



Arlington Heights garden club

November/December 2016

Growing Together

Carol Elliott, Editor

Marshall Fields Holiday Traditions: A Behind the Scenes Tour

Monday, November 28

Speaker: Amy Meadows

Amy Meadows is the former director of Window Display for Marshall Field's/Macy's and owner of Windows Matter, a retail design and education consulting firm. Amy has extensive experience in both the boardroom and classroom and uses her background in theatrical set design to work with businesses.

Get inspiration for your holiday decorating and learn from a Chicago-land legend. Amy Meadows will provide an armchair tour of the design and execution of the famed animated windows, Main Aisle décor, and the Great Tree with archival images, contemporary photos, and memorabilia.



Greetings from Our President

Thanks for everyone's flexibility as we had the last minute change of venue last month and were at the Fire Station with an enjoyable program on the treasures in Busse Woods. Pete Landwehr is finding out about our club attending a wildflower walk there this spring. Our topic this month on Marshall Field's windows is great with the holidays fast approachin!.

We have coordinated with the Historical Society on a date for our 2017 Garden Walk and Unique Boutique--Sunday, June 25th from 10:00-4:00. We selected a later date in June anticipating that the gardens will have more blooms. Our Ways and Means Chair, Adrienne Martz and I just met to start planning for next year's walk. Our planning meetings will start in January on the second Monday of the month at the Museum from 6-7 p.m. and members take turns providing pizza. Please let Adrienne (adrienne.martz@gmail.com, (248)302-2490) or myself (kshend@aol.com, (847)514-0414) know if you would have an interest in assisting the planning of the Club's largest fundraiser.

As I display my Mosaic Pumpkin on my Thanksgiving table this year, I would like to thank Barb Franks for organizing an enjoyable workshop for club members and friends. Thanks to Josephine Perez for her community spirit of decorating holiday trees on behalf of our club. Please look in the newsletter for the details on volunteering to help and on details about our holiday party in December!

Kathy Hendricksen, President

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November Hostesses

A thank you from Aggie Prochaska, Social Chair, to the Girl Scouts for bringing treats to our November meeting!

Thank you, Girl Scouts!

December Holiday Party

Please be sure to mark your calendars and sign up for the Garden Club's Annual Holiday Party which will be Monday, December 12th at 6:00 p.m. at the Historical Museum. The club provides the main course and drinks, with a potluck of appetizers, salads, and desserts from our members.



GROWING YOUR GARDEN KNOWLEDGE - NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2016

Nov. 18 thru Jan. 2, 2017 - "Illumination" featuring tens of thousands of lights - at Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Ill.

Nov. 25 thru Jan. 2, 2017 - "Wonderland Express" - at Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe, Ill.

Dec. 3 - "Celebrate the Season Holiday Festival and Mistletoe Market" - at Cantigny Park in Wheaton, Ill.

Dec. 12th - Arlington Heights Garden Club Holiday Party at the Arlington Heights Historical Society, 6:00 pm.

Creative Fun at the Mosaic Workshop!



Happy Holidays

Yes, they are coming up and the club will again decorate the trees in the library and the Senior Center. (The Village Hall is already done.) So we need tree decorators. The more helpers we have, the quicker the trees will be decorated.

You do not have to be a member of the artistic Committee to help, just let me know you are coming.

The largest tree is on the first floor of the library near the business center. Five or six helpers are needed and the decorating day is Saturday November 26th at 10:00 AM. The Senior Center Lobby tree will be decorated on Friday November 18th at 10:00 AM and needs four to five workers. We usually have a fun time and get to know each other better. I am looking forward to decorating trees and getting into the holiday spirit!

Jo Perez 847-392-7943.



FORCING WINTER BRANCHES

URBANA, Ill. - Forcing branches allows us to enjoy a burst of color and brighten up our homes in the middle of winter with materials from our own garden, said Kim Ellson, a University of Illinois Extension horticulture educator. "We all keenly await the arrival of spring in those cold and dark winter months, and although we cannot change the seasons, we can enjoy a taste of spring in our homes. Forcing branches is very simple, requires little input, and is very rewarding," she said.

There is something exciting and rewarding about watching branches come to life and display their hidden beauty. Every branch has its own unique beauty and appeal. Early-blooming deciduous trees and shrubs are used for forcing as the buds on these plants have already developed prior to the onset of winter. When trying to distinguish between buds, note flower buds are larger and plumper than leaf buds. Fruit trees have their flower buds on spurs, which resemble short knobby branches.

"It does not have to be solely flowers that are forced; leaves, buds, and catkins are equally attractive," Ellson pointed out. "Some species might have more than one desirable trait." Red maple offers a vibrant display of leaves and flowers. Hazelnut delights with little catkins. Honeysuckle and lilac offer fragrant flowers. Birch has graceful weeping branches and pussywillow has soft fuzzy buds. There is a wide range of plants that are suitable; however, some will break dormancy more readily than others. If you are new to forcing, I would recommend starting with some reliable favorites like forsythia, Cornelian dogwood, red maple, or pussywillow. All these experience bud break in a short period of one to three weeks. As a general rule, the later in the season, the more developed the buds, and the shorter the forcing period as buds are nearing their natural bloom time.

Plant species also affect this time period, with some species taking four to five weeks to break, including crabapple, quince, cherry, and buckeye. Always be informed of each plant species' dormancy requirement to avoid disappointment. This will dictate which plants can be collected in January and which need until February or March to ensure successful forcing. Always seek out healthy material with the most developed buds. Be aware, you are now pruning your shrub, so be mindful not to damage the structure or health of that plant. You do not want an unpleasant surprise once your plants leaf out again. The ideal day to collect branches is when temperatures are above freezing. Bring cut branches indoors and submerge these in warm water. If collecting in freezing temperatures, submerge branches in cold water for a day to avoid shock prior to the warm water. Warm water has less oxygen in it than cold water, and it is crucial to ensure no air pockets enter the stems. Air pockets within stems will disrupt the uptake of water and therefore the success of the blooms.

Make a fresh, clean, slanted cut on the stems, an inch above the original cut, while the stems are still underwater. Split the base of the stem to further aid water uptake and mist branches regularly thereafter to avoid buds drying. You can make your arrangement and have it indoors immediately to enjoy from day one, or you can keep the materials in a cool area until the buds break. Always ensure that branches have ample water and are kept out of direct sunlight. Indoor arrangements can be placed somewhere cool at night to extend their life span. Changing the water regularly will avoid any buildup of bacteria. Ensure that stems stay wet during water changes to avoid air uptake. Preservatives serve to further prolong the longevity of the branches, and these can be purchased or homemade.

So sit back, relax in the comfort of your warm home, and await the beautiful display of color, reassuring us that spring is indeed on its way. --Kim Ellson