



Amaryllis
Hippeastrum hybrid

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Petite Gardenscapes

Sensible designs for the weekend gardener

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Special Interest Articles:

- Staying Green in Winter
- Warm and fragrant gifts
- For the Birds



Monthly
features

>Plant disorder of the month

>Bulb of the month

>Timely Tip

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

Staying Green in Winter

After an ugly October and positively balmy November, December is sure to be white. While we're chomping on Christmas goodies, we know we should be eating more greens. Here's the way to keep greens in your kitchen and grow your own tasty salad sprouts.

First, visit your local nursery, and check out the seed racks. You should be able to find parsley and basil seeds that you can start indoors.

To grow herbs, you need sun or good light. Rather than harvesting the whole plant, pull off individual leaves as needed. Below is basil not quite a month old. Rosemary takes longer to germinate, but will come popping out of the ground in a week more or so.

A spicy salad mix of lettuce seeds is ready to eat in 30 days. These can be cut, rather than pulled so they continue to

produce tasty leaves for your salad.

Two days after planting the seeds, they were leaping out of the soil.



Thirty days later, they are ready to taste.



Sprouts are very easy to grow, as long as you remember to rinse them every day for 5 days. An easy way is to use a mason jar and ring with a cheesecloth "lid".



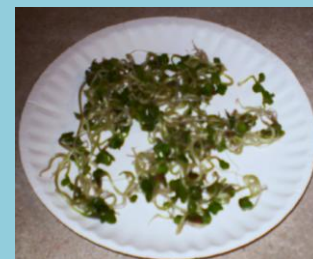
Day One

In 2 days, they were sprouting.



I went on a trip to Chicago to visit my friend Sybil, and my sprout jar came along for the ride.

Two days later and they were ready to harvest.



Day Five- ready to top a salad!

A quick tutorial on starting them can be seen at

www.sproutpeople.com/seed/radish.html



Warm and Fragrant Gifts of the Season

Giving the gifts....

Gifts for yourself and others are easily and economically made at this time of year. One from our Port Washington Garden Club are Simmering Spices which was sold as a Christmas fundraiser, before we got smart and started selling plants, and holding Garden Walks in more salubrious weather. The spice bag, which can be made of a circle of leftover fabric, is wrapped around a snack baggie of dried orange, grapefruit or tangerine peel, cinnamon sticks, whole cloves and a bay leaf. Dumped into a cup of water in a small saucepan, it spreads a Christmas-y fragrance through the air for hours.



Recipe:

A small handful of dried fruit peel (orange, tangerine, or grapefruit, slivered before drying. ½ T whole cloves, 1 cinnamon stick broken into pieces, and 2 bay

leaves. Store in a baggie until ready to use. If you have a simmering pot, add the mix to 1 cup of water. Otherwise, add to a saucepan, set to simmer on your stove.

To make a pretty wrapping, cut fabric into a 9 inch circle. Cut small slits around the edge, 1 inch from top, and thread a colorful ribbon through the slits.



These simmering spice bags make great stocking stuffers or party favors, too.

Corn Bags were a gift to Garden Club members from Bruce and Maggie Barr. After making a bag (sewn on 3 ½ sides, of 1 square foot of pretty colored flannel, they poured about 4 cups of field corn into the bag and sewed the remaining opening shut. Heat in a microwave for 3 minutes, and you have warm and toasty feet, necks or whatever party of you gets chilly. And if

you're one of those people who has trouble falling asleep, put a snuggly warm corn bag at your feet, and you'll be off to dream world in no time.



Corn bags retain heat much longer than rice bags do, because they have more water content in the kernels, and they last a surprisingly long time, like for years! Eventually you will notice that the bag doesn't stay as warm as it used to, or your bag starts to smell like popcorn. That's a sign to find your nearest feed store (In our area, Saukville Feed sells field corn) and start fresh. Although I've made bags for years and never had a problem, some folks have recommended freezing the corn overnight before putting it into the flannel bag to kill any latent bugs that may have crept into the corn.



For the Birds

By Elizabeth O'Connell,



Suet feeders attract woodpeckers and chickadees.

www.jane-domain.com

'The birds....provide great Entertainment on cold Winter days.'

*Elizabeth O'Connell,
monthly contributor and
Ozaukee Gardener
columnist for the
Ozaukee Press*



Triple tube Bird Feeder

www.outblush.com

Even if you've completed your Christmas shopping there's one more gift to put on your holiday list - the neighbors. Not necessarily in the house next door but in your yard. The best way to get free pest control in your garden next spring is to feed downy woodpeckers, nuthatches and chickadees this winter. These birds, along with other year 'round residents, feed primarily on insects and their eggs. They'll help keep pests out of your garden without adding dangerous chemicals - and they'll add beauty and life to the landscape at the same time.

Along with cardinals, these birds all enjoy high calorie snacks like black sunflower seed although the cardinals will eat safflower seed, too. This is excellent for feeders that are plagued by raiding squirrels since they don't like the taste of safflower.

If you put out suet you'll see more woodpeckers and

nuthatches if you use a feeder with a tailboard (an elongated wooden frame). This lets the birds who hunt for insects on tree trunks more comfortably balance on the wood with their tails. Both tube and suet feeders should have covers over them to protect the feed from spoiling in the rain and snow. This not only saves you money on seed but also frequent messy cleanouts.

The birds not only patrol your garden and help control insect populations - they provide great entertainment on cold winter days. So put an extra name on your gift list and remember your garden neighbors this winter.

Cakes for suet feeders can easily be made at home with the following recipe.

Ingredients:

1 cup lard
1 cup crunchy peanut butter
1/3 cup sugar
1 cup of the following:

*whole wheat flour
*cream of wheat
*oatmeal
*2 cups corn meal

optional:

raisins, sunflower seeds, dried fruit bits, egg shells (they provide calcium to help female birds form their own egg shells next year

Directions:

1. line a 9" x 13" layer cake pan with plastic wrap
2. melt the lard and peanut butter in a pan
3. mix in sugar and dry ingredients
4. pour mixture into lined pan and refrigerate until mixture solidifies
5. cut into slabs sized to fit your suet feeder
6. extra slabs may be wrapped in plastic and stored in refrigerator



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
*Petite Gardenscapes Newsletters will
return in Spring, Summer, and Fall
issues in 2010 filled with more tips,
advice, and planting ideas.*



What's Wrong with my Plant?

House plants sometimes fall victim to our enthusiasm in providing enough water for them. The house gets dry and hot in the winter months, so we think we should be generous with the water. That's not always the right solution.

Symptoms: The leaves are the first indication that all is not well: the healthy green color starts to pale and even turn yellow. You might see irregular blotches. Under the soil line, if plants are regularly overwatered, cellular damage shows in brown or discolored tissue and eventually root death.

Waterlogged Plants



realsimple.com

Then, the fungi and bacteria move in!

Solution: Find out the normal watering requirements of the plant. Provide humidity instead by placing the plants on pebble filled trays, and water only as necessary.

"What's Wrong With My Plant?"
Steven Bradley

BULB OF THE MONTH

Amaryllis is our cover bulb with a botanical name of *Hippeastrum* and comes in a wide variety of colors. According to garden guru Melinda Meyers, you can grow this as a houseplant all year long, going outside for the summer, being kept a bit dry in fall in a cool location, which then rewards the gardener with flowers in our dark season. If you'd like to start the bulb, go to

www.amaryllis.com/pac.html
for detailed information

Picture courtesy of
whiteflowerfarm.com