



Winter Greenery

Winter 2010

Petite Gardenscapes

Sensible designs for the weekend gardener

Pat Baganz, sole proprietor

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Our newest contributor is Jessie Gwidt, fellow member of the Port Washington Garden Club who recently presented ways to recycle or reclaim “stuff” that might have ended up in the dump. Each craft re-uses items you’ll find around the house or on someone’s curb.

This season’s offering is a holiday swag using pinecones, rope, and small terra-cotta pots. (If you are in southeast Wisconsin and would like a few of the small pots, I have 18 to offer to the first lucky six seekers.) Jessie will have seasonal decorations from “found” items in each Petite Gardenscapes newsletter.

Questions or comment? Contact Pat at pbaganz@voyager.net or at 262-353-6555

Winter Damage Fixes

We’ve had a taste of winter in part of Wisconsin this past week, and we can expect more before it’s over. Wow, that’s so profound! But this article isn’t about slogging through the snow, cursing merrily all the way to April. This is about looking out your window and seeing the damage that a winter storm can bring to your shrubs and trees. Maybe your first impulse is to rush outside and save your precious plantings.

BUT WAIT! Read this first: sometimes instant action can be counterproductive or even dangerous. Remember in First Aid class we were taught NOT to move anyone until we had assessed the injury. So, read on to see what Bonnie Appleton (professor of horticulture at Virginia Tech) has for advice.



finegardening.com

Broken Branches- So the winter storm brought heavy wet snow that broke branches on your tree.

Fix it? Bonnie advises waiting til spring to prune broken twigs and branches back to ¼ in. above a live bud or to the branch collar. This doesn’t apply if the broken branch creates a hazard.

Prevent it? Before winter approaches, look at your trees and remove partially dead or especially weak branches to prevent storm breakage.



finegardening.com

Frost Heave-these past few winters we’ve had times of freezing and thawing that can push shallow-rooted plants out of the ground. Huecheras, which have grown in popularity with the addition of many cultivars, are especially prone to this.

Fix it? Wait until the soil thaws to replant it. If the root ball is small enough, you may be able to push the plant back in the ground without having to get out the shovel.

Prevent it? Using mulch around the plant creates a buffer that in winter reduces the amount of freezing and thawing of the soil.



Namethatplant.wordpress.com

Salt Burn- occurs when the road salt or ice melt we sprinkle on our driveway injures the plants bordering the road or sidewalk causing dried burnt leaf edges. In addition to plant damage, Bonnie says the soil structure can change, causing it to become compacted.

Fix it? Flushing the soil in early spring (applying 2 inches of water over 2-3 hour period and repeating 3 days later) will leach most salt from the soil. If salt spray from the road causes problems, spray water to rinse the branches when the salt is heavy and again in early spring.

Prevent it? Don't pile snow containing salt around susceptible plants. Plant a salt-tolerant hedge to deflect salt spray. Try salt-tolerant selections. Finally, don't use Sodium Chloride as a melting medium- try Calcium Chloride instead).

For more information on the science of how salt damages plants see the Feb. 2009 edition of Petite Gardenscapes newsletter. The article also lists a number of salt-tolerant plants which might fare better near driveways and roadways. As always in Petite Gardenscapes newsletters, the plants are hardy to zone 5. All previous newsletters are available on the Petite Gardenscapes website, www.petitegardenscapes.com

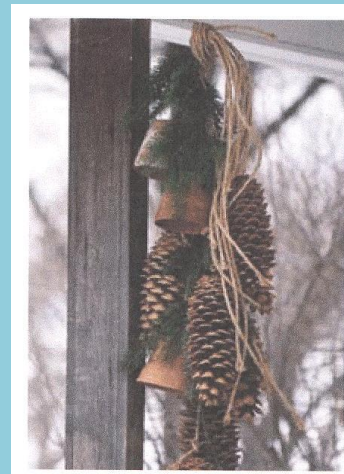
Jessie's Pine Swag

Materials

- 5 or 6 large pinecones
- Drill and drill bits
- Medium gauge florist wire
- Hot glue gun and glue
- 40 feet of rope
- 3 small terra-cotta pots
- Pine boughs

Method:

- Using a 9/64 inch drill bit, drill a hole in the base of each large pinecone. Insert one end of a 4 inch piece of wire into the hole, and secure it with a drop of hot glue.
- Twist the other end of the wire around itself to make a loop.
- Next, cut the rope into 5 foot lengths, one for each pinecone. Thread one length of rope through the wire loop on each cone.
- Cut the remaining rope into three pieces of varying lengths. Knot one end of each piece and thread the remaining end through the hole in the bottom of each terra-cotta pot.
- Gather all the ropes together in your hand and adjust them so the cones and pots hang at different lengths.
- Tie the ropes in a knot.
- Wire evergreens to the ropes along the length of the swag.





Feed the Birds-Tuppence a Bag

By Elizabeth O'Connell , *Ozaukee Gardener*

I enjoy watching the woodpeckers and the birds they flock with during the winter. The chickadees, red- and white-breasted nuthatches and downy woodpeckers all arrive together, filling our bird feeders. We cater to them during the cold weather and our garden reaps the benefits all year.

Woodpeckers, nuthatches and their friends all eat insects, benefiting our plants as they feed themselves and their chicks. In fact we've replaced our plastic tube feeders with roofed hardware cloth cylinders we fill with "woodpecker mix" - nuts, berries and hulled sunflower seed - to make the birds more at home in our yard. This feed is more expensive than the seed mix in the grocery store but much less is wasted. And the open wire sides of the feeders allow the snow to quickly melt away without ruining the food.

We've also installed a covered platform feeder, filling it with seed and chopped suet. The roof keeps the food dry and invites the juncos, ground feeders, to fly up and join the party. Since we removed the old plastic tube feeders this is also a favorite spot for the cardinals and finches. Platform feeders are easy to construct from scrap lumber. Scraps can also be used to make tailboards (wooden surrounds with long tails) for suet cages. The wooden props make it easier for birds that hunt on tree trunks to perch and nibble the suet.



[Etsy.com](#)



www.builderssquare.com

Seed stations can be bird feeders in more than one sense if hawks and other raptors hunt near them so we planted yews, hollies and pagoda dogwoods across the sidewalk from the feeders.

Their evergreen foliage and twiggy branches give the insect eaters a place to hide from predators. As these shrubs have matured the number of birds dining at our feeders has soared. A heated basin atop a large garden pot nearby assures water is available to the birds even on the coldest days.



www.backyardwildlife.com

Since insects make up the bulk of their diets these birds benefit our garden all year long. Beetles, caterpillars and pests like apple borers go down feathered gullets in summer. In the winter the birds continue the hunt for overwintering insects and their eggs on the plant debris in the garden.

What a bargain. I sit inside all winter, comfortable and warm, while the woodpeckers, nuthatches, and chickadees protect my plants. It's only fair to toss them a few snacks and a little water in exchange for their free labor.

You can nourish the local birds without feeders. Keep your old trees, plant native shrubs, and wait to groom your perennial garden until spring - these things provide the birds with food and shelter. Add fresh water in a safe place (bird bath heaters keep water liquid in cold weather) and the basics for survival are in place.

We rake and pick up tree litter, more work than we'd have with a grassy lawn. But when the winter wind howls birds hunt in our garden and entertain us at the feeders. It's a reminder that even the smallest creatures struggle against cold and hardship. How little effort it is to help and how much both birds and gardeners benefit.



Terrarium Teasers

As winter settles in, it seems we yearn for the sight of some fresh and dewy greenery. Houseplants try their best to satisfy us, but the dry indoor climate isn't the friendliest spot for a houseplant.

TADA! It's time to visit P Allen Smith's Garden Home website at www.pallensmith.com/articles/terrarium. He will give complete directions for creating a smally garden in a glass container, such as the one pictured below. Your imagination is the only thing stopping you: an old fishbowl, apothecary jar, large brandy snifter- all are appropriate to use. You'll also need pea gravel and potting soil.



pallensmith.com



blog.gardeners.com

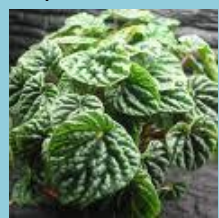
When buying plants, keep in mind that you don't want some that will grow so fast that they will overshadow the others. You also want all the plants to have similar needs in light, moisture, and temperature.

Acorus (Sweetflag)



Ubcbotanicalgarden.org

Peperomia



greenculturesq.com

Creeping Fig



Magnoliagardens.com

Peacock Moss



flickr.com



Ct-botanical-society.org

Stein's Garden Centers in Wisconsin carry a good selection of small houseplants that will help you to create a vibrant garden to tide you over until Spring comes to welcome us outside again



GREEN UP Your Winter Blues

at Port Washington Garden Club's

Gardening Seminar

Saturday, February 26, 2011

At the historic Ozaukee County Courthouse
in downtown Port Washington, WI

Sessions include:

- ***G**etting the Best from Your Backyard Food Garden*
- ***E**xciting Evergreens for Small Gardens*
- ***N**ew Shrubs and Trees for 2011* ***A**dding Natives to Your Landscape*
- ***E**asy Care Roses for the Casual Gardener*
- ***O**rnamental Grasses - Drama for the Modern Garden*
- ***U**nusual Plants for Shade Gardens* ***V**ermiculture: Composting with Worms*
- ***R**over and the Roses: Gardening with Your Pets*
- ***T**he Healthy Gardener: Preventing Joint Damage & Gardening with Arthritis*

for more information, visit

portgardenclub.org

registration opens January 1, 2011

\$25 registration fee is non-refundable - pre-registration required