

Village Garden Center

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If you enjoy cooking, and rely all summer on your outdoor herb patch for flavorings, you will also want some pots of herbs indoors in winter. You can grow these with other plants in any sunny window in the house, although the ideal spot is the kitchen, of course, where the herbs will be used. But what if your kitchen windows are sunless, northern exposures like mine? Do you give up on the idea of fresh, home-grown herbs in winter? No way!

To solve my own dull-window-issue, I installed a fluorescent light unit beneath a bank of cabinets, and created a lovely — and prosperous — little herb garden right on my kitchen counter. To raise shorter herbs closer to the light, I set them on glass shelves balanced on inverted pots. Clay pots suit herbs better than plastic ones, and inexpensive “cool white” fluorescents are just as growth-inducing as pricey “full spectrum” or “Gro-Lux” lights.

I’ve found that less than a dozen different herbs make an excellent culinary garden, and whether you grow more than one pot of each depends on your own taste-preference and available space. For the best performance, use young, potted herbs obtained from an herb specialist or a local plant nursery.

Herbs that have grown all summer in the open garden are monster-sized, and surgery is required in order to fit them into smallish pots.

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Providing they neither dry out nor get too hot, herbs make wonderful houseplants. Daily checking of soil is essential, though rarely daily watering. Herbs do not readily recover from drought, however, and constant wetness is lethal. That’s a nice balance to work out, but not an impossible one if you use a well draining soil.

Which herbs shall we grow? Well, I suppose we all want parsley, probably two pots of it, since we snip it not only for flavor but decoration, too. (Don’t be afraid to clip all of your parsley; under lights, the plant will completely renew itself in 2-3 weeks). Then we need chives, cut finely and often for soups, salads, and creamy hors d’oeuvres. Basil is a must for spaghetti sauce; ditto for oregano. Be sure to have a pot of thyme for both stuffing and butternut squash soup, and sage for stuffing and frying. Mint, of course, is the secret to fresh-tasting deserts.



Garden colors in Winter

“Imagine the possibilities!”

Everyone loves flowers, but most trees only bloom for a few weeks out of the year. Those that have attractive summer foliage, fall color and interesting bark offer more than one season of beauty and really earn their keep in the garden.

Winter King Hawthorne

‘Winter King’ hawthorn is a true four-season tree, with flowers in spring, clean summer foliage, showy fruits in fall and winter, and exfoliating bark that adds winter interest. Even though it is a hawthorn, ‘Winter King’ has relatively few thorns and is relatively resistant to common diseases such as rust that plague other hawthorns. It has an attractive upright vase-shaped growth habit in youth that matures to a pleasing horizontally spreading Shape.

The show begins with white flowers early to mid-May. True, they are somewhat malodorous as is the case with other hawthorns, but the flowers are finished in about two weeks and not everyone finds the fragrance that offensive. Summer foliage is dark green to gray-green with a leathery texture, and fall color ranges from yellow-green to golden yellow. The 3/8-inch diameter fruits start out green, then ripen from orange in early fall to bright orange-red in late fall and early winter. They often remain attractive until late winter, and are a late winter food source for songbirds and small mammals. Older branches are silvery-gray and are extremely attractive in the winter sun. The brown-gray bark on the trunks of mature trees exfoliates in thin flakes to reveal the light orange interior bark. ‘Winter King’ hawthorn grows best in full to partial sun and moist, yet well-drained soil. However, this is an extremely adaptable tree and it is tolerant of poor soil, compacted soil, heat and drought, and is not fussy about soil pH, as long as the soil drains well. It grows 20-35 feet tall with a similar spread. ‘Winter King’ can be used as a specimen, focal point, as a mass planting and in borders.



The Red Twig Dogwood



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A Winter Wonder in the Landscape

If you're looking for a shrub that provides year-round interest, the red twig dogwood (*Cornus sericea* formerly *C.stolonifera*) is just the one.

Well known for its amazing bright red stems in winter, the red twig dogwood is also notable for its fast growth. This fast-growing shrub is so named for its deep red stems, which are more pronounced during winter. Once spring arrives, the lightly fragrant and creamy-white blooms begin to appear. These are followed by attractive white berries in summer. The red twig dogwood is a deciduous shrub-meaning its greenish-gray leaves eventually give way to vivid maroon-colored foliage in fall. There is also a lovely variegated form available as well.

In addition to its beauty, the red twig dogwood flourishes in nearly any landscape, growing prolifically in zones 3-8. While the shrub prefers full sun, it tolerates some shade, but growing red twig dogwood in shade reduces its red color in winter so keep this in mind. It can be grown in a wide range of soils and is even drought tolerant once established; however, the shrub is most favorable to moist conditions. This makes it especially suited for woodland or bog-like gardens. Its small stature (4-8 feet tall) also makes this shrub an excellent addition to mixed shrub borders. Likewise, the red twig dogwood can be planted in masses within larger areas of the landscape or left on its own as a specimen planting. With its strong root system, this shrub can be easily transplanted and is also effective for controlling erosion when situated on slopes or banks.

Once established, the red twig dogwood requires little care or maintenance. Although not a requirement, the shrub can be fertilized in early spring. Pruning should be done in late winter, taking about a third of the older branches. While pruning is not necessary for the overall health of red twig dogwood, it's a good way to maximize its red color for winter enjoyment, as the stems are brightest on new growth. Pruning also helps maintain a neat, crisp appearance. As the shrub is quite hardy, overgrown plants can be cut to the ground without any ill effects. The red twig dogwood can also be easily propagated through hardwood cuttings taken in late fall.

Growing this shrub is easy and well worth the extra effort with pruning. Red twig dogwoods should be planted where they can be easily viewed and appreciated throughout the year, but especially during winter. Once the leaves have dropped, this winter beauty begins to take on its peak performance. No more dark, dreary winter days. The stunning red twig dogwood lights up nearly any winter landscape, even more so with a little snow as a winter wonder backdrop.



From the garden of Eva

Pistachio Bundt Cake

Ingredients:

- .1 (18 ounce) package yellow cake mix
- 3 (3 1/2 ounce) packages instant pistachio pudding mix
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 4 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Glaze

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 tablespoon butter or 1 tablespoon margarine, softened
- 2 -3 tablespoons milk

Directions:

- 1 Add the dry cake mix, pudding mixes, water, oil, eggs, and vanilla to a large mixing bowl.
- 2 Beat, using an electric mixer, on low speed for 1 minute.
- 3 Pour batter into a greased 9-inch bundt pan.
- 4 Bake at 350° for 60-70 minutes or until a wooden pick comes out clean.
- 5 Cool for 10 minutes in pan; then turn out onto a wire rack to let cool completely.
- 6 In a small bowl, mix together the glaze ingredients until smooth.
- 7 Drizzle over cake



Blueberry Dump Cake

- 1 Box yellow cake mix
- 4 cups fresh blueberries
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/2 cup butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
2. Mix berries, sugar, and cinnamon in the bottom of a 9 x 13 inch pan. Cover berries with dry cake mix. Pour butter over cake mix, do not stir.
3. Bake for 30 minutes, or until light brown. Serve warm or cold. top with ice cream.



Sweet Gum Ball Wreath

Items you'll need:

a lot of gum balls

clippers to cut stems

glue gun with a lot of glue sticks

a wreath form you can also use a foam form

burlap, ribbon or fabric to make a hanger

1 .Gather up a lot of sweet gum balls.

2 .Clip off all the stems.

3 .Bake the gum balls in the oven at 200 degrees for about 10 minutes. This is to make sure there isn't anything living in the holes.

4. Cut material into strips and wrap it around the form. (I used a straw wreath form, but a foam one would work as well)

I used black burlap since I had it leftover from another project. I suggest you use a dark color unless you plan to spray paint your finished wreath.

I have done some and sprayed them gold.



5 .Dab hot glue on the form and placed the ball on top of it. Continue this process until the form is completely covered — dozens of gum balls later

6 .Make a hanger using burlap, ribbon or fabric. I tied the brown burlap around the wreath to make a rustic hanger



Sprayed gold

Sweet gum wreath

Or green.

Imagine the

Possibilities!



Living with Nature

Cardinals



The Cardinal is probably one of the most recognizable and popular backyard birds because of its brilliant red color and crested head. It is a great bird to admire year-round. The color contrast of the brilliant red against fresh white snow really is a high point during the winter months. Early settlers were said to have named this bird after the Cardinals of the Catholic Church who wore red robes.

Both sexes are accomplished songsters and may be heard at any time of year. Cardinals will mate for life and remain together throughout the entire year. That's why you will usually see a male and female together at your feeding station.

Cardinals are not migratory. Their bright plumage brings color to our yards during the winter when many other species have flown south. In winter, most cardinals flock and roost together but, at other times of the year, they are quite territorial. In flocks, males dominate females when feeding. It is also nice to hear a pair calling to each other in late winter or early spring.

About 90% of the Cardinal's food consists of weed seeds, grains, insects, fruits, and sunflower seeds. They prefer seeds that are easily husked.

Cardinals are less selective during winter in the colder climates. Cardinals also drink maple sap from holes made by sapsuckers.

Cardinals range from 8 to 9 inches long, with a wingspread of 10-1/4 to 12 inches across. The adult male is bright red with a black face and red bill.

The adult female is buff-brown with a red tinge to the crest, wings, and tail. Like the male, the face is black and the bill orange.

Male and female Cardinals both sing. Songs are loud, beautiful whistled phrases. Some songs you may hear sound like "whoit whoit whoit" and "whacheer whacheer." These songs are used in forming territories and in courtship. Male and female cardinals use "chirps" as contact calls and alarms. They also have many visual displays such as "tail-flicks" to signal alarm. The crest may be raised and lowered. Strongly territorial, males will fight other males, along with their own reflection in windows!

Create a dense hedge or thicket around your backyard. Cardinals are especially fond of roosting and nesting in honeysuckle thickets. Provide open areas with trees and berry producing shrubs such as mulberry, blueberry, grape, and dogwood. At feeding stations, they prefer unhulled black-oil sunflower seeds over all other foods. They will also eat

safflower, cracked corn, white proso millet, bread, nutmeats and peanut butter mixes.

Offer a source of water for drinking and bathing.

Cardinals are also called "redbirds," "Virginia nightingales," or "the state bird" due to the seven states in the United States that name the cardinal their state bird.

These states are Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, North Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia.



How to Care for Arborvitae, the tree of life

Arborvitae is truly the “tree of life.” To the early Indians, and the first French explorers with whom they shared their knowledge of natural medicines, arborvitae meant vitamin C and a cure for scurvy. To the new home owner today, it is a quick hedge and a foundation planting to soften the corners of houses.

For a tree like this, what could be more appropriate than the name arborvitae, a Latin form of the French, “l’arbre de vie,” or “tree of life”? Linnaeus, the Swedish botanist who assigned the Latin name to this species, picked up on other traits. The genus name, Thuja, is from a Greek word for perfume. Squeezing the evergreen leaves releases an aroma that is nothing less than nature’s perfume.

The native North American tree, America Arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*), was useful in early canoes and medicines and became the first North American tree to be introduced to Europe. The specific name, *occidentalis*, means “west,” the direction from Sweden where this tree was discovered.

Tree Care Tips

Arborvitae is a tough and versatile tree – an urban survivor. It can withstand compaction, most common kinds of air pollution, and a range of soils. It can be planted in tight, narrow spaces in a landscape where height is needed, and adapts well to shearing and shaping. However, for a good to fast growing tree of up to 2 feet per year, it is necessary to plant this species within its preferred range of conditions.

Conditions to Maximize Tree Growth Rate

- Soil that is moist, rich and deep, but well drained; loam or sandy loam
- pH of 6.0 (slightly acidic) to 8.0 (alkaline)
- Full sun if rapid growth is important, but will tolerate shade
- Geographic regions with high humidity

Potential Problems

- In times of drought, tree watering is important.
- Young landscape trees will need protection from deer in many areas.
- Pest and Disease Problems: Bagworms are sometimes attracted to this species, but can be removed by hand in winter, or controlled with a biological pesticide.
- In forest or land development situations, large openings can lead to windthrow due to its shallow root system.
- Protection from fire is a ‘must’ except from very old trees



Emerald Green Arborvitae



Green giant
Arborvitae



Thyme in the Garden

Facts on Lenten Rose



Overview

Although its name would lead you to believe otherwise, the Lenten rose is not a rose, but a member of the genus Hellebore. Its name derives from its flowers' resemblance to small roses, and the fact that its blooming season is very early, coinciding with the pre-Easter season of Lent. A member of the buttercup family, the Lenten rose is native to parts of Europe and Asia, and hardy from zone 9 to zone 4.

History

Hellebores were mentioned in medieval medical texts as a treatment for worms and as a purgative. Gerard, the author of a famous 1633 English herbal, notes that Hellebores were to be found in many a London garden. He also mentions two species found growing wild in English countryside. It is possible that these were introduced as early as the 4th century A.D. by members of the Roman legions.

Description

In late winter, new evergreen leaves emerge along with a flowering stem which produces several 2 1/2-inch flowers. The flowers are extraordinarily long-lasting, persisting for six to eight weeks. Flowers are in shades of white and pink, changing color during their long bloom, with white flowers turning more greenish, and pink flowers becoming a deep, rosy tan. A mature plant forms a clump about 24 to 30 inches wide, and nearly as tall, and can produce dozens of flowers.

Culture

Lenten rose like well-drained, fertile soil. To provide the best drainage, a slope or hillside is ideal. In warmer areas, they prefer to be shaded by deciduous trees, but in colder areas will tolerate more sun. They are quite drought tolerant, requiring little extra watering once they are established. The foliage is evergreen, but when the new leaves emerge in late winter, it is best to tidy the plant by trimming off the old ones. The leaves can cause a mild skin irritation, so gloves are recommended when handling this plant.

Uses

Both the flowers and leaves are poisonous, making the Lenten rose a good choice in gardens where deer grazing is a problem, since they will not bother it. The University of Illinois Extension Service recommends Lenten rose as both a specimen plant and as a ground cover planted en masse. It makes a good companion for other early-emerging perennials such as bleeding heart, trillium and ferns.



Happy New Year

Thank you for your business in 2012.

It has been a pleasure helping you reach your goals. We are grateful for good customers like you, who make our work satisfying and enjoyable.

We look forward to working with you in 2013 and contributing to your Landscape projects.

We wish you a prosperous and happy new year!

Village Garden Center

HAPPY
NEW
YEAR