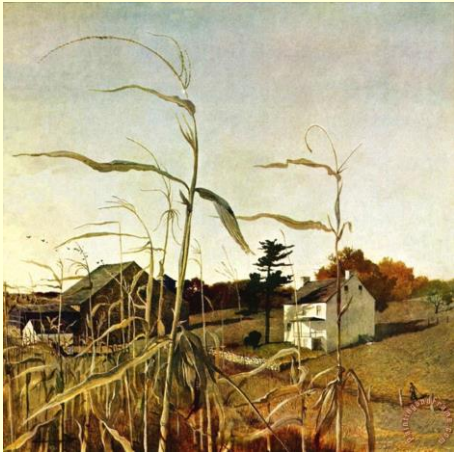


Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

DECEMBER 2018

Traditional Holiday Party
December 11, 2018, at 6:00 pm



I prefer winter and fall, when you feel the bone structure in the landscape-the loneliness of it-the dead feeling of winter. Something waits beneath it-the whole story doesn't show.

By Andrew Wyeth,

"Simple Pleasures of the Garden"

Dear Ladies,

We had a productive Boxwood Tree Workshop in November and everyone left with a beautiful tree. We need to thank Liz Celli for her wonderful instruction on how to build a tree with a dish, an oasis, tape and boxwood branches. Thank you, Liz

This was the first AGC meeting to start at 4 PM and it seemed to have members' approval. A few people came in later and miraculously everyone finished their tree and cleaned up the room and left at 6 PM with finished trees.

The refreshment committee had some tasty delights like filled dates and caramel apple slices to name a few...delicious.

Check out the Lenox Post Office window! It makes you want to step into the cozy space and play a board game with a hot cup of chocolate on a cold winter day. Thank you, Mary Ann Coakley, Joan Hajduk, Lois Hill and Sandy Merlino for your exceptional window display.

Our next meeting is the **Traditional Holiday Party** on Tuesday December 11th at Ventfort Hall starting at 6 PM. Ventfort will be decorated for the festive occasion...always a treat.

We decided at our last meeting to waive the \$5 fee for the wine and have six members bring one red and one white bottle of wine instead of a main dish. So far, we have Dianne Romeo, Sue Hoffman, Beverle Reiman-Marcus, Pat Archey, and Pat Neri - we need one more member. Please let me know.

Remember we **changed** the food from appetizers and desserts to a **main dish for members** who are not on the Dessert Committee or bringing wine. As a reminder those on the Dessert Committee are: Liz Celli, Jean Drees, Theresa Fasano, Anne Gannon, Jen Picard, Carol Rumph, and Jan Chague.

At the Christmas Party we will also have another Paper Bag Auction and need at least 12 members to bring in an item. Please let Theresa Michney know what you are bringing for the raffle. Don't forget to bring some change to purchase one ticket for \$1 or six tickets for \$5. You could be a winner!

Instead of bringing a canned good for the Lenox Food Pantry this year, please bring cash or a gift card. Then the food pantry can purchase what they need and we don't need to carry canned goods around. A win/win for all!

Reminder - the next AGC meeting will be in February 2019 on Tuesday the 12th at 5 PM. This is a workshop glazing ceramic flower pots at the Lenox Community Center, 65 Walker Street. There is a \$10.00 fee.

Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

DECEMBER

PAGE TWO

Also at the February meeting we will have a sign-up sheet for anyone interested in the CT Flower Show in Hartford, February 21 – 24, 2019. More details in the next Thymes.

Hurray for Theresa Michney...she found the AGC Banner! It is now being stored in the basement on a file cabinet at the Academy.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the Ventfort Hall Christmas Party!

Sincerely,

Jan Chague
AGC President

* * * * *

HORTICULTURAL COLUMN

By Harriet Wetstone

Thank goodness for heat now that it's cold (and every year cold is colder, go figure). But on the other hand, the heat makes the indoors air dry and fusty, what to do? Garden of course, isn't that the answer to just about everything? Gardening indoors, I mean, and lo and behold, it turns out that the very plants that can be counted on to survive in the too-hot and too-dry air in our winter houses are also the plants that actually put moisture into the air, and, miracle of miracles, absorb a whole range of pollutants.

Doing a quick search on the web rewards you with a list of easy maintenance, low-light, patient-as-a-saint plants that perform amazing feats of filtration to remove toxins from air and also from soil and water. Such plants, called hyperaccumulators, absorb high levels of toxins supposedly without being poisoned themselves. But more on that later.

The process is called phytoremediation. Much of this research about phytoremediation has been done by NASA which was concerned, for example,

about the air quality in space capsules. The research is not new; NASA conducted a clean air study in association with Associated Landscape Contractors of America as far back as 1989. NASA scientists found that 15 to 18 plants in 6 to 8-inch pots are needed to cleanse the air in an 1800 square foot house.

Hyperaccumulating peace lilies (*Chrysophyllum wallisii*) take up toxins such as benzene and formaldehyde with their rich, dark green foliage; leafy weeping fig trees (*Ficus benjamina*) are said to clean the air of formaldehyde, toluene, and zylene; and the spiky red edged dracaena (*Dracaena marginata*) efficiently absorbs other common toxins. Boston ferns, English ivy, different types of palms such as areca palms; golden pothos, philodendron, aloe vera, snake plants - all of these plants are said to be effective air cleansers.



It is really interesting that different houseplants absorb different chemicals, and that some can only absorb a couple of the chemicals studied and others, several. For example, the bamboo palms, boston ferns, the spider plant, and weeping fig will absorb formaldehyde and xylene. However, chrysanthemum and spathiphyllum have been shown to absorb not only formaldehyde and xylene, but trichloroethylene, benzene, and ammonia as well. I barely know how to spell these chemicals, but they are pretty common household pollutants emanating from such things as furniture and floor waxes, paints and adhesives, paper goods, detergents, and dyes.

Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

DECEMBER

PAGE THREE

While it is important to recognize that our houses are different from the laboratories where this data was generated, it still looks like having lots of plants around makes sense and we are not even talking about the demonstrated effects of having plants around on psychological wellbeing. Unfortunately for plants, this isn't quite a win-win situation. There has also been research on the effect of air pollutants on plants. Air pollutants cause damage to leaf cuticles and can have direct effects on photosynthetic systems and on leaf longevity.

Thanks this month to NASA Publications, the NSF, ACS Publications, Science Direct, and AskNature and lovethegarden.com.



Note: On the front page is Andrew Wyeth's *Autumn Cornfield*.