tools in a garden shed or area where they will remain dry and rust-free. Avoid leaning tools up against walls with blades touching the pavement. The blades will dull and the pavement can hold moisture which will lead to rust. There are many options for hanging your larger tools and smaller tools can be stored in large pots or bins ready to come out in the spring.

Tips of the day: My garden tools play mutiny every so often and hide themselves in my garden. The Penn State Master Gardener Manual suggests that we take time this winter to paint the handles of our tools with a bright color so they can be easily spotted in the garden soil. I have a love-hate relationship with my garden hoses and can never seem to properly train them to do what I want them to do when I want them to do it...Winter is a good time to love them by draining water from the hoses and sprinklers, dry them before coiling them for storage, replace washers and repair leaks.

Last thoughts: Tools that are well taken care of last longer and provide better performance. Come glorious springtime you will be glad you took the time to complete the tasks.

Resources:



Oregon State University: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening/take-good-care-hard-working-garden-tools>

Cornell Cooperative Extension Fact Sheet: Caring For Your Tools

The Penn State Master Gardener Manual: <http://source.colostate.edu/master-gardener-tips-caring-garden-tools/>

Purdue University Consumer Horticulture: https://hort.purdue.edu/ext/tools_winter.html

Garden Tips for December

- Select a live or cut Christmas tree while the selection is good. Keep the tree outdoors until it is time to decorate it.
- Keep poinsettias out of cold drafts and away from heat sources. Place them where they will get as much light as possible.
- Popcorn and cranberry garlands are easy to make.
- Cover or move indoors any stone statuary to prevent frost cracks.
- Protect furniture from the sap of fresh, needled evergreen boughs when decorating for the holidays.
- Don't let dried evergreen decorations become a fire hazard.
- Trim an outdoor evergreen tree with treats for wildlife.
- If you're considering the native American holly for your landscape, please be advised that it will grow 40-50 feet in height with a spread of 18-40 feet.
- Salt used to melt ice on sidewalks and driveways can damage plants and lawns.
- Begin planning your garden as the seed catalogs arrive in the mail. Try a few new plants next year.
- Evaluate your landscape. Plan to fill in gaps with appropriate plants in the spring.
- Gather holiday greens from your landscape but prune carefully. Spray the greens with an antidesiccant to retard water loss.
- After the ground freezes, mulch shrubs and perennials with straw, pine needles or branches of the discarded Christmas tree to prevent heaving of the plants during periods of freezing and thawing.
- Rake up any leaves remaining on the lawn.
- Avoid walking on the lawn once the ground has frozen.
- Begin bringing in some bulbs potted for forcing. Put them in a cool location with bright light.
- Plant your live Christmas tree as soon as possible after Christmas.
- Feed the birds.
- Rotate houseplants to achieve even growth.
- Keep succulents and cacti on the dry side.
- Do not feed houseplants during the winter months and reduce the watering.
- Raise the humidity for your houseplants by grouping them together.
- Water houseplants with warm water. Keep your Christmas tree stand filled with water.
- Relax with a good gardening book.
- Plants make nice holiday gifts.
- Have a nice December!

Gardening Tips for January

- Cut up your Christmas tree and use branches as mulch over perennials and around shrubs.
- Feed birds regularly and see that they have water. Birds like suet, fruit, nuts and bread crumbs as well as bird seed. They won't even complain if the food is stale.
- Move the most tender plants away from windows on cold nights.
- Your live Christmas tree should be put in a cool location for no more than a week before planting.
- Get caught up on your garden reading list.
- Inspect stored bulbs and discard those that are rotting.
- Salt on sidewalks and driveways can injure nearby lawns and plants. Try sawdust or sand instead. Cat litter works well if you haven't obtained the less expensive materials.
- Make plans for your spring and summer gardens.
- Checks out the new offerings from mail order companies. Make sure plants are hardy for this area before ordering.
- Mealy bugs on house plants can be killed by touching them with cotton dipped in alcohol.
- Economical "sticky stakes" for trapping whiteflies and aphids can be made by cutting bright-yellow cardboard or plastic, such as recycled detergent bottles or margarine tubs, into strips. Coat with petroleum jelly. Insert into pots or hang near problem areas.
- Inspect perennial beds for heaved plants during warm periods. Mulch around heaved plants. Don't push them into the soil! Dig and replant them in the spring.
- Your local delicatessen or fast food restaurant often has surplus 5-gallon plastic pickle buckets. This is a good size for growing containerized plants and for general use in the garden.
- Start forcing shrubs indoors.
- Limit traffic over dormant lawns. Grass is easily broken now and the crown of the plant may be severely damaged or killed.
- Check germination of leftover seeds.
- As you look through seed catalogs, choose disease-resistant varieties. They make gardening easier and they reduce the expense of pesticides.
- Some mail order seed companies offer pelletized seeds of lettuce, carrot, and a few other small-seeded crops. Pelletized seeds have a special coating to make them larger and easier to handle.
- One way to file seeds as they come in the mail is to use index card tabs to divide a cardboard file box into categories for each vegetable or flower. As new seeds arrive, place them alphabetically into the proper slot. Drop notes into the file to remind yourself what is on order to avoid duplication.
- Remove bagworms from evergreens.
- Buy yourself a new house plant. The *Hedera helix*, English Ivy is the only ivy that will survive indoors. Its leaves will grow in fair light (50 foot candles and up) or a north or east window. Provide constant moisture to prevent leaf drop. Ivy tolerates drafts near doors.
- Consider using ferns in shady areas of your landscape this year.
- How energy efficient is your landscape? Do you have evergreen trees or shrubs blocking a window where the sun's warmth would be welcome now? Consider replacing them with a deciduous plant that would let sun in during the winter but cast cooling shade in the summer.
- When dusting the furniture, consider washing the dust from your houseplants.
- Paint the handles of garden tools red or orange. This will preserve the wood and make the tools easier to locate in the garden.
- Have the lawn mower and tiller serviced.
- Perform a soil test. The pH scale ranges from 1 to 14 with 7 being the point at which soil has a neutral reaction. The majority of plants, including vegetables, grow in soils which have a slightly acid reaction, with a pH of 6.0 to 6.5. One exception are the ericaceous plants which include azaleas, rhododendrons, andromedas and blueberries. They require a more acid soil with a pH of 4.5 to 5.5.
- Wood ashes will raise soil pH. Use them only if the pH is less than 7.0 based on a soil test. The safe rate of wood ash application to lawn or gardens is 15 to 20 lbs. per 1000 square feet per year. Remember, a little wood ash is beneficial, but a lot is not.
- The flower for January is the carnation.
- Have a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Gardening Tips for February

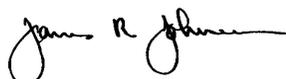
- Have your lawn mower and rototiller serviced.
- Take stock of leftover seeds. Get them organized and do some germination testing if they're more than a few years old or if storage conditions have not been cool and dry. Even under ideal storage conditions, some vegetable seeds have a fairly short life and probably will not be good one or two years after purchase. These include sweet corn, onion, and parsnip.
- Purchase new cool-white fluorescent bulbs for your indoor grow lights.
- If the soil dries out against a house under the eaves where rain rarely reaches, water well during a thaw to prevent loss of plants. Remember that plants require water during the winter to replace water lost due to wind desiccation and lack of rain or snow.
- Make final plans for the annual and vegetable gardens and get the seeds ordered soon. A frequently overlooked factor in vegetable garden planning is the date of the family vacation. Choose planting dates and varieties carefully, so your garden won't be ready for a full harvest when you are out of town.
- Look for sales on fertilizer, seed starting supplies, tools and organic mulches.
- Get your hand tools organized and sharpened. Check the handles on shovels and hoes to make sure they're firmly attached.
- Branches of forsythia, pussy willow, spirea, and dogwood can be forced for indoor bloom. Make long, slanted cuts when collecting the branches and place the stems in a vase of water. Change the water every four days. They should bloom in about three weeks. For something unique to force for winter flower arrangements, consider red maple, buckeye, birch, hickory, larch or oak branches.
- Repot your houseplants. Check them closely for insects.
- Plan a perennial border. Particularly good choices for a cutting garden are daisy, dahlia, aster, gladiolus and lily.
- Mulch perennials that have been heaved from the soil. Replant them in the spring.
- Miniature roses can be a colorful addition to your landscape. They range from pure white to golden yellow to dark red. They grow well on containers and planters, or they can be used as a low-growing border or mixed in beds/borders with other perennials.
- Make labels for your spring garden. Plastic milk jugs or bleach bottles cut in strips 1" by 6 to 7" work well. Use permanent ink markers to write on them.
- Continue to feed the birds.
- Have you had a soil sample analyzed within the past few years? Soil sampling packets are available at your local Extension office.
- Give a living plant as a present for Valentine's Day.
- If you're anxious to get some seeds started, plant onion and leek seeds indoors anytime this month.
- The flower of the month is the violet.
- Get ready for spring! It will be here next month.

Rutgers Cooperative Extensions Fact Sheets

FS #	Fact Sheet Name
Fact Sheet 19	How to Hire a Tree Care Professional
Fact Sheet 34	Build Bird nest Boxes
Fact Sheet 35	Build Brush Piles for Wildlife
Fact Sheet E60	Indoor Care of Christmas Trees
Fact Sheet 74	Backyard Leaf Composting
Fact Sheet 117	Using Leaf Compost
Fact Sheet 128	Forcing hardy bulbs Indoors
Fact Sheet 235	Spidermites
Fact Sheet E271	Landscape Plants Rated by Deer Resistance
Fact Sheet E272	Weed Management in Ornamental Plantings (\$1.50)
Fact Sheet 389	Minimizing Waste Disposal: Grass Clippings
Fact Sheet 449	Caring for Your Poinsettia
Fact Sheet 797	Soil Testing for Home Lawns and Gardens
Fact Sheet 805	Vermicomposting
Fact Sheet 811	Home Composting
Fact Sheet 849	Cover Crops and Green Manure
Fact Sheet 930	Natural Pest Control
Fact Sheet 944	Roses and their Care
Fact Sheet 1022	Backyard Birdfeeders
Fact Sheet 1118	Rain Barrels Part 2: Installation and Use
Fact Sheet 1150	African Violet Care
Fact Sheet 1151	Hollies for New Jersey
Fact Sheet 1154	Orchids on the Windowsill
Fact Sheet 1156	Keeping Geraniums Over Winter
Fact Sheet 1163	Mail Order Vegetable Seed Sources for the NJ Gardener

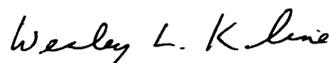
Call 856/451-2800 x4 ask for Pam Burton. When calling to request a fact sheet refer to the Fact Sheet by FS# or by name. All fact sheets are free unless otherwise noted.

What's Growing On is prepared by Pam Burton, Horticultural Assistant, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Cumberland County.



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For important announcements concerning the Cumberland County Extension Center visit:
<http://Cumberland.njaes.rutgers.edu>

If you have any questions concerning the website, please call our office at
856-451-2800 x1 for agriculture and
856-451-2800 x4 for Home Horticulture and Master Gardeners

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