

Academy Garden Club Thymes

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMY GARDEN CLUB OF LENOX

DECEMBER 2016



Tuesday, December 13, 2016, 6:30 pm
Ventfort Hall

Traditional Holiday Party

Refreshment Hostesses – Everyone

Last names A-M - please bring a dessert

Last names N-Z - please bring an appetizer

There will be a cost of \$5.00

Beverages to be provided

Post Office Windows – Dec, Jan, Feb

Liz Celli, Lois Parker, Joan Parker, Tjasa Sprague

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'Tis the Season!!

What a lovely thing that we can all join in together, over delicious tidbits, and bring in this wonderful time of year! There are many ways to celebrate, many different belief systems, yet we all seem to pick a similar time of year to celebrate the joy of our convictions. So **YES! 'Tis the season!!!!**

Our meeting last month did not turn out as planned, yet we all had a nice time talking and enjoying each other's company. Not to mention the treats provided by Lynn Schmitter and Carol Way!

We will have a meeting in January this year, on Tuesday the 10th. Please keep this date in mind going forward.

Tjasa Sprague has once again come forward to offer Ventfort Hall for our annual gathering, **THANK YOU** so much Tjasa!! The doors will open at 6:00 pm so that the set up for the evening can begin. Our party will end at 8:00.

This year I would like to try something a bit different. Instead of donating to the food pantry as usual, I thought we would donate to the Berkshire Community Diaper Drive.

Please bring a check made out to that organization and drop it in the provided basket. I will put all the checks in the mail the next day with a note that they are from the Academy Garden Club.

Here is just a thought, a few terms that were new to me:

Absent presence: When you take a sunken stone from the ground, yet the shape is still there.

Dark diversity: A rare plant near it goes extinct and its absence affects the remaining plants.

Indeed, not the cheeriest closure, but something to think about and keep in mind with this changing administration coming in January.

And from me, I say, ***Merry Christmas!!*** And you can change that term into whatever works the best for you. The sentiments are the same. I wish everyone a ***Wonderful Holiday Season!***

Warmly,
Anne Gannon
President



Horticultural Column by Harriet Wetstone

What's in a name: A misnomer and new herbal vocabulary!

Not coming from a Christmas tree tradition, my "must have" for the Christmas Season is a bright ruffled Amaryllis. So I thought I would study up.

Guess what? An amaryllis is not an amaryllis!!

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According to The Royal Horticulture Society, what we think of as an Amaryllis bulb is actually a Hippeastrum bulb, commonly but incorrectly known as Amaryllis, and widely sold in winter months because they bloom indoors.



The true Amaryllis is a bulb from South Africa with only one species - the Amaryllis Belladonna. The Hippeastrums, on the other hand, are from Central and South America with 90 species and over 600 cultivars.

Evidently it took botanists from both sides of the Atlantic fifty years to reach this decision, which was ruled in 1987 at the 14th International Botanical Congress.

Needless to say, we still call them Amaryllis!

Some of the herbs (and spices) most associated with the holiday season are sage, rosemary, cinnamon, nutmeg, and, according to 'keeper of the home' website, an herb I didn't know at all: Astragalus. It turns out that it has the potential to keep us all around for many holiday seasons to come!



Astragalus alpinus

Astragalus is a class of herbs found in northern Asia that's been used for thousands of years. A potent immune system booster, it causes your body to produce more telomeres, a part of your DNA that protects chromosomes from degradation (healthkismet.com). Dried, sliced astragalus root (it's a member of the pea family) is often cooked to make teas and soups!

As with many potent herbs, too much Astragalus is toxic, so always do your research!

