

"Learn Something New Every Day"

"From December to March, there are for many of us three gardens: the garden outdoors, the garden of pots and bowls in the house, and the garden of the mind's eye."

Stanley Horowitz

Houston Federation Of Garden Clubs

Volume 64, No. 5

www.houstonfederationgardenclubs.org

December 2010 January 2011

Friends:

Happy Holidays – All of Them

Thanksgiving will be over by the time you receive this Newsletter, but there is **Hanukkah, Christmas, and New Years** yet to come – for which I wish all happy returns of the day(s).

Our **Christmas Luncheon and Fund-raising event** is well under way, planned with the utmost care for your satisfaction and enjoyment. Festivities will begin with **wassail and cookies in the Azalea Room** and then it is on to the **bidding frenzy** for all the silent auction and drawing items. Then it is on to the **design program and luncheon**. We are ready – are you ready? Have you gotten your tickets to get you into this extravaganza? Call Beth Campbell – she may have tickets left (281-324-2479).

The **Star of Hope Mission** will once again collect all the toys you bring to the December meeting. Elsewhere in this Newsletter is a list of items most urgently needed – notice that teen gifts are a priority this year. **Gift certificates are always welcome.**

Once again Federation will distribute **poinsettias** to hospitals, hospices, nursing homes, etc. This is a long-standing project, one that those who are confined will truly enjoy. Brookwood has once again provided us with these beautiful symbols of the holiday season and if you need some for your holiday decorating, Sara Chumley still has 6 or 7 available for \$10 per plant. Her number is 713-461-0573.

This issue will contain both the December and January happenings. **BIG CHANGE FOR JANUARY!!!**

The January meeting will be held at the **Judson Robinson Center** at 2020 Hermann Drive which is just down the street from the "back" entrance to the Garden Center at 1500 Hermann Drive. The reason for this **BIG CHANGE** is because the Garden Center will undergo a month-long renovation. All

events scheduled in the Directory for January will take place at Judson Robinson Center: meeting, program, all exhibits, workshop, sales, etc. Joyce Bryant Zone 3 Chairman and all her clubs will provide refreshments for this change of venue.

January's program will be about Texas coral reefs, presented by Jesse Cancelmo, diver, photographer and author. We are learning something new every month: last month The Nature Conservancy told us about the Nash Prairie in Brazoria County. We might even make a pilgrimage to that site next year if the next president decides to! And in January we will learn about our coral reefs.

Even though I am writing this before we hold our **Flower Show**, I am going to go out on a limb and say that **it was a smashing success!!!** It has to be because Corrie Ten-Have has everyone organized up the gazoo!! I hope you got to see it.

I will see you in December for the **big wing-ding** where we can try to outbid each other for items in the silent auction!! You see, I know what is on the list of items donated thus far and they are fantastic! However, more is better! Deana Roberts would like to hear from you about what you would like to add to either the silent auction or the drawing (713-777-7103). I hope I have gotten your attention!!

Cheers and all good wishes for the coming year.

Betty

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 10	HFGC Holiday Luncheon/Meeting
January 10	HFGC Board Meeting – 1:00 p.m. Judson Robinson, Jr. Community Center At 2020 Hermann Drive
January 14	Federation Regular Meeting – Judson Robinson, Jr. Community Center At 2020 Hermann Drive
January 15	Newsletter Deadline for Feb. Edition



Horticulture and Feeding the Critters

December, 2010

By Jonni Almoney

713-524-4285

Our garden is bursting right now with food for the birds and all the other transient animals that happen through – like the opossum that persists in digging up the Louisiana iris (*Iris brevicaulis*) rhizomes that I transplanted in mid-October. I replanted one particularly nice root three times, and the opossum kept digging it up to see if anything new was growing on it that she could gnaw off. The rhizome has now disappeared, so either she ate it all up or tossed it under a bush.

The raccoon that sleeps in the oak tree in the lot behind us uses our compost piles as a buffet table. He digs around in the compost until something tasty emerges - maybe an apple core or a vegetable root or a fat grub. Then he trudges over to the fountain and washes his dinner before gulping it down.

Countless numbers of squirrels stay in the garden year-round, drawn by the peanuts that the neighbor has out for them all the time, but now they are also feasting on acorns and pecans in the trees over the back fence. The blue jays seem larger than usual this year, fattened up by Donna Kay's peanuts as well as the natural bounty, and the male red-bellied woodpecker, who spends his days snatching seeds from the feeders and then stuffing them into cracks in the power pole in the corner, is looking pretty sleek himself. Something we haven't heard lately is the toad serenade. The small pool at the base of our fountain serves as a singles' bar for toads, and most nights throughout the spring and summer, we fall asleep to the mournful plaint of lovesick toads, singing for toad ladies to come and join them in the water.

The toads may have fallen silent, but the fruit-eating birds are louder than ever. After the mockingbirds and cardinals stripped most of the beautyberries (*Callicarpa americana*) off the bushes, they started to work on the coral honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*), squabbling over the red berries that decorate the trellis against the west wall of the house. That trellis is multifunctional: it pleases me, it feeds the birds, and when the house sparrows feel threatened, they hide among the thick foliage of the honeysuckle vines. Recently they have needed to take cover often.

A Cooper's hawk has wintered in our neighborhood for the past three years. The first year she was still immature and fairly ineffectual as a predator, but last year she regularly caught the odd sparrow when she swooped through the yard, maneuvering like a fighter pilot with her short wings while she steered with her long banded tail. This year she's back again, and she has become a force to be reckoned with. More often than weekly we find new circles of feathers on the ground in the garden where she has paused to pluck her prey and eat it. Usually Lady Hawk takes the sparrows because they are plentiful and easier to find, but she has been known to make a meal on an occasional white wing dove as well.

Last month, the hawk bit off more than she could chew, or at least tried to snatch up more bird than she could carry. Skip was in the garage on a glorious fall day with the back door into the garden open as well as the big garage door. He heard a commotion out back and turned in time to see the hawk, with a pigeon in her talons, flying very low into the garage with him. Hawk dropped the pigeon, which flapped and scrambled to safety atop a high cabinet, and the hawk flew over Skip's head and perched on the edge of the garage attic floor. It wasn't until her third flight around the garage, with Skip watching in wonder, that she was able to find her way back out the back door – with her wingtips barely clearing each side of the thirty-two inch wide opening. Later, it took some serious persuading to get the pigeon to leave the relative safety of the garage.

The hawk didn't seem to be traumatized by her close encounter with Skip and the garage; two days later she left the feathery remains of a dove dinner just outside the garage door.

The reason that the doves continue to risk their lives in our garden despite the hawk is that the pigeonberry (*Rivina humilis*) is burgeoning, and berries are everywhere. This happy little plant has been a terrific addition to the garden, and the birds have spread the seed around so that we have many more plants than we started with last year. It only gets to be about a foot tall, but it works very hard all season to stay filled with little pink blossoms and translucent red fruit. If it were evergreen, pigeonberry would be the perfect ground cover.

As our garden grows and matures and the native trees we have planted start to bear fruit, I hope that we will have even larger numbers of creatures coming to test our hospitality. Some will be welcomed and wondered over, and some, like the pigeons, will be barely tolerated. But clearly they all have a place, and the hawk will be happy to see them.

Silent Auction and Drawing for HFGC December Luncheon

The silent auction and the drawing for other items are good fund-raisers, as well fun additions to the December Luncheon Gala. There will only be as many great items for the silent auction at the HFGC Christmas Luncheon as are provided by our club members. Deana Roberts will be happy to hear from you, 713-777-7103. By providing Deana with this information in advance she will be able to secure a space and a ticket bag for them in advance. Kay Veech will accept the drawing items – 713-526-6158

Hostess Reminder**January 14, HFGC Meeting**

Joyce Bryant – Chairman
Zone 3 Counselor
Joysan36@aol.com
281-479-5089



Forest Cove Garden Club
Gardeners by the Bay
Kingwood Garden Club
Lake Houston Garden Club
Liberty Garden Club
New Caney Garden Club
Newport Garden Club
Petal Pusher's Garden Club
Wooster Garden Club
Astro Branch American Begonia Society

**BIG CHANGE FOR
JANUARY MEETING**

Don't go to 1500 Hermann Drive for the January meeting. **Do go** to Judson Robinson, Jr. Community Center at 2020 Hermann Drive, just down the street from the "back" entrance of the Garden Center. (See the President's message on page one of this Newsletter for more details.)

STAR OF HOPE TOYS

Toys for all ages are needed to help make the holiday season brighter for children who will have Christmas at Star of Hope. Some suggested toys or items are:

Infants and Toddlers: Learning toys with batteries included, building blocks, activity tables, large picture books, baby blankets and crib mobiles.

Children: Learning toys, electronic games, children's bibles, books, large cars and trucks, footballs, basketballs, Nerf balls, dolls of ethnicities, doll clothes, puzzles (all ages), LEGO sets, and radio.

Teenagers: Watches, alarm clocks, clock radios, portable CD players, tote bags, purses, sports bags, wallets, curling irons, flashlights with batteries, Bibles, books, diaries, journals, toiletry baskets, boxed costume jewelry and sleeping bags.

PLEASE, if you bring toys or items that require batteries **do** include the proper size and quantity of batteries. **Do not wrap the toys.**

Note: This is just a suggested list. Other common sense items would be welcome as well.

Also welcome are \$25.00 gift certificates from Wal-mart or Target.

**CHRISTMAS TOUR OF HOMES**

The Blue Triangle Garden Club presents its annual Christmas Tour of Homes on Sunday, December 12, 2010, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Three lovely homes in the historical MacGregor area will be beautifully decorated by club members and opened for public viewing. Tour tickets are \$10.00 per person and may be purchased at each site or by calling

Contact: Bola Patrick
Telephone: 713-747-3415

Complimentary transportation will be available.

Sugar Creek Garden Club

Presents

"Hearts & Flowers"

Annual Friendship Luncheon

& Silent Auction

Saturday

February 12, 2011

10:30 AM - 2:00 PM

at the

Sugar Creek
Country Club

Open to the public with reservations.

Adults \$21.00

Children \$10.00

Garden décor,

Children's items,

Teapots, Jewelry, Raffle and more!

Entertainment by Twilight the Clown

For more information, please contact
Jenny Schultz orjlschultz17@comcast.net**ANNUAL FRUIT TREE SALE**

Saturday, January 15, 2011

9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

(or until sold out)

Scott Street & Holman

The fruit tree sale will be on the west side of Robertson Stadium. Check the Urban Harvest Website urbanharvest.org for parking directions and information on sales talks that will be offered on Tuesday, January 4 and Saturday, January 8 before the big sale. Just click on "Events" to see some of the trees that will be offered.

*"One kind word can warm
three winter months."
Japanese proverb*

Looking Ahead

2011 Spring District IV Convention - March 15, 2011 at Kingwood Country Club. Details and registration forms will be in a later edition of this Newsletter.

Flower Show School, Course IV - School will be in Houston, March 22-24, 2011. Registration forms will be in a later edition of the Newsletter.

WAF A**WAF A June 14 - 18, 2011 - BOSTON, MA -**

This is the first time the World Association of Flower Arrangers will hold their convention in the USA. Don't miss it. It is stunning, awesome, amazing, gorgeous and more. I cannot think of enough wonderful things to say about this event. "DO NOT MISS IT!"

Since it is expensive to do it as part of the WAF A organization, Texas Garden Clubs has put together a tour originating in Texas, which is less expensive. It includes four nights hotel stay at the Intercontinental Hotel located in the city center; full breakfast daily; two tickets to the WAF A show; half-day sightseeing tour of Boston; transfers to and from the airport and local area Boston MBTA pass for your entire stay. The cost is \$1,526 including airfare from Houston and based on two persons sharing a room. **Contacts:**

Guyneth Priem, 713 664-5831**mepriem@sbcglobal.net,****or Deana Roberts, 713 666-3838 x 5201****droberts@intropa.com.** Space is limited;

don't let this slip past you. \$100.00 - tax-deductible donation is included in the price.

EDITORIAL INFORMATION

President - Betty Schoolar - 713-523-6979
1111 Hermann Dr., #17-E, Houston, TX
77004-6930 schoolar.betty@gmail.com

Treasurer - Bunnye Baldwin -
281-482-7130

503 S Shadowbend Ave., Friendswood, TX
77546-3846 bbunnye@aol.com

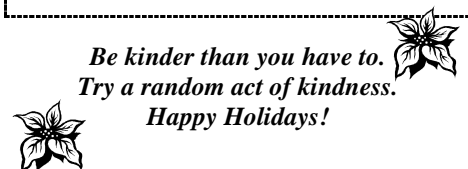
Recording Secretary - Daphne Light -
832-321-5679

19410 Kessington Lane, Houston, TX
77094-3443 dlight1215@aol.com

Corresponding Secretary/Newsletter Editor
Etta Guillot

1822 Penina Drive, Crosby, TX 77532-5428
281-328-1330 ettacg@msn.com

*Be kinder than you have to.
Try a random act of kindness.
Happy Holidays!*



Houston Federation of Garden Clubs Newsletter

HFGC meets on the second Friday of each month (Sept. – May).

Program at 10:30 A.M. followed by a short business meeting. Refreshments from 9:30 A.M. to 10:30 A.M.

Houston Civic Garden Center; 1500 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX 77004



December 10, 2010

HFGC Luncheon/Fundraiser

9:30 – 10:15 A.M.

Wassail and Cookies – Azalea Room

Christmas Music

Hostesses: Board of Directors

Decorations: Sugar Creek Garden Club

Program: "Not Just Another Christmas Design"

Speaker: J Scotts

J Scotts of J Scotts Aflorist, located in Orange, TX will delight and inspire us with exciting holiday designs. Check out the website www.jscottsaflorist.com for beautiful designs and more information.



January 14, 2011

Houston Federation Meeting

Meeting begins at 10: 30 followed by a short business meeting.

Judson Robinson Center, 2020 Hermann Drive

Program: "What we Learn From our Texas Coral Reefs"

Speaker: Jesse Cancelmo - Diver Photographer and Author.

Take a deep breath and learn about the Flower Garden Banks in the Gulf of Mexico. For a comprehensive list of Mr.

Cancelmo's books, published articles and photography go to:

www.cancelmophoto.com/bio.htm or go to BING and type in his name to see all his web links.



At the December 10 Meeting Reservations Required

What to Expect

- Good food, silent auction, drawings galore and loads of fun
- Great Decorations – Sugar Creek Garden Club
- Toy Collection for Star of Hope
- Beautiful Poinsettias
- Distribution of Poinsettias by Sarah Chumley and her elves

At the January 14 Meeting

Ways & Means

- Plant Sale – Bring plants for sales table
 - Things and Such Sales Table
 - Monthly Drawing
- Horticulture Exhibits – Share a prized specimen from your garden.
Design Exhibits – "Design Without Containers"
Workshop: Deana Roberts – "Learn How To Grow Orchids Semi-hydroponically."
Hostesses – Zone 3 – Joyce Bryant, Chairman, Petal Pushers G.C.