



Backyard Views

The Backyard Gardeners

Winter, 2011-12

The Backyard Gardeners, Inc. was established in 2007 as a non-profit organization to provide free education to homeowners in the Hampton Roads area on gardening and horticultural practices, designs and techniques in order to encourage conservation of our natural resources, the enjoyment of gardens, garden-related activities and creative garden art.

Calendar of Events

Garden Talks, 7-8:30 pm
Chesapeake Library
298 Cedar Road

December 13

"A Berry Merry Holiday"
& Holiday Reception

January 17

"You and Your Houseplants"
TBA

February 14

"To Cut or Not to Cut..."
Jason Hiezer, Bartlett Tree Experts

March 20

"Worm Composting"
Kandy Keith, Chesapeake Master Gardeners

Upcoming "Garden Talks"

April 17
May 15
June 19
July 17
August 21
September 11
October 16
November 20
December 18

Winterizing Your Garden

Spring, summer and even fall, you've worked weeding, watering fertilizing and maintaining the plants you have in your gardens. You've enjoyed the fruits of your labor and now is the time to rest...not quite yet! Before you settle in for "a long winter's nap", there are a few tasks you can complete that will protect your gardens and make spring gardening easier and more fruitful.



Here's the top things to do to winterize your gardens:

- ✓ Rake the leaves off the lawn and use them as mulch.
- ✓ Dig up annuals and herbs and bring them in to keep them through the winter.
- ✓ Remove debris from gardens to keep them looking nice & prevent spread of diseases.
- ✓ Remove as many weeds as possible.
- ✓ Add a layer of compost to insulate and feed the plants.
- ✓ Mulch after ground has frozen.
- ✓ Prune only damaged trees and shrubs.
- ✓ Clean and repair tools before storing.
- ✓ Plant spring blooming bulbs. Dig any tender bulbs and store for next year.
- ✓ Plant trees and shrubs as long as the ground is not frozen.
- ✓ Take care of the birds and wildlife by providing food, water and shelter.

Make your list and check it twice. Completing these few tasks will make for a restful winter and a more successful spring for you and your gardens.

Journaling 101 by Anne Rouquie



It all started with a blank journal and a great desire not to make the same gardening mistakes twice. As much as I thought I would remember the name of a certain plant, how tall it grows or its watering requirements, I was kidding myself. I began journaling with my first vegetable garden. I drew a garden plan, noted the varieties and their maturity dates and at the end of the season, evaluated their success or failure. Over the years, I have expanded my journal to include my perennial beds and other observations. You may wish to include these as well...

- Record what you have planted and where.
- Note what's in bloom, its color, when it started blooming and when it ended. You may wish to include photographs.
- Record when you applied fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides and when to reapply if needed.
- Include when plants were pruned and how much.
- Take note of temperatures, and rainfall, especially if they are out of the ordinary.
- Record actual first and last frost dates.
- Note the habits of birds, insects and garden pests.
- Write down when and where you bought plants and perhaps the cost.

And when you return to your journal next year and read about those previous successes and failures, the hope of a perfect garden begins again.

Spotlight on Gardens

For years, one of the favorite traditions of the area is to visit the various holiday outdoor light displays. Located in public garden areas and along the oceanfront, these displays create a fantasy wonderland that appeals to all ages.

Dominion “Garden of Lights”

The Norfolk Botanical Garden has presented their annual light show that transforms the Garden into a winter wonderland for 17 years. This Hampton Roads tradition takes you on a 2-mile drive through a million sparkling lights bringing the four seasons to life through a variety of displays. In addition, this year, a synchronized light display will captivate visitors of all ages. The Dominion “Garden of Lights” runs from November 30-January 1, 5:30 pm to 10 pm. The price is per car: \$10 (Sunday-Thursday), \$15 (Friday-Saturday), NBG members \$2 discount - Cash only.

“Celebration in Lights”

Open for its 19th season, Virginia’s first drive-through holiday light event, “Celebration in Lights” opened in Newport News Park on November 24 and remains open through January 1, 2012. Hours for the “Celebration of Lights” are 5:30 pm to 10 pm. Over half a million individual lights transform the park into animated holiday and seasonal scenes. Santa, elves and a “Winter Wonderland” are a few of the spectacular displays that illuminate the park and create a magical experience. Price is \$10 per car or \$50 per bus.

McDonald’s “Holiday Lights at the Beach”

The holiday display marks the only time during the year that cars can drive on the boardwalk. The ever-changing winter wonderland extends for over 30 blocks along the Virginia Beach oceanfront. The “Fanta-Sea” of lights is a sparkling tradition for the holidays and sure to entertain the entire family. Some displays are over 30 ft. tall and include drive-thru elements. The “Holiday Lights at the Beach” runs from November 18-January 1 and is priced per car. Prices are \$10 (Sunday-Thursday) and \$15 (Friday-Saturday and Christmas Day).



Tool Corner by Gary Bennett

Tool Maintenance 101



Preparing your tools for winter is as important to gardeners as preparing your gardens. Taking care of tools by cleaning, sharpening and properly storing them keeps them in good condition for years.

Gardeners should maintain all tools including hand tools as well as gas and electric tools. A few simple steps are all that are needed. For a comprehensive explanation of how to maintain each type of garden tool, check out this [information on tool maintenance](#) prepared by the Vancouver Master Gardeners.

Winter Bird Hints by Patty Bennett

- ❁ Get to know the butcher and ask for scraps of fat. Birds like it just as much as packaged suet cakes.
- ❁ Save leftover bits of dry bread, cereal, crackers and crumbs in a re-sealable plastic bag. For a quick high energy treat, moisten the scraps with peanut oil and pack them in the holes of a hanging log feeder.
- ❁ Make your own suet feeders using recyclable mesh vegetable and fruit bags.

You may request to be added to the newsletter mailing list at www.thebackyardgardeners.org or by emailing gardenguru@thebackyardgardeners.org.

Help Us Raise Needed Money!
Bloomin' Bucks
with Brent and Becky's Bulbs

Brent and Becky's Bulbs offers a fundraising project for non-profit groups. If you wish to order from them, click on the logo above and select our group, The Backyard Gardeners, from the list. We will receive a portion of the sales. This a great way for you to help us help you!! For more info on this program, check www.thebackyardgardeners.org.

The Backyard Gardeners, Inc.
Education to help make gardening fun!



Winter Calendar of Gardening Events 2011-2012

December

- 1-January 1 Virginia Beach, "McDonald's Holiday Lights at the Beach" presented by Ntelos Wireless
- 1-January 1 Newport News City Park, "Celebration in Lights"
- 1-January 1 Norfolk Botanical Gardens, "Dominion Gardens of Lights"
- 2 Manteo, NC Manteo Tree Lightings on Queen Elizabeth Street
- 2 Newport News, Hollydazzle- City Center at Oyster Point
- 3 Elizabethan Gardens "Grand Illumination 6 pm
- 3 Chesapeake- Rotary Christmas Parade 6 to 8 pm
- 3 Portsmouth- Old Towne Holiday Market 9 am to 1 pm at Courthouse Galleries Courtyard
- 3/4 Whites Nursery Holiday Gala
- 4 Williamsburg Grand Illumination begins at 4:15 pm
- 4 Portsmouth Historic Port Norfolk Holiday Tours of Homes, 757-399-7526
- 9/10 Portsmouth Old Towne Candlelight Home Tour, 757-714-3223
- 10 Portsmouth Early Bird Walk Hoffer Creek Wildlife Preserve 8 am to 10 am, 757-686-8684
- 10 Beaufort, NC Christmas Candlelight Tour 5 to 7 pm, 1-800-575-7483
- 31 Portsmouth Old Towne Scottish Walk begins at 4 pm at corner of Queen and Washington Streets, 757-650-3052

January

- 21 Elizabethan Gardens – Coldest Day of the Year! 4 Hour Sale! 10 am to 2 pm. Plant & Yard Sale up to 70% off. Camellias are in bloom.

February

- 11/12 Elizabethan Gardens- Valentine's Day Sale & Love to Pay What You Want Sale!
10 am to 1 pm. 40-70% off selected items.

