

# Upstate Gardeners'

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Journal



Meet Berna Ticonchuk  
Make a "Grateful Tree"  
Eastman Museum's Dutch Connection

FREE

Volume Twenty-five, Issue Six  
November-December 2019



# SARA'S GARDEN



## Who is Ready?

What an extraordinary gardening season this has been. Not too dry, not too wet (well sort of if you completely forget the month of May) but always plenty of weeding. And even though this has been a favorable weather year, we are so ready to move on. Guess that is just how it rolls each season; you can only do so much before the desire for change kicks in...our time is here now! We have steadily completed the final efforts needed before the dormancy of Winter. The planting schedules, new variety selections, and all other miscellaneous spring efforts are finished. Now we are ready for the finale of our gardening year, Christmas!

The next six weeks are the summit of the whole season; we take the last bits of the garden and use them to celebrate the holidays! Fresh, daily -made wreaths are ready to grace your welcoming house door, hundreds of cut trees, garlands, and winter flowers for the house.

We have filled the garden shop with items aimed at the loves of the garden enthusiast. Decorated trees, ribbon, ornaments, all oriented towards bringing the joys of gardening indoors for the last hoorah. A visit to Sara's during the holidays is guaranteed to surprise and delight, consider this your official invitation!

### Stone Wall Follies

Can we use this last bit of advertising as an apology? So we already know about the 'no follies this year' but we also know about the no reliable responses from me..... do I have to continue? Guess this shows it was a good season to have a break. It was just not in the cards for our teacher this season nor us. John Scott has eluded to an appearance for 2020, and we are taking him up on the offer. So as in year's past, this is the call if you need basic dry laid stone wall construction instruction. Commitments ahead of the actual event are a necessary requirement these days! There is no time or money to waste...the reality is, we are a small nursery with many irons in the fire; hopefully, this one will keep burning, and folks wanting to enjoy one weekend of walling will make it happen. Email will be the way to connect the dots here...

For details on garden event opportunities, Stone Wall Follies, or any other garden-related topic, contact the nursery at **585-637-4745** or [kkepler@rochester.rr.com](mailto:kkepler@rochester.rr.com)

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## Ear to the ground



I don't actually remember first meeting Berna Ticonchuk, but I can tell you that it was a long, long time ago at what is now called the Eastman Museum (back then it was the George Eastman House, and my great friend Deirdre Cunningham was the landscape curator). Reading Michelle Sutton's piece on Berna brought back so many wonderful memories—of that place, of those people, of original Gatherings of Gardeners that were held there ... At those conferences I

met the likes of Tony Avent and Michael Dirr for the first time. I was young and starstruck. I'm not as young anymore, but don't admire those names—those people—any less. How lucky I feel for having a chance to know them.

We have such a rich, vibrant gardening community here in upstate New York. My plea for this winter: Take the time to read the calendar ... go to classes ... check out the education days held by PlantWNY, PlantGFLX, and PlantCNY ... talk to the experts at GardenScape and Plantasia ... go to a seed swap ... take advantage of it all.

Have a wonderful holiday season, and we'll catch up in January.

Jane

2020

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### For more information:

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Contact 716-741-8047

Friday, February 7:



**keynote speaker** Susan Martin. Susan is a freelance horticultural marketer, writer, speaker and consultant based in West Michigan. Working in numerous branches of the horticulture industry for the past 20

years, she has gained experience in independent garden center and mass merchant sales, merchandising, landscape design and installation, new plant development, branding, and marketing at the trade and consumer levels. Susan currently resides on the board of GardenComm: Garden Communicators International (formerly GWA) as the Great Lakes Regional Director.

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# 2019 Winter Photo Contest

Congratulations to all of the 2019 contest winners! The Grand Prize winner, seen on the cover, is “Beauty on Long Pond” by Donna LaPlante, taken at Long Pond in Rochester, NY.

The 2020 contest will run December 21, 2019 through March 19, 2020. Watch our Facebook page and [upstategardenersjournal.com](http://upstategardenersjournal.com) for details on how to enter.



1. **SCENES:** “Morning Glory” by Donna LaPlante | Rochester, NY
2. **PLANTS:** “Winter’s Tulip—a snow-filled *Liriodendron tulipifera* seed pod” by Bonnie Guckin | Darien, NY
3. **WILDLIFE:** “Duck in Snow” by Marie Costanza | Irondequoit, NY
4. **ENHANCED:** “February 6th, 1:10 pm” by Serena Hall | Irondequoit, NY
5. **ONLINE FAVORITE:** “December Sunset” by Jonathan Shoop | Ontario, NY

# Rooted in the Finger Lakes: Horticulturist, arborist, and educator Berna Ticonchuk

by Michelle Sutton

*Berna Ticonchuk coordinates the horticulture program at Finger Lakes Community College (FLCC) and teaches the Introduction to Horticulture, Tree Culture and Maintenance, Plant Propagation, and Certified Applicator Training courses. Prior to coming to FLCC in 2002, Ticonchuk had a 20-year career in public gardens in Rochester and Canandaigua. She brings a wealth of knowledge and professional connections to her FLCC students and to her service on the City of Canandaigua Tree Advisory Board and Sonnenberg Gardens Education Committee.*



RIGHT: Ticonchuk with her dog, Jack  
Photo courtesy Berna Ticonchuk

## What were your connections to plants as a child?

**Ticonchuk:** I grew up in Owego on the family Christmas tree farm; it's not in operation anymore, but my sister owns a parcel of the property. Remnant trees we planted there as kids 45 to 50 years are now 50 to 60 feet tall and forming a beautiful forest. In addition to running the tree farm, my father was what was then called a "tree surgeon." I worked for him in the summers and enjoyed it so much that I knew I wanted to have a career outdoors.

## What was your educational journey?

**Ticonchuk:** I started with my associate's degree in what was then called the Ornamental Horticulture program at FLCC, back when FLCC was known as Community College of the Finger Lakes. Eventually I got a bachelor's degree in plant science from Empire State College.

At FLCC, Dr. Ed Moberg was a hugely important advisor to me. He was an agronomist PhD who came from Penn State to FLCC to start the College's first horticulture program with Dr. Dan Marion. Ed's support and professional credentials helped me plan my own future

versus my father planning it for me (he wanted me to come back and help him with the Christmas tree farm).

As a student, I was really taken with the subject matter and hands-on element of courses like tree maintenance. I learned a great deal about teaching styles and how to manage a classroom from observing my instructors. For instance, I took a field ornithology course with Frank Smith, who had a relaxed, informal way of teaching students; while Bruce Gilman, in his field botany class, was more formal. When I began to teach years later at FLCC, former department chair John VanNiel gave me many opportunities and very helpful constructive criticism. My mentor and dear friend Dr. Jana Lamboy taught me many things about the world of plant science as well as about life in general.

## What was your career trajectory leading up to FLCC?

**Ticonchuk:** After graduating I worked a series of jobs I hated before I landed on something I loved. I worked briefly for a landscaper, I worked at a beet factory in the evenings doing quality control, and I pruned grapevines in the coldest winter I could remember—oh my goodness, it was so cold. Mercifully, the following spring I got hired at Sonnenberg Gardens in Canandaigua, where I worked happily for ten years, from 1981 to 1991. I started as a senior gardener and ended up being assistant horticulturist and supervising a seasonal crew while still weeding and planting and mowing all the large areas.

In the late 1980s my boss and mentor at Sonnenberg, head horticulturist Ginny Schirer, sent me to a tree academy held at George Eastman House (now called Eastman Museum). We learned tree physiology, climbing, and pruning—using the mature trees on the property for climbing practice—from world-class expert Dennis Ryan. After I became certified as a climber, I got more into the tree management side of things at Sonnenberg, including conducting a tree inventory.

Sonnenberg was so rewarding, but the pay was nominal and there was no health care coverage. I worked briefly in the grounds department at Nazareth College and brushed up on my knowledge and skills by taking the Master Gardener (MG) program at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County. It was there I met MG coordinator Pam Hyman, whose path I'd cross many times over the years. She was an important mentor and colleague to me and to so many people, and her untimely death in 2008 from lymphoma was a real loss to all who knew her. At FLCC we honored her posthumously, in 2009, with the Outstanding Alumni Achievement Award.





As part of my MG training, I did my community volunteer hours at Eastman Museum. I was offered a job by the very knowledgeable then-landscape curator Deirdre Cunningham as the groundskeeper and kept that position for ten years, working closely with a treasured colleague, then-head gardener Andy Joss. It was wonderful to be working among the mature trees that I once climbed in the tree academy, and I really enjoy historic horticulture. One of my favorite aspects of my time there was working with volunteers, where I got to hone some of my teaching/instruction skills.

Ten years into my work at Eastman House/Museum, Andy brought in a job announcement to show me for a conservation/horticulture technician position at FLCC. It was an incredible match. I had every qualification—even boat-handling skills—except for radio telemetry (think collaring bears). I applied for the position and was hired in 2002 and have been very happy there advising students, teaching, running the greenhouse, coordinating the horticulture program, and more.

### How has your student population changed over the years?

**Ticonchuk:** The program's students are majority nontraditional—age 25 to 55, sometimes up to 65. That is a big change I've seen over time. I really enjoy the older students—they are so motivated and interested—but I would love to also see more young people studying horticulture. Partly the number of traditional-age students is down because the over-all population of that age group is declining; partly I believe young adults are less interested in manual labor than they used to be.

### What do you want to be sure folks know about FLCC's horticulture program?

**Ticonchuk:** This is an excellent plant science-based horticulture program, with strong environmental themes (for instance, Environmental Science and Ecology are required courses). There are hands-on opportunities for

sure, but it's also rock-solid with the science. One of the strengths of our program is the deep and longstanding connection we have to green industry professionals around the State who we can put students in contact with. That professional networking, along with keeping up with urban forestry research and practice, are the main reasons I go to the annual New York ReLeaf Conference and to regional ReLeaf events.

We have turned students on to a wide array of careers; often, what students come in planning to do changes as they are exposed to more facets of horticulture. For instance, a person could come to the program thinking they want to be a landscape designer, but graduate and start a lavender farm. Or someone will come thinking they want to do plant propagation or hydroponics but leave really juiced about plant pathology and go on to get degrees in that.

I also want to highlight that our full-time horticulture faculty, Dr. Shawn Kenaley, is superb. He started teaching here last year and has been a huge addition to our program. His breadth of knowledge is impressive. He's a forest pathologist who has taught all ages about just about every facet of horticulture, and he's down-to-earth and approachable. Having worked at Cornell as a research technician earlier in his career and more recently as a post-doctoral associate, he has strong Cornell connections that our students can benefit from in terms of knowledge, advising, and networking.

Another thing that I would like people to know is that we have recently started a three-course cannabis track as a result of student and societal demand. Our provost, Jonathan Keiser, suggested it and horticulture department chair John Foust encouraged us to create it. I think it will be in demand and will help keep our horticulture program populated.

### What's a trend in arboriculture you feel especially good about? What's been a surprise?

**Ticonchuk:** I'm very interested in how research entities like the Morton Arboretum are monitoring trees to see how climate change is affecting them. The level of sophistication

**LEFT:** Ticonchuk's mentor and dear friend, plant pathologist Dr. Jana Lamboy, retired in 2011 from teaching at FLCC. Photo Courtesy FLCC

**RIGHT:** FLCC Main Campus in bloom last July; annuals in foreground are verbena 'Scarlet Star' from the Superbena series. Photo courtesy FLCC





**ABOVE:** *Lespedeza thunbergii* hedge outside Berna and Beth's home. Photo courtesy Berna Ticonchuk

of the instrumentation is truly amazing, including the use of drones to capture images way up in the tree canopy.

I'm pleased and actually quite surprised that electric chainsaws have become so prevalent in the arboriculture industry. Running a noisy gas-powered chainsaw has historically been considered a macho enterprise, but I see

that arborists are switching to the quieter electric ones. I think that's a smart move on so many levels.

**Do you garden at home?**

**Ticonchuk:** Yes, indeed—I have to, for my sanity. I'm into vegetable gardening and my wife Beth and I do home canning and freezing. Lately, I've been obsessed with peppers. I also love to grow older varieties of ornamental plants. For instance, on the bank behind our house, I planted nine Vanhoutte spirea (*Spiraea x vanhouttei*) seven years ago, and they've now fully covered the bank. Sally Jean Cunningham turned me on to bush clover (*Lespedeza thunbergii*) that has beautiful fuchsia pea-family flowers and tolerates road salt. I have a 15-foot hedgerow of it by the road and it thrives there as a subshrub, dying back to the ground in the winter.

**Anything else you want to share?**

**Ticonchuk:** We have a two-year-old dog named Jack who is three quarters mini-Poodle and one quarter Shih Tzu and a real character. We never thought we'd have a little dog—we always had big dogs, like German Shepherd mixes—but we are crazy about Jack.

Michelle Sutton is a horticulturist, editor, and writer.



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## BUFFALO

### REGULAR CLUB MEETINGS

**African Violet & Gesneriad Society of WNY** meets the third Tuesday of the month, March–December, at 7pm, Greenfield Health & Rehab Facility, 5949 Broadway, Lancaster. judyoneil1945@gmail.com.

**Alden Garden Club** meets the second Wednesday of the month (except July & August) at 7pm, Alden Community Center, West Main Street, Alden. New members and guests welcome. Plant sale each May. 716/937-7924.

**Amara Garden Club** meets the second Wednesday of the month (except January) at Ebenezer United Church of Christ, 630 Main Street, West Seneca. Visitors welcome. 716/844-8543; singtoo@aol.com.

**Amherst Garden Club** meets the fourth Wednesday of the month (except December, March, July & August) at 10am, St. John's Lutheran Church, Main Street, Williamsville. New members and guests welcome. 716/836-5397.

**Bowmansville Garden Club** meets the first Monday of the month (except June, July, August & December) at 7pm, Bowmansville Fire Hall, 36 Main Street, Bowmansville. New members and guests welcome. For more information 716/361-8325.

**Buffalo Area Daylily Society.** East Aurora Senior Center, 101 King Street, East Aurora. Friendly group who get together to enjoy daylilies. Plant Sales, May & August. Open Gardens, June–August. Facebook.

**Buffalo Bonsai Society** meets the third Wednesday of the month at 7pm, Buffalo Botanical Gardens, 2655 South Park Ave., Buffalo. buffalobonsaisociety.com.

**Federated Garden Clubs NYS – District 8.** Nancy Kalieta, Director, nancyk212@aol.com. gardenclubsofwny.com.

**Friends of Kenan Herb Club** meets the fourth Monday of the month at 6pm (January–March), 5:30pm (April–November), Kenan Center for the Arts, 433 Locust Street, Lockport. Meeting dates, times and campus locations: kenancenter.org/affiliates.asp; 716/433-2617.

**Garden Club of the Tonawandas** meets the third Thursday of the month at 7pm, Tonawanda City Hall, Community Room.

**Garden Friends of Clarence** meets the second Wednesday of the month at 7pm, September–June, Town Park Clubhouse, 10405 Main Street, Clarence. gardenfriendsofclarence@hotmail.com.

**Hamburg Garden Club** meets the second Wednesday of the month at noon, Hamburg Community Center, 107 Prospect Avenue, Hamburg. Summer garden tours. 716/649-6789; lonabutler4@gmail.com.

**Kenmore Garden Club** meets the second Tuesday of the month (except July & August) at 10:00am, Kenmore United Methodist Church, 32 Landers Road, Kenmore. New members and guests welcome. ewpinkposies1@gmail.com.

**Ken-Sheriton Garden Club** meets the second Tuesday of the month (except January) at 7pm, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 576 Delaware Road, Kenmore. Monthly programs, artistic design and horticulture displays. New members and guests welcome. 716/833-8799; dstierheim@gmail.com.

**Lancaster Garden Club** meets the second Wednesday of the month (except January, July & August) at 7pm, St. John Lutheran Church, 55 Pleasant Avenue, Lancaster. *November 13: Essential Oils & You with Sharon Ashcraft.* All are welcome. 716/685-4881.

**Niagara Frontier Koi and Pond Club** meets the second Friday of the month at 7pm, Zion United Church, 15 Koening Circle, Tonawanda.

**Niagara Frontier Orchid Society (NFOS)** meets the first Tuesday following the first Sunday (dates sometimes vary due to holidays, etc.), September–June, Botanical Gardens, 2655 South Park Avenue, Buffalo. *November 9–10: Orchid Show, see calendar (below).* niagarafreierorchids.org.

**Orchard Park Garden Club** meets the first Thursday of the month at 12pm, Orchard Park Presbyterian Church, 4369 South Buffalo Street, Orchard Park. Contact: Sandra Patrick, 716/662-2608.

**Ransomville Garden Club** meets the third Wednesday or Saturday of the month at 5:45pm, Ransomville Community Library, 3733 Ransomville Road, Ransomville. Meetings are open to all. Community gardening projects, educational presentations, June plant sale. bbonnie2313@gmail.com.

**Silver Creek-Hanover Garden Club** meets the second Saturday of the month at 11am, Silver Creek Senior Center, 1823 Lake Road (Rte. 5), Silver Creek. edlorrie@yahoo.com; Facebook.

**South Town Gardeners** meets the second Friday of the month (except January) at 9:30am, West Seneca. New members welcome.

**Town and Country Garden Club of LeRoy** meets the second Wednesday of the month (except February) at 6:30pm, First Presbyterian Church, 7 Clay Street, LeRoy. New members and guests are welcome. 585/768-2712; ritawallace005@gmail.com; Facebook.

**Western New York Herb Study Group** meets the second Wednesday of the month at 7pm, Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens, 2655 South Park Avenue, Buffalo.

**Western New York Honey Producers, Inc.** Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County, 21 South Grove Street, East Aurora. wnyhpa.org.

**Western New York Hosta Society.** East Aurora Senior Center, 101 King Street, East Aurora. Meetings with speakers, newsletter, sales. Hosta teas first Saturday of July, August, September. h8staman@aol.com; wnyhosta.com.

**Western New York Hosta Society Breakfast Meetings,** a friendly get-together, first Saturday (winter months only) at 10am, Forestview Restaurant, Depew. wnyhosta.com.

**Western NY Iris Society** usually meets the first Sunday of the month (when Iris are not in bloom), 1–4pm, at the Lancaster Public Library, 5466 Broadway, Lancaster. Information about acquiring and growing irises (bearded & non-bearded) and complimentary perennials, annual flower show & summer iris sale. Guests welcome 716/837-2285; drsnooks@twc.com.

**Western New York Rose Society** meets the third Wednesday of each month at 7pm, St. Stephens-Bethlehem United Church of Christ, 750 Wehrle Drive, Williamsville. *November 20: Hybridizing Roses with Rene Schmitz from Palatine Roses. December 4: Christmas Party. January: no meeting.* wnyrosesociety.net.

**Youngstown Garden Club** meets the second Wednesday of every month at 7pm, First Presbyterian Church, 100 Church Street, Youngstown.

### FREQUENT HOSTS

**BECBG: Buffalo & Erie County Botanical Gardens,** 2655 South Park Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14218. 716/827-1584; buffalogardens.com.

**BMAC: Beaver Meadow Audubon Center,** 1610 Welch Road, North Java, NY 14113. 585/457-3228; 800/377-1520; buffaloaudubon.org.

**COOP: Chicken Coop Originals,** 13245 Clinton Street, Alden, NY 14004. 716/937-7837; chickencooporiginals.com; Facebook.

**LOCK: Lockwood's Greenhouses,** 4484 Clark Street, Hamburg, NY 14075. 716/649-4684; weknowplants.com.

**REIN: Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve,** 93 Honorine Drive, Depew, NY 14043. 716/683-5959; dec.ny.gov.

### CLASSES / EVENTS

**F- Indicates activities especially appropriate for children and families.**

**November 2–January 18: Horticulture II Certificate Program,** 6 Saturdays, 11am–1pm. Taught by David Clark, Horticulturist & CNLP. *Soil Science; Advanced Plant Propagation; Hydroponics; Water Gardening; Practical Principles of Pruning; Introduction to Landscape Design.* Series: \$108 members; \$138 non-members. Single class: \$18 members; \$23 non-members. Registration required. **BECBG**

**November 9: Christmas Open House,** 9am–3pm. Shop holiday gifts & décor. Refreshments, prize drawings & giveaways. **LOCK**

**F- November 9–10: Orchid Show,** Saturday, 10am–4:30pm; Sunday, 10am–3pm. Presented by Niagara Frontier Orchid Society. Displays, educational presentations, demonstrations & vendors. Included with admission. niagarafreierorchids.org. **BECBG**

**November 12–December 10: Beginner Watercolor,** 4 Tuesdays, 8:45–11:15am. Taught by Joan Saba. Series: \$68 members; \$76 non-members. Single class: \$17 members; \$19 non-members. Registration required. **BECBG**

**November 12–December 10: Intermediate Watercolor,** 4 Tuesdays, 5:45–7:45pm. Taught by Joan Saba. Series: \$60 members; \$68 non-members. Single class: \$15 members; \$17 non-members. Registration required. **BECBG**

**November 14: Cornell Cooperative Extension, Wyoming County – Annual Meeting,** 7pm. Guest speaker: Pilar McKay, Brew Master, Silver Lake Brewing Project. Location: Ag & Business Center, 36 Center Street, Warsaw. All are welcome. 585/786-2251.

**November 14–17: Christmas Open House. COOP**

**November 16: Christmas Open House. LOCK**

**November 16: Natural Products Workshop – Personal Care,** 10:30am. Learn to make natural personal care products and how to make choices that are better for the environment. Participants will make a lip balm or deodorant to take home. \$3 members; \$5 non-members. Registration required. **REIN**

**November 16: Woods Walk – Nature Guide's Choice,** 11am. Guided nature walk through the woods. Free. **REIN**

**November 21–24: Christmas Open House. COOP**

**F- November 23: Forever Evergreen,** 10am–12pm. Join Naturalist Mark Carra for a hike to find conifer, beech and oak trees plus ferns and other winter-hardy plants. Open to all. \$5. Registrarion required. **BMAC**

**November 23: Basic Christmas Wreath with Bow,** 10:30am. Participants will hand-wire their own fresh evergreen wreath. \$32. Registration required. **LOCK**

**November 23: Thanksgiving Centerpiece Workshop,** 1:30pm. Learn tips for plant identification while creating a fall-themed centerpiece. \$7 members; \$10 non-members. Registration required. **REIN**

**November 24: Thanksgiving Centerpiece,** 1:30pm. Florist Mary Trifunovic will demonstrate & assist participants in arranging fresh flowers into a table display. Materials included. \$42. Registration required. **LOCK**

**November 25 or 26: Fresh Thanksgiving Arrangement,** 6pm. Create your own arrangement to take home. \$40 members; \$45 non-members. Registration required. **BECBG**

**F- November 29–December 31: Poinsettia & Railway Exhibit,** 10am–4:30pm. Included with admission. **BECBG**

**November 30: Colonial Style Christmas Wreath,** 10:30am. Create your own fresh evergreen wreath adorned with cinnamon, citrus, apples, berries, pine cones & plaid ribbon. Materials included. \$69. Registration required. **LOCK**

**December 1: Outdoor Holiday Container,** 1:30pm. Design your own planter using fresh evergreens, cones, branches and bows. Materials included. \$50. Registration required. **LOCK**

**December 1–15: Deck the Halls Workshop.** Make either a boxwood Christmas tree or a tabletop pine



arrangement with a candle. Groups of 3–4 or more people. \$40 per person. Reservation & registration required. **COOP**

**December 5: Tropical Glass Terrarium**, 6pm. Build your own closed tropical terrarium. \$20 members; \$25 non-members. Registration required. **BECBG**

**F- December 7: Winter Wonderland Holiday Open House**, 9am–12pm. Winter woods walk; create snacks for backyard birds; photos with Santa. Coffee, hot chocolate & pastries. \$7 adults; \$5 ages 4-12; 3 & under free. **BMAC**

**December 7: Fresh Boxwood Arrangement**, 9am or 1pm. Create your own boxwood tree and personalize it with holiday décor items. Materials included. \$40 members; \$45 non-members. Registration required. **BECBG**

**December 7: Multi-Textured Christmas Wreath**, 10:30am. Marge Vogel will guide participants in creating a wreath using a variety of evergreens, pine cones and a festive bow. Materials included. \$42. Registration required. **LOCK**

**December 7: Boxwood Christmas Tree**, 1:30pm. Learn the technique of crafting your own freshly made tree. Presented by Julie Emmerling. Materials included. \$40. Registration required. **LOCK**

**December 8: Fresh Conifer Wreath**, 9am or 1pm. Create your own 14" conifer wreath embellished with seasonal greenery & holiday decor items. Materials included. \$40 members; \$45 non-members. Registration required. **BECBG**

**December 8: Small Evergreen Centerpiece**, 1:30pm. Create a fresh evergreen arrangement in a seasonal container. Presented by Mary Trifunovic. Materials included. \$25. Registration required. **LOCK**

**F- December 14: Visit Santa's Workshop**, 10am–4pm. Activity stations, ages 4-12. Photos with Santa, \$5 each. Included with admission. **BECBG**

**F- December 14: Terrarium Workshop for Kids**, 10am or 2pm. \$15 members; \$20 non-members. Registration required. **BECBG**

**December 14: Small Evergreen Centerpiece**, 10:30am. See description under December 8. Presented by Beth Henesey. Materials included. \$25. Registration required. **LOCK**

**December 15: Large Christmas Centerpiece**, 1:30pm. Create your own arrangement using fresh mixed greens, cones, berries & white taper candles. Materials included. \$45. Registration required. **LOCK**

**December 19 or 20: Fresh Holiday Arrangement**, 6pm. Design your own unique table-top arrangement. \$40 members; \$45 non-members. Registration required. **BECBG**

**F- December 20: Macrame Feather Wall Hanging**, 7–9pm. Create your own to take home or give as a gift. Materials included. Ages 14+. \$10. Registration required. **BMAC**

**F- December 27: Buffalo Day**. \$1 admission. **BECBG**

**January 9–February 13: Women in the Woods**, 6 Thursdays. Join Lesley Sardo for meditation, journaling, self-reflection and conversation. Registration required. **BMAC**

## SAVE THE DATE...

**January 24: Lumagination Launch Party**, 6–9pm. Opening night celebration includes beer, wine, hors d'oeuvres & raffle. \$45 members; \$50 non-members; \$60 after January 17. **BECBG**

**January 25–February 29: Lumagination**. See the Gardens illuminated at night. Special dates and times apply, see website for details. Included with admission. **BECBG**

**January 25–March 14: Horticulture III Certificate Program**, 5 Saturdays, 11am–1pm. Taught by David Clark, Horticulturist & CNLP. *Sustainable Landscaping Practices; Gardening with Native Plants; Shade Gardening; Small Space & Urban Gardening; Beneficial Insects & Pollinators*. Series: \$100 members; \$125 non-members. Single class: \$20 members; \$25 non-members. Registration required. **BECBG**

# ITHACA

## REGULAR CLUB MEETINGS

**Adirondack Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society (ACNARGS)** meets the third Saturday of the month (except in summer) at 1pm, Whetzel Room, 404 Plant Science Building, Cornell University, Ithaca. Meetings are open to all. 607/269-7070; acnargs.org; Facebook.com/acnargs.

**Aurora Herbarists**, an herb study group, usually meets the second Tuesday of the month at noon, Cornell Botanic Gardens, Ithaca. Brownbag lunch at noon followed by the program and herb of the month. Field trips during the growing season. All are welcome. Contact: Pat Curran, pc21@cornell.edu.

**Elmira Garden Club** meets the first Thursday of the month, April–December, at 6pm, 426 Fulton Street, Elmira. Annual plant sale, workshops, monthly meetings, local garden tours and community gardening services. Karen Coletta, 607/731-8320; Facebook.

**Finger Lakes Native Plant Society** meets the third Wednesday of the month at 7pm, Unitarian Church annex, corner of Buffalo & Aurora, Ithaca. Enter side door on Buffalo Street & up the stairs. 607/257-4853.

**Windsor NY Garden Group** meets the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 10am, members' homes or Windsor Community House, 107 Main Street, Windsor. windsorgardengroup.suerambo.com.

## FREQUENT HOST

**CBG: Cornell Botanic Gardens**, 1 Plantations Road, Ithaca, NY 14850. Inquire ahead for meeting locations. 607/254-7430; km274@cornell.edu; cornellbotanicgardens.org.

## CLASSES / EVENTS

**F- Indicates activities especially appropriate for children and families.**

**November 16: Make an Evergreen Wreath**, 1–3pm. Materials, cookies & hot cocoa included. Location: Nevin Welcome Center. \$20 members; \$25 non-members. Registration required. **CBG**

**November 23: Bokashi Composting Workshop**, 10am–12pm. Learn about this Japanese composting technique that involves natural fermentation. \$10 per household. Registration required. Cornell Cooperative Extension, Tompkins County, 615 Willow Avenue, Ithaca. 607/272-2292; ccetompkins.org.

**December 20: Winter Solstice Garden Tour**, 12–1:30pm. Tour the Mullestein Family Winter Garden as you learn how plants cope with winter's cold and some seasonal plant folklore. Meet: Nevin Welcome Center. \$5 suggested donation. Registration required. **CBG**

**December 20: Plants & Stories of the Winter Solstice**, 4–6pm. Learn about the natural history and folklore of oak, holly, ivy, mistletoe and evergreens. Indoor presentation & refreshments followed by candlelight visit to the Winter Garden, weather permitting. Location: Nevin Welcome Center. \$20 members; \$25 non-members. Registration required. **CBG**

# ROCHESTER

## REGULAR CLUB MEETINGS

**7th District Federated Garden Clubs New York State, Inc.** meets the first Wednesday of the month. 7thdistrictfgcnys.org.

**African Violet and Gesneriad Society of Rochester** meets the first Wednesday of the month (except in summer), 7–9pm, Messiah Church, 4301 Mount Read Blvd., Rochester. All are welcome. Stacey Davis, 585/426-5665; stacey.davis@rit.edu; avgsr.org.

**Big Springs Garden Club of Caledonia-Mumford** meets the second Monday evening of the month, September–November, January–May. New members and guests welcome. 585/314-6292; mdolan3@rochester.rr.com; Facebook.

**Bloomfield Garden Club** meets the third Thursday of the month (except May, July & August) at 11:45am, Veterans Park, 6910 Routes 5 & 20, Bloomfield. Visitors and prospective new members welcome. Diane Nelson, 585/435-7896. Facebook.

**Bonsai Society of Upstate New York** meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at the Brighton Town Park Lodge, Buckland Park, 1341 Westfall Road, Rochester. 585/334-2595; Facebook; bonsaisocietyofupstateny.org.

**Country Gardeners of Webster** meets the second Monday of the month (except February, July & August) at 7pm at various locations. All aspects of gardening covered, outside speakers, projects, visits to local gardens, community gardening involvement. Includes coffee and social time. Guests welcome. 585/265-4762.

**Creative Gardeners of Penfield** meets the second Monday of the month at 9:15am (except July & August), Penfield United Methodist Church, 1795 Baird Road, Penfield. Visitors welcome. Call 585/385-2065 if interested in attending a meeting.

**Fairport Garden Club** meets the third Thursday evening of each month (except August & January). Accepting new members. fairportgc@gmail.com; fairportgardenclub.com.

**Garden Club of Brockport** meets the second Wednesday of every month at 7pm, Jubilee Church, 3565 Lake Road, Brockport. Speakers, hands-on sessions. Georgie: 585/964-7754; georgietoates@yahoo.com.

**Garden Club of Mendon** meets the third Tuesday of the month, 10am–1pm, Mendon Community Center, 167 North Main Street, Honeoye Falls. Work on community gardens and gather new ideas in a casual, social environment. 585/624-8182; joanheaney70@gmail.com.

**Garden Path of Penfield** meets the third Wednesday of the month, September–May at 7pm, Penfield Community Center, 1985 Baird Road, Penfield. Members enjoy all aspects of gardening; new members welcome. gardenpathofpenfield@gmail.com.

**Gates Garden Club** meets the second Thursday of the month (except July & August) at 6:30pm, Gates Town Annex, 1605 Buffalo Road, Rochester. New members and guests welcome. 585/429-5996; may@gmail.com.

**Genesee Region Orchid Society (GROS)** meets the first Monday following the first Sunday of the month (September–December; February–May), Jewish Community Center, 1200 Edgewood Avenue, Rochester. GROS is an affiliate of the American Orchid Society (AOS) and Orchid Digest Corporation. *December 2: Orchid Auction, 6:45pm, see calendar (below)*. facebook.com/geneseeorchid; geneseeorchid.org.

**Genesee Valley Hosta Society** meets the second Thursday of the month, April–October, at Eli Fagan American Legion Post, 260 Middle Road, Henrietta. 585/538-2280; seubckner@frontiernet.net; geneseevalleyhosta.com.

**Greater Rochester Iris Society (GRIS)** meets Sundays at 2pm, dates vary, St. John's Episcopal Church Hall, 11 Episcopal Avenue, Honeoye Falls. Public welcome. 585/266-0302; thehutchings@mac.com.

**Greater Rochester Perennial Society (GRPS)** meets the first Thursday of each month at 7pm, Twelve Corners Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall, 1200 South Winton Road, Rochester, except in summer when it tours members' gardens. 585/467-1678; smag@rochester.rr.com; rochesterperennial.com.

**Greater Rochester Rose Society** meets the first Tuesday of the month at 7pm, First Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Road South, Room 110, Rochester. July meeting is a garden tour. 585/694-8430; rochrosesociety@gmail.com; Facebook.

## ROCHESTER cont.

**Henrietta Garden Club** meets the second Wednesday of the month (except May–August & December) at 6:30pm, Department of Public Works Building, 405 Calkins Road, Henrietta. *November 13: Eating Wild Plants with Karen Evans. January 8: Q & A with a pro gardening panel.* Guests welcome. Handicap accessible. 585/889-1547; henriettagardenclub.org.

**Holley Garden Club** meets the second Thursday of the month at 7pm, Holley Presbyterian Church. 585/638-6973.

**Hubbard Springs Garden Club of Chili** meets the third Monday of the month at 7pm, Chili Senior Center, 3235 Chili Avenue, Rochester. dtogood@rochester.rr.com.

**Ikebana International Rochester Chapter 53** meets the third Thursday of each month (except December and February) at 10am, First Baptist Church, Hubbell Hall, 175 Allens Creek Road, Rochester. 585/301-6727; 585/402-1772; rochesterikebana@gmail.com; ikebanarochester.org.

**Kendall Garden Club** meets the first Wednesday of the month at 7pm, Kendall Town Hall. 585/370-8964.

**Klemwood Garden Club of Webster** meets the 2nd Monday of the month at 7pm (except January & February) in members' homes or local libraries. Accepting new members. 585/671-1961.

**Lakeview Garden Club** (Greece) meets the second Wednesday of the month (except January & February) at 7pm, meeting location varies depending on activity. Meetings may include a speaker, project or visits to local garden-related sites. New members always welcome. Joanne Ristuccia; rista1234@gmail.com.

**Newark Garden Club** meets the first Friday of the month at 1pm, Park Presbyterian Church, Newark. Guests are welcome.

**Pittsford Garden Club** meets the third Tuesday of the month at 10:30am, Spiegel Center, Room 19, 35 Lincoln Avenue, Pittsford. July & August visits to member gardens. 585/425-0766; BKRU888@aol.com; pittsfordgardenclub.wordpress.com.

**Rochester Dahlia Society** meets the second Saturday of the month (except August & September) at 12pm, Trinity Reformed Church, 909 Landing Road North, Rochester. Visitors welcome. 585/865-2291; Facebook; rochesterdahlias.org.

**Rochester Herb Society** meets the first Tuesday of each month (excluding January, February & July) at 12pm, Potter Memorial Building, 53 West Church Street, Fairport. Summer garden tours. New members welcome. rochesterherbsociety.com.

**Rochester Permaculture Center** meets monthly to discuss topics such as edible landscapes, gardening, farming, renewable energy, green building, rainwater harvesting, composting, local food, forest gardening, herbalism, green living, etc. Meeting location and details: meetup.com/rochesterpermaculture.

**Seabreeze Bloomers Garden Club** meets the fourth Wednesday of the month (except January) at 7pm, location varies depending on activity. Meetings may include a speaker, project or visit to local garden-related site. Members receive a monthly newsletter. New members welcome. 585/230-5356; bonniearnold@frontiernet.net; jen@adaras.com.

**Stafford Garden Club** meets the third Wednesday of the month (except December & January) at 7pm, Stafford Town Hall, 8903 Morganville Road (Route 237), Stafford. Plant auction in May. All are welcome. 585/343-4494.

**Victor Garden Club** meets the second Wednesday of the month (except January & February) at 6:30/6:45pm. New members welcome. Meeting and location details: victorgardenclubny2.com; 585/721-5457.

**Williamson Garden Club.** On-going community projects; free monthly lectures to educate the

community about gardening. Open to all. 315/524-4204; grow14589@gmail.com; thewilliamsongardenclub.blogspot.com.

### FREQUENT HOST

**GAL: Gallea's Florist & Greenhouse**, 2832 Clover Street (corner of Clover & Jefferson Road), Pittsford, NY 14534. 585/586-3017; galleas.com.

### CLASSES / EVENTS

**F- Indicates activities especially appropriate for children and families.**

**Ongoing through January 5: Woven – Photo Gallery.**

Artist Tanya Marcuse's photographs, each five feet high by ten feet wide, feature flora and fauna gathered from her immediate surroundings and composed into arrangements of tightly compacted plant, animal and mineral findings in an abstract manner. George Eastman Museum, 900 East Avenue, Rochester. 585/327-4800; eastman.org.

**November 6: Propagating Native Perennials & Ferns**, 6:30–8pm. Ellen Folts will describe the process of starting from seed and spores. Penfield Public Library, Community Room, 1985 Baird Road, Penfield. Registration appreciated. Flower City Garden Network. flowercitygardennetwork@gmail.com.

**F- November 11: Children's Flower Arranging**, 11am–12pm. Each child will make a simple arrangement with fresh flowers to take home. \$20. Registration required. **GAL**

**November 11: Glass Lantern Sand Painted Centerpiece**, 2:30–4pm. Jeanine Fyfe will guide participants in creating a centerpiece using succulents planted in a colorful sand painting. \$15. Registration required. Broccolo Tree & Lawn Care, 2755 Penfield Road, Penfield. 585/424-4476; broccolotreeandlawn.com.

**November 12: Autumn Centerpiece**, 6pm. Participants will use fresh greens and flowers to make a seasonal arrangement. Learn how to keep it looking fresh and lasting for weeks. Materials included. \$50. Registration required. **GAL**

**November 19: Seasonal Everlasting Wreath**, 6pm. Create your own wreath using a base of salal (lemon leaf) and baby's breath (depending on availability) embellished with dried, fresh and/or silk floral materials. Materials included. \$60. Registration required. **GAL**

**December 2: Orchid Auction**, 6:45pm. Presented by Genesee Region Orchid Society. Location: JCC of Greater Rochester, 1200 Edgewood Avenue, Rochester. Free. facebook.com/geneseeorchid; geneseeorchid.org.

**December 3: Outdoor Holiday Welcome Arrangement**, 6pm. Design a custom arrangement for the front entrance using fresh greens, decorative materials & holiday container. Materials included. \$60. Registration required. **GAL**

**F- January 11: Children's Fairy Garden**, 11am. Pat McCullough will guide participants in creating a miniature indoor garden. \$25. Registration required. **GAL**

### SAVE THE DATE...

**February 14–March 1: The Dutch Connection Flower Show.** Enjoy thousands of tulips, hyacinths, daffodils, amaryllis and freesias in the same shades that Eastman featured 100 years ago. In addition, tropical orchids will be displayed, courtesy of the Genesee Region Orchid Society. George Eastman House, 900 East Avenue, Rochester. 585/327-4800; eastman.org.

**April 25: Gathering of Gardeners.** *Garden Secrets and Shady Characters.* Speakers & vendors. Presented by Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners of Monroe County. gatheringofgardeners.com.

## SYRACUSE

### REGULAR CLUB MEETINGS

**African Violet Society of Syracuse** meets the second Thursday of the month, September–May, Pitcher Hill Community Church, 605 Bailey Road, North Syracuse. 315/492-2562; kgarb@twcnv.rr.com; avsofsyracuse.org.

**Bonsai Club of CNY (BCCNY)** usually meets the second Wednesday of the month at 7pm, Pitcher Hill Community Church, 605 Bailey Road, North Syracuse. 315/436-0135; lnewell1@gmail.com; cnybonsai.com.

**Central New York Orchid Society** meets the first Sunday of the month, September–May, St. Augustine's Church, 7333 O'Brien Road, Baldwinsville. Dates may vary due to holidays. 315/633-2437; cnyos.org.

**Fairmount Garden Club** meets the third Thursday of the month (March–November) at 6:30pm, Camillus Senior Center, 25 First Street, Camillus. Speakers & community projects. *November 21: Make Your Own Garden Apron.* All are welcome. tooley.susan@yahoo.com.

**Federated Garden Clubs NYS – District 6.** 315/481-4005; dist6fss@gmail.com.

**Gardening Friends Club** meets the third Tuesday of the month, March–December, at 6:30pm, Wesleyan Church, 4591 US Route 11, Pulaski. 315/298-1276; Facebook: Gardening Friends of Pulaski, NY; ViLaDeeDa@frontiernet.net.

**Gardeners of Syracuse** meets the third Thursday of each month at 7:30pm, Reformed Church of Syracuse, 1228 Teall Avenue, Syracuse. Enter from Melrose Avenue. 315/464-0051.

**Gardeners in Thyme** (a women's herb club) meets the second Thursday of the month at 7pm, Beaver Lake Nature Center, Baldwinsville. 315/635-6481; hbaker@twcnv.rr.com.

**Habitat Gardening in CNY (HGcNY)** meets the last Sunday of most months at 2pm. Northern Onondaga Public Library, North Syracuse Branch, 100 Trolley Barn Lane, N. Syracuse. HGcNY is a chapter of Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes; wildones.org. Free and open to the public. 315/487-5742; info@hgcnv.org; hgcnv.org.

**Home Garden Club of Syracuse** usually meets the first Tuesday morning of the month. Members are active in educating the community about gardening, horticulture & floral design and involved with several civic projects in the Syracuse area. New members welcome. homegardenclubofsyracuse@gmail.com; homegardenclubofsyracuse.org.

**Koi and Water Garden Society of Central New York** usually meets the third Monday of each month at 7pm. See website for meeting locations. 315/458-3199; cnykoi.com.

**Men and Women's Garden Club of Syracuse** meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:30pm, Reformed Church of Syracuse, 1228 Teall Avenue, Syracuse. Meetings feature guest speakers on a variety of gardening and related topics. Members maintain gardens at Rosemond Gifford Zoo & Ronald McDonald House. Annual spring & fall flower shows. 315/699-7942; Facebook.

**Southern Hills Garden Club** meets the third Tuesday of each month, February–November, LaFayette Community Center, 2508 US Route 11, LaFayette. Some meetings are off site. Cathy Nagel, 315/677-9342; cen42085@aol.com.

**Syracuse Rose Society** meets the second Thursday of the month (except December) at 7pm, Reformed Church of Syracuse, 1228 Teall Avenue, Syracuse. Enter from Melrose Avenue. Club members maintain the E. M. Mills Memorial Rose Garden, Thornden Park, Syracuse. Public welcome. syracuserosesociety.org.



*From the garden*

# Sweet potato breakfast "power bowl"

by Ellen Adams

Now that fall is here, let's change up your breakfast routine to amp up the vitamins and increase your energy! This breakfast bowl is part of a wonderful trend in combining healthy ingredients to create a personalized meal. Add your own favorite healthy ingredients to the bowl, like mushrooms, onions, turkey sausage, or avocado for a different flavor burst every morning.

Serves 2

## INGREDIENTS

1 sweet potato  
½ red pepper (sliced into strips)  
2 handfuls fresh spinach  
2 Tbsps walnuts  
2 eggs  
¼ Cup feta cheese  
Olive oil  
Salt  
Pepper

## DIRECTIONS

1. Scrub the sweet potato and pierce the skin with a fork.
2. Wet a piece of paper towel and wrap the potato in it. Microwave the potato until soft, approximately 3-4 minutes.
3. Cut the potato into cubes. You do not have to peel the potato—many nutrients are in the skin. Divide the sweet potato cubes between 2 bowls.
4. Put 1-2 tsps of olive oil in a skillet, Sauté the red peppers and spinach for 3 minutes or until the spinach starts to wilt. Divide the peppers and spinach between the bowls.
5. Using the same skillet, fry 2 eggs (over easy, scrambled...your choice!) Place each cooked egg on top of the vegetable mixture in each bowl.
6. Sprinkle the walnuts and the Feta cheese over each bowl and enjoy!



Ellen Adams is a personal chef in the Webster area. She is a military veteran and leads a program for fellow veterans called Cooking with Heroes.



**Botanical Gardens**  
www.buffalogardens.com



*Poinsettia & Railway Exhibit*

**November 29 - January 5**



*Lummagination*

**January 25 - February 29**

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# Foreign flowers, Rochester roots

The Eastman Museum's annual "Dutch Connection" show shares in the struggle against winter blues

*Story by John Ernst; photos provided by the George Eastman Museum*

In 1895, 41-year-old George Eastman bicycled through Holland. "Two large fields that we passed were the greatest blaze of color I ever saw," he wrote home to his mother in Rochester. "Reds, yellows, pinks, and white flowers three inches in diameter and the blossoms covered the ground. If we can grow them I will have a bed next year." And he did just that. After his botanical bewilderment overseas, Eastman ordered tens of thousands of bulbs from Holland each year until his death. According to Eastman House landscape manager Dan Bellavia, "One of the reasons he built greenhouses is so he could have flowers in the house at all times." Each year, Eastman's live-in servants would transform his home into a Dutch summer field. After he built his East Avenue mansion in 1905, this meant constructing five greenhouses to prepare fifty rooms' worth of floral color. Later, in 1917, he even dug a tunnel from a greenhouse to his house to prevent the winter cold from hurting plants when it was time to transfer them.

One hundred years after that loving letter to his mother, the Eastman Museum decided to bring the billionaire-philanthropist's tradition to the people of Rochester. The event has continued to grow each year, and its twenty fifth anniversary is no exception. "It's become almost a year-round job for me and my crew," Bellavia says. "I have my orders in by June and they're usually delivered in the last week of September." After months of expert

care in their greenhouses, the flowers are brought into the house for the Dutch Connection in February. "We almost always have extras that live longer than we expect, so it ends up going until the second or third week of March." April through June involves cleaning and disinfecting fifteen thousand pots before it's time to order again.

Bellavia only has two employees, so the event runs on volunteers and community engagement. "We'd be nowhere without them. We try and feed them breakfast and coffee, but we can't thank them enough," he continues. "We have anywhere from 12,000 to 15,000 flowers that need to be watered every two days." From the beginning, the primary economic force behind the Dutch Connection has been local sponsors Gerald P. and Karen S. Kral. "The museum was just starting up in '95, so we knew they were interested in helping with gardens and initially asked if they could help with just the printing costs," Bellavia says. "Since then, they've donated and sponsored the show ever since. And each year they seem to find a way to help out more." Each year the museum spends roughly \$12,000 on the event—up to \$8,000 on bulbs alone.

Two years ago, Bellavia and his team developed a program for kids to plant their own bulbs and learn about gardening and community stewardship. "I really push education," he says. "They learn a little bit about gardening, and they take it home to watch it grow and bloom. Then they can plant them in their gardens outside." This year the

**ABOVE:** Just a few of the potted flowers on display during the Dutch Connection





openings have almost doubled from 2017's slots. Bellavia notes that a lot of parents grow tired of "big germ factories" like some children's museums in winter, so the Dutch Connection is a great opportunity to try something new. "But anything to get your kid's nose out of their phone is great," he laughs.

After the success of the kids' event's first year, the Eastman House decided to try something special for adults. "Learning to plant bulbs is just as enriching for grown-ups as it is for kids," Bellavia says, "but we wanted to couple it with something trendy." After partnering with Bushnell Basin's Lost Borough Brewing Co, "Blooms and Brews" was born. "We allowed 60 people to come in, plant some bulbs, and try samples of Lost Borough's new seasonal beers," he says. Admission to Blooms and Brews includes a house tour and a series of appetizer pairings for each beer.

The Eastman House utilized Cornell University's extensive archive of Eastman's catalogs to determine his exact orders. "I still deal with one company he originally ordered from," Bellavia says. "some of the varieties of tulips are no longer in existence, but we order the closest varieties we can." Eastman ordered nine types of tulips, differing namely in the time that they bloom. That way, Bellavia says, he'd have flowers blooming far beyond the typical season—"especially when he'd plant them outside, he'd have tulips blooming for two months." Eastman's catalogs also show narcissi (daffodils and paperwhites), hyacinths, amaryllis,

freesia, clivias, hellebores, English and German primulas, Rieger begonias, and azaleas. "Depending on availability, I like to add another annual or two," Bellavia says, "but I don't know what until just before the show." Interestingly, George Eastman favored monochromatic displays—"so it would be *all pink* or *all white*."

When you cut through the glamor and class, there's a simple reason Eastman chose to decorate his home with flowers—to uplift spirits through the winter. "February, you know, is lovely around here," Bellavia laughs. "But by getting people in here, we remind them that winter's almost over. And there's a light at the end of the tunnel." As depression-fighting as the flowers themselves can be, watching them grow and develop adds a new level to the good-mood magic. "If you come in one day it'll look gorgeous," he continues. "But if you come a few days later, you'll see the changes as bulbs open up and the flowers change color. You see the differences." Bellavia notes that a membership to the museum makes it easy to return as often as you'd like.

"After working here fifteen years," he says, "I still walk in some mornings and just go, 'wow.'"

John Ernst is a writer and graphic designer based in Rochester. See more of his work at [johnmwrites.com](http://johnmwrites.com).

**TOP LEFT:** The kids program is a unique opportunity to learn about gardening during winter

**RIGHT:** Overhead view of the conservatory

**BOTTOM LEFT:** Display in front of organ in the conservatory



# What to do in the garden in November & December



**ABOVE:** Drain and store hoses  
Photo: Jane Milliman

One of the wonderful things about gardening and raising plants is there are things to do in every season ... a time to sow, a time to reap, and as fall ends and winter rolls around ... still more to do. Some planting and reaping continues. This is the time to get the remainder of any spring bulbs (tulips, daffodils, crocus, hyacinths, and snowdrops) in the ground before it freezes. It's also a great time to root-divide and plant perennials; plant roses, azaleas, and other shrubs; and establish rhubarb and/or asparagus beds—first prepare the bed/s, and then set the plant crowns under soil.

Now is the time to plant tree seedlings and shrubs, as they enter dormancy. I have potted apple, chestnut, aronia, and elderberry first-

year seedlings ready to go into the ground, but the same goes for currants, raspberries, and others. Having waited for dormancy, I avoided the extensive watering that would have been required if I planted them earlier. For those plant seeds needing cold stratification, you're on schedule to take your nut seeds (oak, chestnut, hazelnut, etc.), fruit tree seeds, and some berry seeds and get them planted in potting media. Place planted containers and trays outdoors, (covered with hardware cloth if squirrels might be tempted in your yard) Since they are outside, the cold winter weather will help soften up the nut seed coat, allowing them to sprout for spring.

If you plan on buying a live Christmas tree for the holidays, dig your hole before the ground freezes. Cover the removed soil to insulate it, so you can place it back in the hole when you plant the tree after the holidays.

Bring potted plants that will not survive the winter indoors as house plants (hearty geraniums, begonias, fuchsia, etc.). Potted tender perennials such as lavender and rosemary can also be kept in the garage or basement where temperatures stay above 32 degrees.

Time to harvest! After we have had a few frosts but before the ground freezes solid, turnips, parsnips, Brussel sprouts, and carrots may be harvested and will be as sweet tasting as they can be. This is the time to finalize clean-up and organization of the root cellar, as well as to can and preserve your remaining harvest. Check stored onions and potatoes periodically during the months ahead, removing any damaged or rotting fruit. Still, for those who want to extend the season, it's time to set up cold frames and get your winter hardy greens (spinach, kale, and such) going in your greenhouse. As they are tropical perennials, you may even wish to bring some small pepper plants right into the

house, where they may produce fruit all winter. Lift dahlia tubers, begonias, and gladiolus corms to store them in a dry and cool location over the winter, making sure to remove any dead foliage before storing.

For many gardeners, November and December is when to transition from growing to care and maintenance—this is the time to winterize your garden. Adding organic matter to beds and blending it in is important. You can also spread fresh manure over the surface of your vegetable beds to rot down over the winter months. Cut back and prune out any diseased or infested foliage. When cleaning up, make sure any refuse from any diseased plants is disposed of; do not put it into your compost, as typically home compost piles do not get hot enough to destroy pathogens. With crops removed and beds bare, it's a good time to take any necessary soil tests.

Collect leaves, hay, etc., to either spread as mulch or to add to your compost piles. When mulching young trees, avoid putting the mulch directly next to the base of the tree, thereby styming rodents' easy access. Keep mulch at least two to three inches away from the tree trunk. Shielding the tree with wire mesh guards, tree tube, or some form of trunk protection is also critical in preventing mice, voles or rabbits from girdling and killing young trees. Remember, deer will be looking for young trees, evergreens, and shrubs to browse in the winter snow, so consider more substantial protection. Mowing lawns low close to your shrubs and young trees will also help prevent damage from rodents, as they avoid open, exposed spaces. Protect roses by mounding soil around the crown and covering the bud union. Tie down climbing rose canes to protect them from freezing winds. Before the snow turns everything white, aerating your lawn is a good idea, as well as a final mowing with the blade set high.

This is maintenance time for garden equipment, when hoses are drained, tools are cleaned, and all are appropriately stored for winter. Some tools, especially hoes and your handy scythe, need sharpening. Sharpening lawn mower blades before storage helps set you up to be ready for spring. It's also inventory time, wherein you gaze across your garden and landscape, snap a few pictures, and ask yourself what worked, what didn't work, and what would you like to do differently next year.

For further gardening advice contact your local Extension office and ask for the Master Gardener volunteers help line.

—John Slifka, CCE Oneida County Master Gardener Volunteer



# Winter birds

by Liz Magnanti

Every year, as the days grow shorter and the nights get colder, it amazes me how animals can survive the winters we have here. Although weather conditions are changing, the main elements needed for survival remain the same for all animals, including birds.

In the winter there are three major things birds need for survival: food, water, and shelter. Some birds, like chickadees, nuthatches, jays, and woodpeckers will cache food away throughout the year to survive the winter. Other birds, such as cardinals, doves, and finches, do not. All birds must rely on finding food in the winter to survive. Seeds, nuts, fruit, and dormant insects and larvae are major sources of food for birds in the winter. Although birds will visit feeders in the winter, the food they get from it is just a supplement of what they find naturally. Providing high-fat foods like peanuts, suet, sunflower, and nyjer seed give birds the calories they need to stay plump and warm in the winter.

Finding water can be a challenge in the winter. It's not uncommon to see birds drinking from melting icicles to get some water! Shallow bodies of water that birds can bathe in and drink from can be hard to find in the winter. Providing birds with a heated birdbath will give them that source of water all winter long. These sources of water are extremely important though, because birds will use them to clean their feathers. Clean feathers allow birds to trap air between their warm body and feathers, providing insulation. This is why you so often see fluffed up birds in the winter! They're using their down coats to keep warm.

Birds find shelter in many places. Shrubs, trees, tree cavities, and man-made structures are all places birds will go to stay out of the elements. Roosting pockets are great for birds to take refuge in during harsh weather conditions. These woven pockets are not designed for nesting, but to provide birds with a place to stay out of the snow, rain, and wind. Roosting houses are even bigger and have perches inside of them for multiple birds to sit on while they take shelter. Multiple species will use roosting houses and pockets at the same time. If you keep your birdhouses out all year you may see birds flying in and out of them in the cold months. They provide a space for the bird to hunker down and rest. Don't be surprised if you see something furry in your nest box! Mice, and if the box is big enough, squirrels will also use them to stay out of the elements. At night in the winter many birds undergo a process called "torpor." Their body temperature drops, their metabolism slows down, and their physiological functions slow down. It is almost like a mini hibernation. Their body doesn't use as many resources as they would normally need when they are in this state. This does make the animal very susceptible



to predators however, so providing places for the birds to roost is important!

This time of year be on the lookout for new birds in your yard. Dark-eyed juncos are here only in the winter and early spring. They are dark gray with a white belly and pink beak. Look for them hopping on the ground under your birdfeeders. White-crowned and white-throated sparrows may also visit your yard this time of year. They both have white stripes on their heads but the white-throated sparrows also have a white patch on their throat. They are also most often seen on the ground foraging under feeders. Pine siskins and the occasional redpoll may come to your nyjer feeders. Pine siskins look similar in size to goldfinches, but they are very striped. Redpolls are small chickadee-sized birds that have a raspberry colored mark on the top of their heads. Some years there are huge influxes of these birds, other years they are scarce.

It is amazing how many birds you can get in your yard throughout the winter by providing them with their main staples for survival: food, water and shelter. There is nothing more beautiful than a tree full of cardinals on a snowy winter's day. Entice them and our other hardy winter birds with some creature comforts and you will have beautiful birds all season!

Liz Magnanti is the manager of the Bird House in Pittsford.

ABOVE: Dark-eyed junco  
Photo courtesy Flickr: DaPugle



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# Winter growing, reading, and making with kids

It's a chilly early winter day, there's frost in the garden, the furnace humming expensively, and your little ones are waiting with anticipation for the next holiday, or snow day, or weekend. You may not be able to convince your kids to venture outside, but don't worry, there's still green-thumb fun to be had!

One of the bigger trends right now has the rather gross name of "Kitchen Scrap Gardening," which just might sound icky enough to be interesting. You can also call it "Plant Rescue" for the kinder of heart, or "Garbage Gardening," "Bio-active Recycling," or something similar. Whatever you call it, it's a quick process with satisfying results.

**Tops and bottoms:** Save your celery or onion bottoms, or your carrot or beet tops, and stick them in either a little container of water or some moist potting soil. Give them a few days and, like the Thanksgiving turkey leftovers creatively hidden in every dish, *they're backkk!* You can make this a quick experiment and toss them, or plant them in pots and keep them in a sunny window. Feeling especially green? Try doing this with lettuce roots or turnip tops. Once we kept "perpetual lettuce" growing for an entire winter. It didn't make enough for a salad, but it was fun to pick fresh leaves to stick in a sandwich.

**Tubers:** Sweet potatoes make lovely vines, as you probably have discovered in your plant-buying travels. Simply wait for a sweet potato to sprout from an eye and stick it halfway in water. It'll put out roots and leaves shortly. They like sunshine and will climb upward to frame a window.

**Avocado Tree:** Want lots of leaves? Enjoy your avocado, then scrub the seed clean. Stab it with four toothpicks and



suspend at the top of a jar with the wide part of the seed touching the water. Change out the water every two days until the jar fills with roots. Plant it in a big pot and put it somewhere sunny, then stand back. These are abundant and fast-growing plants! The Internet is full of different advice about growing these, so you can assign your science-minded kid a project to determine the truth.

With the holidays approaching, I've compiled some new projects that will get your kids busy, and still inspire them to love their "planty" pals.

**Cranberries:** They are not only delicious, and grow in intriguingly different methods than most plants, they are also quite cheerfully beautiful and their large size makes them easy for kids (and grownups!) to handle. Kids will enjoy making cranberry ornaments, garlands, and even easy candle displays, and the fresh cranberries remain bright red even when dried. For an easy ornament, simply string cranberries and beads (silver or gold look lovely) on floral wire and twist into a circle. Tie a ribbon on top and you have a pretty, lightly scented ornament for your room, or as a nice gift for grandma! Check out Ocean Spray's website for more great cranberry crafts.



**Reading:** Oh yes, books are a gardener's friend! Try *The Secret Garden*, *Seed People*, or, for the little ones, *Peter Rabbit*, for cozy reading when the snow's flying.

**Flowerpot People:** All you need is a clay flowerpot to make a cute, funny pal. Have your child paint a

face on the pot with acrylic paint, then fill with potting soil and sprinkle some chia or grass seeds on top. You can use wheat grass seeds to make this a cat treat, too. Water and keep somewhere sunny, then enjoy trimming the pot pal's "hair" when it begins to grow long!

That's all for this year! Happy holidays, from my garden to yours!

Valerie Shaw is a YMCA coach, PTO mom, and aspiring novelist with too many distracting goats. She lives on a patch of plant paradise in West Monroe, NY, with her wonderful husband and two energetic tweens.

**ABOVE:**  
Cranberries  
Photo courtesy  
Flicker: Marco Verch

**LEFT INSET:**  
Growing an  
avocado tree from  
a seed  
Photo courtesy  
Flicker: Maria Keay.

**RIGHT INSET:**  
"The Secret  
Garden" courtesy  
Library of Congress,  
Rare Book and  
Special Collections  
Division

# Grateful tree



by Cathy Monrad

**F**all ... it's what leaves and branches do this time of year. You can use both as free craft materials for your holiday décor. Get the kids and grandkids involved to make a "Grateful Tree" for display during your Thanksgiving feast.

## MATERIALS

- Vase or other container
- Container filler such as rocks or pinecones
- Ribbon to decorate container (optional)
- Small branches
- Leaves of various sizes, types, and colors with stems attached
- Paraffin wax
- Wax paper
- Marker or paint pen
- Mini clothespins or narrow ribbon/string

## TOOLS

- Mini crockpot or nonstick saucepan

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. If desired, decorate your container with ribbon. Add filler to container, then arrange branches as desired.
2. Melt wax in crock pot or saucepan. Holding stem, carefully dip each leaf in wax, then lightly shake off excess. Lay leaf flat on wax paper and let dry completely.
3. Using marker or paint pen, write something you are grateful for on each leaf. Let dry.
4. Attach leaves to branches using mini clothespins or tie with ribbon.

Cathy Monrad is the graphic designer and garden crafter for the *Upstate Gardeners' Journal*.

## PROJECT NOTES

- Waxing "fresh" leaves works better than dried leaves.
- Give your leaves some pizzazz by tracing the edge with a gold marker or paint pen.
- After the turkey coma wears off, you can create a wintry look by removing the leaves and using Epsom salts as "snow." See [upstategardenersjournal.com](http://upstategardenersjournal.com) for details.

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