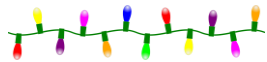


Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

DECEMBER 2021



A Message from the President

We had a fabulous boxwood creation workshop on November 16th! Tjasa captured the excitement and creativity with her photos of the members at work and the finished products. Thank you Tjasa for the visual records; and thank you Dianne and Liz for putting this workshop together.



Another thank you to members who were flexible in moving the date because of the boxwood not arriving. I am sorry to those who could not make it. It has become a tradition, and members are expanding their abilities from trees to wreaths and arrangements with candles. Who knows what you will create in the future!



Thanksgiving has come and gone. We gave thanks for our health, family and friends. Now, we have to give hope to our family and friends to end the effects of this pandemic. We can all help by getting a vaccine, a booster shot and continue to wear masks.

Our holiday party will be held at the Berkshire Botanical Garden in the Center House. We are scheduled for Tuesday, December 14th at 6:00 p.m. We will revisit our interest in consuming appetizers and desserts. So, bring your favorite!

A-L Please provide appetizers

M-Z Please provide desserts

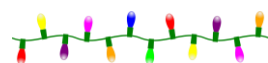
You are welcome to bring both or switch with a friend. Wine and other beverages will be provided as well as plates and utensils.

Festivities will include our Academy Auction! If you have an item, you would like to include in the auction, please bring it. Don't forget to bring your dollars to participate!

Please read the November minutes provided by Jen Picard. We will vote to approve them at the December meeting.

Agenda

- Welcoming Remarks and Updates
- Questions or Concerns
- Vote to accept the November 16th meeting minutes
- Purchase your auction tickets (tickets will be drawn after we have eaten)
- Eat, drink and be merry!



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November 16, 2021 Meeting Minutes

27 Members in Attendance

The meeting was held at the Lenox Academy Building with a short business meeting called to order by President Theresa Terry at 6:10 pm.

Minutes were accepted and the president advised that the Holiday Party would be held at the Berkshire Botanical Garden on December 14th. All club members should bring a dish based on the A-M and N-Z System. Further information will follow on bringing appetizers or desserts. We will do one of those wonderful auctions at the Holiday party.

Theresa reminded Tjasa and Jill about the December Post Office Window.

After the short meeting we worked on our Boxwood Projects. Members made amazing Trees, Wreaths and Centerpieces, some decorated for the fall and some ready for our December holidays. Everyone did a wonderful job under the watchful eye of Liz Celli. Many thanks to Dianne Romeo and Theresa Terry who not only managed to procure the boxwood, but set up the room with tables, tablecloths, and chairs, spaced with appropriate distances so everyone remained safe.

The meeting adjourned about 7:30 with everyone bringing home their masterpieces.

Respectfully Submitted

Jen Picard, Secretary

Horticultural Column Harriet Wetstone

Terry is right, one must talk about Conifers if one is going to talk about trees in December! And when I think about Conifers there is always a nagging question: Can I remember how to differentiate between Pine and Spruce and Fir? I always must review!

First off, Conifers, as we all know, are trees whose foliage remain green and functional through more than one growing season. Pinaceae, the pine family of conifers, includes not only Pine, Spruce and Fir, but also Cedar, Hemlock, Cypress, Yew and Juniper. Pine, Spruce and Fir can be differentiated in terms of their needles and their cones. First, the needles.

Pine trees (genus *Pinus*), the classic Christmas tree, are the ones with clusters of long needles arranged in clusters of two to seven called fascicles. They are often arranged spirally on their branches.



Spruce Tree/Cones

Spruce trees are classified in the genus *Picea*. The needles of Spruce trees are attached individually to their branches by means of a woody peg which stays behind when the needles drop off the tree. The needles are sharply pointed, and square, easy to roll between your fingers.

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Fir Tree Pollen Cones

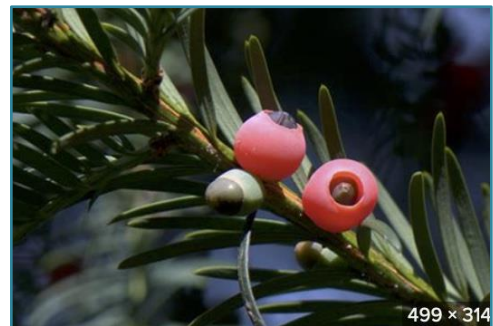
The other common way to differentiate Conifers is by their cones which are fascinating all on their own. There are two kinds of cones: female (seed cones) and male (pollen cones). The female cones are the ones we all think of as pinecones, and they can be the showiest; but pollen cones are also very interesting. Some conifers have both so that the tree can pollinate itself, but others have only one or the other.

Pollen cones are usually smaller and wider than seed cones, and they tend to wither and die once their pollen has been released. Pollen cones tend to be lower in the tree than the seed cones.

Slender seed cone buds swell for four to six weeks until the ovuliferous scales begin to emerge. The scales tend to fold upright from the cone base and then droop downwards after accepting pollen.

Pinecones have thick hard woody scales that hang down from their branches. Spruce cones also hang down but are smaller and more flexible. Fir cones sit up on their branches like candles. Fir cones are some of the most colorful. They can be purple, green, or even dark blue!

Cone bearing conifers or pinophyta are classified as gymnosperms (naked seeds) as their ovules and seeds are not enclosed in ovaries or protected by fruit. There are also Conifers such as the Yews that have neither pollen nor seed cones. Instead, the tree produces fruit (Arils) that partially covers the seed. To protect itself from seed loss from fruit eating predators, the yew has adapted itself so that its fruit is toxic!



Yew Berries (Arils)

Thanks to: www.leafyplace.com;
www.gardeners'path.com; countryfile.com;
<http://www.ipm.missouri.edu>; the American Conifer Society