

Forest West Garden Club Newsletter

September 2006

Next Meeting:
Tuesday, Sept. 12th, 7 PM

***at Elizabeth's home,
5902 Spruce Forest, 77092
Robbie & Phyllis B. are to bring refreshments.***

Program: Member's Garden Tour

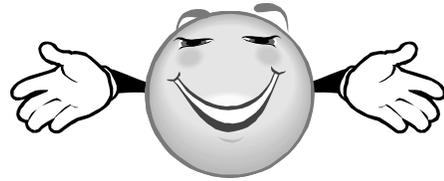
Dues are due –
don't forget your checkbook!



*Find past newsletters, the latest calendar, the photo gallery
and other fun information at our web-home,*

<http://www.cybertoad.us/FWGC>

Welcome back ladies!



It will be a delight to see everyone once again when we meet at Elizabeth's house, but note the time that we meet: **7:00 PM**. Phyliss B. and Robbie have refreshments for this gathering.

We begin the year with tours of 3 gardens of our own members: Mary's, Elizabeth's, and Evelyn's. We'll split up into small groups to take a peek at their plantings, blooms, and garden elements. Thanks to you three for letting us come.

Dues are due....so be ready with your check for our treasurer. If you know that you will not be at this first meeting, please mail in your dues to Elizabeth---still a bargain at \$15.00!

Not many changes this year, same officers, and same committees. In March, probably, the nominating committee will meet so if you think you'd like to serve in any one of the positions, please let me know.

Mark your calendars for November 11 which is our Fall Plant Sale date. This is our largest fundraiser for our club which helps pay for our programs, speaker fees, and program supplies along with our community service activities. We need everyone's participation and support for this endeavor to make it a success especially since we are a small club. Our Christmas party is also slated for December 5. We will discuss a spring sale at a later date.

Stay cool,
Suzanne

New Plants for Containers

Have you run out of space in your gardens, but still have notions about buying plants and showcasing some new ones? Well, here's a few to try in containers. Blue *plumbago* and *hamelia*'s can be put into pots and placed strategically in your yard or on the patio. While both can get large, the pots will contain their growth. Add osmocote on top and be sure to mulch as well as monitor water, sometimes daily. *Tecoma Stans* may be potted, so can *firecracker plant* or *jatropha integerrima*. The *jatropha* pot can dry out but still bloom almost year round. It's become so dependable that it is being considered a Texas Superstar.

Did you know that there is a new type of shrimp plant called *orange justicia*? Also new on the market is *pink porterweed* which brings lots of butterflies. If you have always liked hostas, but have been challenged with them withering in hot weather, try *ligularias*. A *variegated tapioca* may be planted in partial shade to full sun. It's foliage is very dramatic which can brighten a dull spot. Under plant it with *blue daze* for a great color combination. *Caricature plant* with green, cream, and pink foliage is also a plant to consider for your shade areas (I once bought one at Brookwood).



One plant that requires little water is the *butter daisy*. It can take lots of sun as well. *Pride of Barbados* is being considered a Texas Superstar plant. While it dies back, it is considered a perennial. You'll often see these hot red, orange plants in community landscapes or store fronts. I've seen many in Austin and San Antonio and it is really catching on around here as well.

So, if you want to get out in your garden, dig up some of the old, replace with some new, and enjoy!

(Information from July's Master Gardener meeting with TAMU professor as speaker.)

Tending Old Friends – Houseplant Care

If we are lucky gardeners, little houseplants grow big. If we adjust to their needs, we can enjoy their aging, and watch as they mature and reach amazing heights. Like so much of life, moderation is the key when growing tropical container plants for the long term. When you put plants on your busy calendar, you may find solace in their routine care.

Schedule Plant Time

Pick an hour or two twice a week, such as Wednesday afternoon and Saturday morning, and actually write "plant time" on the calendar. Take care of the big pots outside, the ferns on the porch, and the pots scattered throughout the house. Just do it: water philodendron pots that are dry, fertilize the Chinese evergreen, pluck old flowers off the kalanchoe, cut off the orchid's browned stems, and actually look at all your plants. Look for soil that's crusting, and cultivate it so water can be absorbed. Add mulch to pots that stay too dry all the time. Keep an eye out for sticky masses or crawling insects, leaf spots, or browning tips.

Take action when problems are small, and most houseplants will outlive their pests. Repot plants annually in winter or spring. If you want the jade plant to continue to grow larger, move it up to a pot 1 inch larger each year. Replenish or replace the potting soil, and take cuttings from the pothos to ease the transplant process.

Continued on next page...

*Article from National Gardening
Association website,
August 17th, 2006
In My Garden,
Coastal and Tropical South
By Nellie Neal, Baton Rouge, LA*



Tending Old Friends – Houseplant Care , cont...

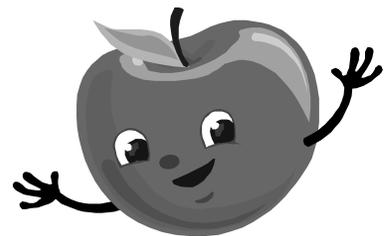
Once a houseplant has reached its potential, or when the Norfolk pine will nearly scrape the ceiling, you can control its growth and still keep it healthy. Repot when water runs right through the pot, indicating the roots have filled the space inside. Slip the plant out of the pot and prune the roots, add new soil, and repot in the same container. Fertilize less as the years go by, but don't stop supplying nutrients entirely. Instead, use a slow-release formula once or twice each year.

Long-lived houseplants are those that appreciate the same conditions as the people who live with them: temperatures between 50 and 80 degrees, sunlight that doesn't blind you, regular watering and feeding, and humidity that keeps your skin supple.

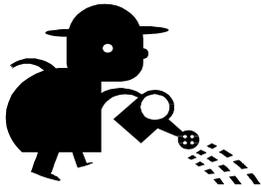
Sautéed Apples

Ingredients:

4 apples
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup butter
Raisins (optional)
Pecans (optional)



Peel, slice and core apples. Toss with brown sugar and sauté in butter until tender. Throw in a few raisins and some pecans, if desired. Simmer for two minutes, then cool slightly.



Effective Watering

- Target the specific areas of the plant that needs water. For most plants this means watering the area of soil around the roots.
- Do not saturate the plant with water because some of the water will evaporate or run off. Water until the soil feels moist.
- Avoid watering in the midday sun because the water will evaporate. The best time to water the garden is early in the morning or evening.
- If possible, use a watering can rather than a hose or sprinkler. It will be easier to target a specific area of the plant.
- To reduce evaporation, don't water when it's windy.
- Watering plants less frequently, but deeply and thoroughly helps them to develop healthy, deep root systems.
- Automatic watering systems should be altered according to the time of day, season and level of rainfall.
- Collect rainwater in a water butt to use later. It is easy to connect one to your existing guttering and downpipes.
- Before planting, dig down deeply into the soil. It is better for water penetration and will increase its moisture-retaining qualities in dry periods.
- Improve your soil by adding organic matter such as compost, manure or leaf-mould. This also increases its moisture-retaining qualities.

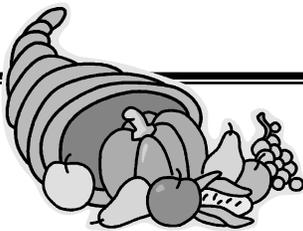
(Article from *BBC-Gardening website*.)

Grow a Pineapple!



Who says you can't eat bromeliads?? It's called the pineapple family, after all, and you can grow one as easily as any other vase type. Slice the crown off a fresh pineapple with about an inch of fruit below it. Put the fruit side down into a shallow dish of water, then watch for roots to show at the base in a few weeks. Pot up the pineapple and grow in a bright, sunny location for about a year, then get ready for the magic: A stem emerges from the center crowned by a baby fruit that matures in several weeks. Trust me, your family and friends will be amazed when you cut and serve it to them.

*(Article from National Gardening Association website, August 3rd, 2006
In My Garden, Coastal and Tropical South
By Nellie Neal, Baton Rouge, LA)*



Time to plant the veggies...

Reports around Houston tell of the rainiest summer gardening season in years. Now's the time to find a place that's not too soaked and put in the fall vegetable garden. Squash, cole crops (broccoli and its mates), and bush beans can be planted now. Wait until next month for greens.



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To Forest West Garden Club Member: