

Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

DECEMBER 2020

Hello Academy Garden Friends

We've had a delightful autumn. Luckily, we had nice days that we've been able to spend outside doing last minute garden clean up. Special thanks go to Diane Romeo for cleaning out the pots in front of the Academy building and to both Diane and Kathy DeVylder for clean up at the monument. The weather has allowed us to take long walks in the woods enjoying the foliage, as well as to meet friends on the deck for steaming cups of tea along with chatter and laughter. We decorated with pumpkins and other gourds, mums, apples, corn stalks and wild grasses. Now it is time for us to change those warm fall colors for more vibrant colored plants to usher in December. Thanks go to the ladies who worked in the rain to decorate the pots in front of the Academy building for our next season. The pots look great!

These are some of the plants that we use in our homes to decorate for the December holidays, but also to add cheer well into January and February.



Boxwood trees are another favorite holiday decoration. It is disappointing, that our garden club annual boxwood tree making led by Liz Celli and Diane Romeo has had to be cancelled. Being able to work together, laugh, and compare notes on how our trees are coming along made this a popular club activity. We had every shape tree represented-tall and thin, short and fat, and everything in between. They were all beautiful!! It was fun to see the delight on our members' faces as they left the academy building toting their creations! This pandemic is sure putting a crimp on our gatherings! It was great to have all of the materials and boxwood ready for us at the Academy, however, if you would like to make a tree on your own, you can source supplies (oasis, bowls, tape and decorations) at Michaels. As for the boxwood, the florist at Stop and Shop thought they would have boxwood this year and both Windy Hill and Wards confirmed that they would have boxwood as well. (1 ½ pounds of boxwood per tree would be plenty. You may even have a bit left over.)

Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

DECEMBER 2020

PAGE TWO

Do you remember where you were last December 10th at 6:00? Many of us were at the Academy building enjoying our traditional holiday party! The room looked festive and everyone brought something scrumptious to eat. Laughter filled the room as people mingled and plates were filled. It was such an enjoyable evening!



Again, the “damn panic”, as Susan Branch calls this pandemic, has put the stop to an eagerly anticipated event. We felt terrible about missing out on such a fun evening and decided that the closest we could come to sharing our fun this year was to share our favorite holiday recipes. (Well, it’s hard to choose a favorite, we all have so many! This is a sampling of our favorites! See pages three.to eight.)

Academy Garden Club Thymes

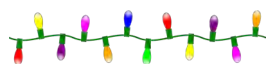
A NEWSLETTER FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMY GARDEN CLUB OF LENOX

DECEMBER 2020

PAGE THREE

As we head into December, our thoughts are on fires roaring in the fireplace, warm cookies alongside cups of tea, hearty soups and stews to warm us, and bundling up for walks with friends (Carol would assure us that there is no such thing as too cold, only bad clothing!). Our wish for everyone is to have a happy, healthy, holiday season.

Carol and Lynn



Mom's Filled Kolachki Cookies

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

1 cup butter at room temperature

1 (8-ounce package of cream cheese) at room temperature

2 cups flour

Powder sugar

Filling: Apricot jam or your favorite jam or jelly

Cream butter and cream cheese in bowl until fluffy

Work in the flour

Roll into a ball and wrap in wax paper, refrigerate for several hours

After chilled in refrigerator roll out on powdered sugar surface (not to thin)

Cut out rounds and place on greased cookie sheet

Top with another round where the center is cut out

Place teaspoon of jam or jelly in center of round

Bake 15 minutes or until bottom of rounds starts to brown slightly

Remove from oven to a rack to cool

Sift powdered sugar over top while still hot, let cool

Enjoy!

Jan Chague



Here is a little recipe that I make to give away as a small gift:

Almond Brittle

1 cup roasted and salted almonds

1/3 cup light karo syrup

2/3 cup sugar

1 cup dark chocolate chips

Melt butter in a saucepan and then add the sugar and karo syrup.

Once above is stirred add almonds.

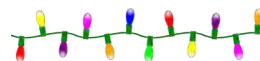
This mixture has to be tended to for 8 minutes until it is light and frothy. It has to look like the color of butterscotch.

Grease a large cookie sheet and then spread the hot mixture onto it.

Sprinkle the chips around the top and try to spread them around the surface as much as possible.

Let cool and then break into pieces.

Dianne Romeo



Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

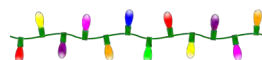
DECEMBER 2020

PAGE FOUR

Fluffy Hard Sauce

Cream together ½ cup butter, 1 tsp vanilla or rum extract. Add 2 cups powdered sugar. Beat in 1 egg yolk and fold in 1 beaten egg white.

Jean Drees



This is my family's favorite Christmas cookie. It came from my mother-in-law, who really didn't like to bake! She'd make one batch every year and dole them out "one to a customer" at a sitting. Being a family of cookie monsters, I make multiple batches...some for us and some to give away.

Rum Logs

Sift together

3 cups flour
1 tsp. nutmeg

Cream

1 cup butter
¾ cup sugar

Blend into cream mixture

1 egg
2 tsp vanilla
2 tsp rum flavoring (You can use real rum, but the flavor will be milder.)

Gradually add dry ingredients to creamed mixture. Shape pieces of dough on lightly floured surface into long rolls 1/2" in diameter. Cut in 3" lengths. Bake on greased cookie sheets at 350 for 12-15 minutes.

When cool, spread frosting on top and sides. Make fork lines in frosting.

Frosting

Cream 3 TB butter with 1/2 tsp vanilla and 1 tsp rum flavoring.

Blend in 1/2 cup sifted confectionary sugar, beating well.

Add 2 cups additional sifted confectionary sugar alternately with 2-3 TB cream. Beat well.

Lynn Schmitter

When I was a young girl everyone at my grandmother's Christmas dinner saved room for her Plum Pudding. Hers was the traditional kind made with beef suet. My mother also made it, but when I left home and got married, I didn't make it because the only suet available was sold for bird feeders. Then in the 70's I found this recipe in Better Homes and Gardens which used butter for the fat. It tastes just as good and is well worth all the work. Hardly a year goes by that I don't make it.

Regal Plum Pudding

Soak 4 slices torn bread in 1 cup milk and beat to break up.

Stir in:

2 eggs
1 cup brown sugar
¼ cup orange juice
6 oz butter

Sift:

1 cup flour
1 tsp baking soda
½ tsp salt
2 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp cloves
1 tsp mace or allspice

Mix well.

Mix dry ingredients with:

2 cups seedless raisins
1 cup dates (cut up)
½ cup walnuts

Stir in bread and liquid mixture. Pour into greased mold, cover with foil and tie with string tightly. Place on rack in deep kettle. Pour in boiling water and steam for 3 ½ hours. Serve warm with hard sauce.

Jean Drees

(See next column for the sauce,)

Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

DECEMBER 2020

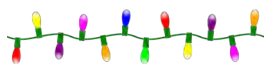
My mom made these cookies every Christmas and they are my favorite! Now I continue her tradition. They are the first cookies I make for the holidays, and to me, once the butterballs are in the tin, the holiday season officially begins!

Butterballs

1 stick of butter
2 Tbsp. sugar
1 tsp, vanilla
3/4 cup finely chopped walnuts or pecans
1 cup flour
Confectioners sugar

Cream the butter and sugar. Add the vanilla, nuts and flour until well blended. Shape into round balls using about a tablespoon of dough. Bake at 300 degrees for 20-25 minutes. When cookies are hot out of the oven, sprinkle with confectioners sugar.

Carol Way



Here are a few of my favorite recipes that I always do for Christmas. Bobbie Anne

Christmas Cheese Ball

8oz Mascarpone
8oz Blue or Gorgonzola
1 TB chopped red onion
1 large clove garlic

Mix all in the food processor

Shape into balls and roll in 1 cup toasted walnuts or pecans

I always double this recipe- they disappear fast!!

The next two cookies came from The Family Christmas Book that I received as a shower gift in 1966...say no more...it's old and they are both awesome cookies!!

PAGE FIVE

This is a cookie from Sweden. Cookies are an integral part of teatime in Sweden.

Rosenmunnar

"Red Lips" are favorite cookies because of their attractiveness and taste.

½ pound butter
½ cup sugar
2 cups sifted flour
Heat oven to 375

Cream butter and sugar till fluffy. Add flour. Shape in olive-sized balls.

Press center down and fill with jam. Bake for 15-20 minutes until delicately browned around edges. Yield 60-75 cookies.

Almond Biscotti

1 cup butter
1 ½ cup sugar
4 eggs
4 cups flour
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp vanilla
½ cup sliced almonds (I sometimes use chopped figs)

Cream the butter and sugar.

Add eggs and vanilla

Add the dry ingredients

Knead on floured board adding more flour if needed. Knead in nuts when desired consistency is reached.

Shape into a 2" log (makes 2-4 logs depending on length)

Bake 375 degrees until golden brown, 15-20 minutes

Cool slightly and slice on an angle ¾" to 1" pieces

Return to oven. Bake 425 degrees 3 to 4 minutes toasting both sides, turning when brown

I sometimes dip ½ of the final cookie in melted chocolate!!

Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

DECEMBER 2020

PAGE SIX

Chocolate Snowballs

2 cups sifted flour
½ tsp salt
¾ cup butter
½ c sugar
2 tsp. vanilla
1 egg
1 cup chopped nuts
1 cup chocolate bits
Confectioners sugar

Heat oven to 350

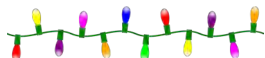
Sift flour and salt. Blend butter, sugar and vanilla. Beat egg into creamed mixture.

Blend dry ingredients, nuts and bits into mixture.

Shape into 1" balls. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake in 350 oven for 15-20 minutes

Cool...then roll in confectioners sugar Yield 6 dozen

Bobbie Anne



You could try this. The luxury of oysters with no *shucking...great on a cold evening.*

Oyster Bruschetta -Titanic Fried Oysters

In the Gilded age, the rich and poor ate oysters almost every day. Before the waters were polluted, New York Harbor and Long Island grew the best oysters in the world. Oysters were delivered by the barrel, even to Lenox where Mrs. Morgan paid a man to shuck oysters every day.

I developed this appetizer for a Titanic Dinner in 2002 at Ventfort Hall. I serve it often. It is quick, but you need to make it and serve it immediately.

Slice a baguette into thin slices.

Purchase a small container of freshly shucked oysters. Drain them or lift them out of the container with a slotted spoon.

Melt ½ stick unsalted butter in a large frying pan.

Quickly fry the thin baguette slices in the butter on both sides till a little toasted. Place on a warm serving plate.

Add another ½ stick butter to the pan and melt it. You can let it brown a little. If it splatters a lot, cover it.

When the butter is ready, use a slotted spoon to drop the oysters on the hot butter.

Fry quickly on high heat till they curl a bit and turn them over. You want them just lightly cooked.

Place an oyster or 2, if some are small, on each baguette slice.

Boil down the liquid in the pan and pour a little over each oyster.

Serve with napkins or little plates. It is a little messy, but delicious. I find everyone eats 3 or 4 at least...Cheers!

Tjasa Sprague

Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

DECEMBER 2020

PAGE SEVEN

Raspberry Chocolate Tea Cake

6 ounces semi-sweet Ghirardelli chocolate (melted and cooled)
½ cup unsalted butter, room temperature
½ cup sugar
3 eggs
½ cup sifted cake flour (King Arthur works sifted)
Raspberry jam
Confectioners sugar

Whisk together chocolate and butter. Add sugar and then beat in eggs, one at a time.

Blend in flour until just mixed. Pour into a buttered 9-inch cake pan that has been lined with waxed or parchment paper and butter again.

Bake 350 degrees for 20-25 minutes. The cake will rise slightly, then sink in the center.

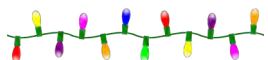
Cool cake in the pan. This is a dense moist cake.

Invert onto serving plate and remove parchment paper. Chill one hour and spread top with raspberry jam: sprinkle with confectioners sugar. Serve on glass plate: surround cake with fresh raspberries.

Cut small slices very rich. 8-10 servings.

I take this recipe to gatherings like Garden Club and potluck suppers. Very quick and easy to make.

Peace, Liz Celli



Brandied Cheese

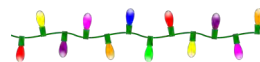
Great appetizer!

In a bowl stir together
one 8-ounce package cream cheese, softened;
one 8-ounce carton dairy sour cream;
and 3 tablespoons brandy.
Stir in 1 ½ cups shredded Edam or Gouda cheese (6 ounces).

Turn into an 8-inch quiche dish. Bake in a 350 oven about 30 minutes or till lightly browned. Arrange ¼ cup broken walnuts in center of cheese. Serve warm with 2 medium red apples, cored and thinly sliced.

Makes 8 servings. (I've never put the brandy in, and it still tastes great!)

Anne Gannon



Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

DECEMBER 2020

PAGE EIGHT

Molasses Crinkles

¾ cup shortening
1 cup firmly packed brown sugar
1 large egg
¼ cup molasses
2 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground ginger
½ teaspoon ground cloves
½ cup sugar

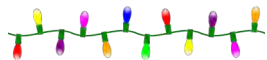
Beat shortening at medium speed with an electric mixer until soft and creamy; gradually add brown sugar, beating well. Add egg and molasses, mixing well. Combine flour and next 5 ingredients; add to shortening mixture, mixing well. Cover; chill 2 hours.

Shape dough into 1-inch balls, and roll ball in sugar. Place 2 inches apart on lightly greased cookie sheets; bake at 350 for 12 to 15 minutes. Remove crinkles to wire racks to cool.

Yield 4 ½ dozen.

These are great cookies! I also love to put chunks of crystalized ginger in the batter-yum!

Anne Gannon



Andes Mints Cookies

1 package Andes Mints
¾ cup butter
1 ½ cup brown sugar
2 T water
12 oz package chocolate chips
2 eggs
2 ½ cup flour
½ t salt
1 ¼ t baking soda

In sauce pan combine butter, brown sugar, water and chocolate chips. Melt together. **(Continued on right.)**

Every year around the holiday season I make caramel popcorn for my family and friends. It is a big hit with everyone, and I love to see people eat with joy! I warn you though; you can't just eat one handful!

The original recipe is from a 1990 Best Foods booklet featuring KARO corn syrup. I have made some changes to adapt it to my preference. It is not the healthiest, but it is the sweetest! Plus, it is gluten free!

Easy Caramel Popcorn

3 quarts popped corn	½ cup butter
3 cups dry roasted peanuts	½ teaspoon salt
1 cup packed brown sugar	½ teaspoon baking soda
½ cup light corn syrup	½ teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 250 degrees.

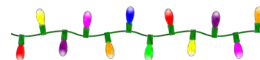
In large roasting pan combine popped corn and nuts. Place in oven while preparing glaze.

In medium saucepan combine brown sugar, corn syrup, butter, and salt. Stirring constantly, bring to boil over medium heat. Without stirring, boil 4 minutes.

Remove from heat; stir in baking soda and vanilla. Pour over warm popcorn and nuts; toss to coat well. Bake 60 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes.

Cool; break apart. Store in tightly covered containers.

Terry Terry



Andes Mint Cookies Continued

In sauce pan combine butter, brown sugar, water and chocolate chips. Melt together.

Let cool. Transfer to mixing bowl. Add eggs.

Mix dry ingredients together and add to chocolate mixture.

Chill for one hour.

Cover cookie sheet with tin foil. Roll cookies into a ball and bake for 10 minutes only at 350. When cookies come out of the oven, place half mint on top. Let it melt.

Jane Leahey