

Dunesland Latest Dirt



PRESIDENTS' POINTS

Where to begin? At the end? Yes, it's finally the end of the old year that brought us so much turmoil and turned our lives upside down. So let's happily wave good-bye to 2020 and look forward expectantly to 2021.

There is much hope in the air now with vaccines on the horizon so that we will be able to once again meet with our friends and family. It may not be right away, but that time is coming!



As gardeners we are always looking forward—to trying that new plant, to starting seeds for the garden, to rearranging what we have in a more pleasing or fruitful way and of course to the harvest, whether it be blooms or food.



With that in mind, this month we are thinking of ways to repurpose the old year with its lessons and remnants into useful experiences to guide us forward. We can use up old items, rework our garden plans and figure our way onward. The club staff is working hard to keep IDGC relevant for you. We are planning more videos and workshops (*virtually at the moment*) as well as timely articles for the newsletter. We look forward to holding meetings again in person in a few months.

So now let us look to 2021 with hope; with expectation; with gratitude for a year with beautiful blooms and full harvests that we can share with each other.

Sandi Shea

Let us begin anew.

We are all in this together.

If anyone needs a bit of computer advice or assistance

Let us know.

If you don't know how to access Facebook or our website,

We can answer your questions.

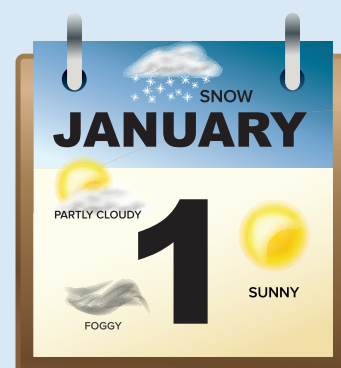
Let's all do this.

Let's find creative ways.

Let's stay in touch with one another!

ISSUE 5

January 2021

WEATHER FOLKLORE
FOR JANUARY

Fog in January brings a wet spring.

A favorable January
brings us a good year.

If grass grows in January,
it will grow badly the whole year.

A summerish January,
a winterish spring.

JANUARY
BIRTHDAYS

Ruthann Davis	5
Judy Anderson	13
Ruth Serdar	17
Janet Melin	24
Suzanne Raiden	27

You can also find news on
our Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/
illinoisduneslandgardenclub](https://www.facebook.com/illinoisduneslandgardenclub)



PRESIDENTS' POINTS

It's January so there's no gardening to be done now, right? After all there is snow on the ground... so, no gardening. Wrong!

Now is the time to get those seed and plant catalogs. There are lots of seed catalogs out there including exclusively heirloom seeds. You can also find native plant and seed catalogs.

Some of the well known seed businesses are [Burpee](#), [Gurney's Seeds](#), [Johnny's Selected Seeds](#), [Park Seeds](#), [Harris Seeds](#), [John Scheepers](#) and [Heirloom Seeds](#). Most catalogs are free for the asking. A couple of native seed and plant companies are [Prairie Moon Nursery](#) and [Missouri Wildflowers Nursery](#).

If you want native trees, shrubs or bushes, try the [Missouri Department of Conservation](#). They sell their seedlings in bundles of 10, 25 and 100 with prices starting at 90 cents each. At that price you can plant several in each spot and when they grow, cull out the weaker plants. My daughter bought some of these. They came as one-foot tall sticks that she planted in the spring and grew to 3 foot bushes by fall.

So January is the month to: 1) send for the catalogs, 2) make a list of the seeds and plants you would like to try, and 3) draw a diagram of your garden and where you want to put all the plants that you are going to grow this spring and summer.

Next month we'll talk about starting those seeds. Check out [Beth's Corner](#) for some tips for reusing some of those pretty colorful Christmas cards you receive each year, instead of recycling them.

Beth Dermody

Anyone who thinks gardening begins in the spring and ends in the fall is missing the best part of the whole year; for gardening begins in January with the dream.

Josephine Neuse

RE-BLOOMING

While the 2020 holidays were unlike any others in memory, one tradition in our home endured. Celebrated every year on the day after Christmas, it's called [Wing Chair Day](#). I highly recommend you plan one for yourself.



The idea arrived years ago. Faced with a marathon run of shopping, wrapping, cooking and entertaining, I would add a library visit to the To Do List. There I would scoop up an armload of reading prospects. Because the focus was on relaxing, many of the books were loaded with pictures. And as we all know, the best picture books are about gardening.

Stacked next to my favorite chair, they would stand sentinel, the silent cheerleaders in the corner. "Keep going." "Enjoy the journey." "A reward for your effort awaits." On December 26, our five boys happy with new toys and the fridge stocked with leftovers, I would settle in. Bliss!

Ironically, this could become [Wing Chair Winter](#) as we ride out the Covid-19 storm. As The Barefoot Contessa is fond of saying, "How bad could that be?" Day after day to think, to learn, to plan, to dream? Serve it up!



Just as the pandemic has challenged us to consider what matters most in life, this winter offers the possibility to rethink our gardens and what they mean to us. Let's embrace it. Whether through books, magazines, the Internet, garden visits, conversations with friends and more, inspiration is all around us. Enjoy the journey. A reward for your effort awaits.

Jan LaBelle

WINTER PLANTING – Milkweed Seeds



Milkweed seeds can be started in the winter and basically left alone until they're almost ready to transplant.

For us, late January or February planting should give plenty of time for cold stratification.

You will need containers. Gallon milk jugs or distilled water jugs work great, but you can also use 2 liter soda bottles or even large box lettuce containers. Make sure you have thoroughly rinsed them clean and label them with a permanent marker.

1. Poke or drill holes in the bottom for drainage—about 4 to 8 quarter inch holes. If you're using fruit or vegetable boxes, poke holes the top also.
2. Draw a line around the container about 4" up from the bottom.
3. Cut along this line on 3 sides leaving one side for a hinge. Don't use the handle side for the hinge side. Keep it straight because you're going to tape it closed.
4. Add about 4 inches of potting soil that has been well wetted. Do not use soil with moisture beads because it sometimes causes poor germination or stays too wet for this method.
5. Plant your seeds by placing them individually or sprinkle them. Press them down lightly, then cover with about ¼" of soil.
6. Close your container and seal the seam securely with duct tape.
7. Leave the caps off (so that rain or snow naturally waters them) and set them outside where they get a few hours of sun each day. If they are in an area where the wind could blow them over or animals disturb them, stake them down or put rocks or bricks around the bottom of the container.
8. Just let them rest till spring. Then make sure there is some condensation in the jug. If not, dig them down into the soil and water the soil around it so that water seeps up from the drainage holes.
9. Once you have seedlings, you may need to move the container to a better spot until it's time to transplant to their final location.

<https://monarchbutterflygarden.net/winter-sowing-milkweed-seeds-checklist/>

TREASURER'S REPORT 2021



As Treasurer of the Garden Club, the last time I had an opportunity to present the Treasurer's Report was back in March for the month of February 2020. Thankfully our bank account was strong.

When everything came to a halt, there was great concern not so much about income but about not retaining our membership and keeping the club going. A very big Thank You to everyone for sending in your dues and taking advantage of our 2 year special. We have 70 paid memberships that are good through spring of 2022. Our club remains strong because of you.

If you would like to view the Treasurer's Reports for the rest of 2020, they can be found on our website. Thank you so much for your continued support of our wonderful club.

Dolores Mink

MIDWEST MONTHLY GARDENING

January is usually spent recovering from the holidays and taking down decorations. In the gardening world it's a time to really get to know your garden, to plan for next year and to dream what could be. Like everyone, you've tried plants and they either were a great success or a complete failure. But there's always surprises. So this month let's mix it up by exploring and learning something along the way.

Planning

You should have been getting seed, nursery and bulb catalogues. If not, order those right now. It's best to buy seeds early because many times the one seed you want may be sold out by the time you make up your mind. Look at sources online or visit a local botanic garden for ideas. Our Chicago Botanic Garden has so much information on the best annuals, perennials, grasses, trees and shrubs for our area. That advice will help you make good decisions on how to buy or care for plants. Take a walk through the Chicago Botanic Garden to get ideas. In winter it is easier to notice the "bones" or structure (trees, shrubs, garden beds, arbors, walkways, garden ornaments) which is the starting point for any garden, then incorporate those elements into your own. By taking time to learn about gardening you can be even more successful.

Recycling live Christmas Trees

If you've put up a live Christmas tree you can recycle it in several ways. There is a whole article on the next page with ideas!

Shoveling

When clearing driveways or walks try to distribute the snow loads equally so garden beds, shrubs and trees aren't damaged. Use only a potassium or calcium based product on walkways to prevent slippery surfaces BUT make sure you put it down after you have shoveled. Sand (in moderation) is another good alternative to any sodium based product. Salt based products harm not only garden beds but also pets and wildlife. Just remember whatever product you use will be thrown onto your beds or lawn along with the snow the next time you shovel.



Monitoring your Garden

Continue to take walks around your garden throughout the winter even when there is snow on the ground. You can then see any signs of damage from animals such as rabbits or deer. A sure sign of voles is tunnels in the snow which means the voles are eating the base of your plants. Clear off heavy snow on evergreens and shrubs so branches don't bend so badly they break off. Also clear away any broken or fallen branches in the yard.

Pruning

It is NOT time to prune your trees or shrubs. We haven't had enough freezing temperatures for trees or shrubs to go dormant, so hold off until possibly February or March.

Indoor Plant Care

Most houseplants require less water and very little fertilizer because of slow growth during this semi-dormant winter time. You will know when to water by putting your finger into the soil to test for dryness or if you notice leaves drooping. Don't allow plants to sit in water. After watering thoroughly allow time for dripping then throw away excess water in the trays. Monitor for pests, such as spider mites, scale, mealybugs, whitefly and fungus gnats. Eliminate the problem immediately. New plants or plants brought indoors from outside should be isolated before bringing them in contact with your regular houseplants to prevent pest problems.



Seed Starting

While it's not time to start seeds, it is time to check out your seed starting equipment. Look at your light system, heating elements, seed trays, starter soil, transplant containers, etc. Repair or replace as needed so everything is ready to go.

Tools & Equipment

If you haven't already sharpened, cleaned, repaired or replaced tools or equipment you have lots of indoor time to do it now.

April is a horticulturist retired from the Chicago Botanic Garden. She shares monthly gardening tips and would love to help you out with plant and gardening questions. Just [send her an email](#) and she will get back to you.

WAYS TO REPURPOSE CHRISTMAS TREES

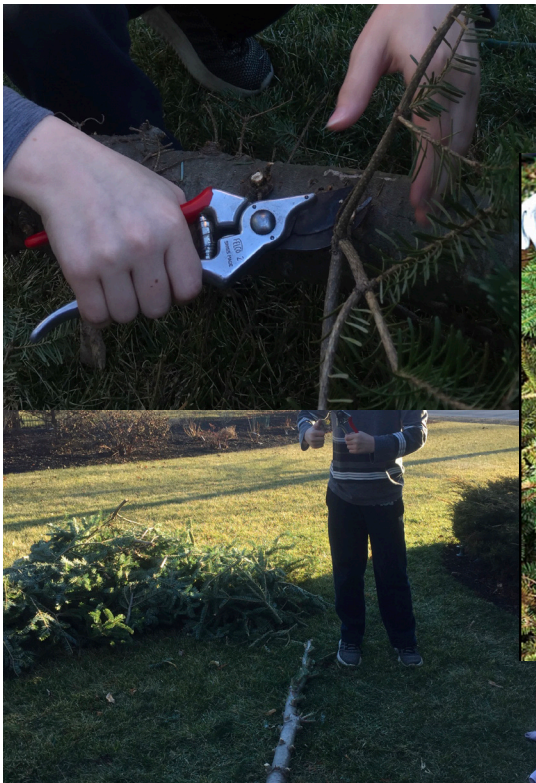
Christmas trees can be put to good use after the holidays. Here are some tips for repurposing a tree. Begin by removing all decorations, including tinsel. *And of course, don't do this with an artificial tree!*

The first thing is to get it out of the house. Dragging a no-longer-fresh Christmas tree outside after the holidays is a messy and miserable task in freezing Midwestern winters. Depending on your later use, here is one method: Bring in a clean tarp and pruning loppers. With the tarp next to the stand, cut off each branch and stack it on the tarp. Then pull up the four corners and slide the tarp out of the house so that the branches can be used later. After that, loosen the tree in the stand and it becomes easy to lift the lightweight trunk out, set the wet base in a plastic bag and carry it out to the curb.

For some uses the whole tree is needed. That requires forethought. Put an old sheet on the floor before bringing in the tree. Place the tree on top of the sheet, stand and all. It can then be rolled up under the skirt to hide it and pulled out when de-decorating to catch any old needles. Pull it up around the tree and slide the whole thing out without scattering needles all over the floor.

Here are a few ways to put that old tree to good use:

- Re-decorate it with treats for wild birds. Leave the tree in its stand or stand it in a large planter with rocks or sand to steady it. Put it on a deck, porch or patio and decorate it with orange halves, pine cones slathered with peanut butter, suet cakes and small bird feeders.
- If your yard borders woods or another type of wild area, lay a de-decorated tree near or in it. Birds, chipmunks, mice and other small animals can use it for cover from predators and harsh weather.
- Compost it. Be sure to shred it into wood chips before you add it to the pile. It is not true that conifer needles or other parts will acidify your compost.
- Cut branches and loosely place them over "evergreen" perennials in your garden that tend to get ratty over the winter, such as coral bells (Heuchera) or pigsqueak (Bergenia). Remove in earliest spring.
- Cut a branch or two and hang them above a bird feeder, creating a protective roof for the birds as they feed.
- Use branches that are still fresh as filler in the New Year's flower arrangements.



Christmas Card Ornaments

Don't throw away those gorgeous Christmas cards that you got this year (actually last year, now). Let's make something with them instead of putting them in the recycle bin.

These crafts are very easy. All you need are some colored craft sticks, scissors, glue (I used tacky glue), toothpicks (wood or colored) and Christmas cards.

1. Cut the picture that you want to frame in the size that you want.
2. Glue the craft sticks to the outside edges of the picture overlapping the corners. If you want your ornament smaller you will need to cut the craft sticks to size.
3. Allow the ornament to dry.
4. Turn the ornament over and cut another picture to the same size and glue to the back of the ornament. This will make the ornament double sided.
5. Repeat step 2.
6. Add a gold string to the middle of the top craft stick to hang the ornament.



Toothpick Ornaments

1. Cut the picture in a house shape.
2. Glue the toothpicks to the outside edges of the picture, overlapping the ends of the toothpicks, crossing the top toothpicks in the middle of the picture (point).
3. You may need to trim the side pieces a little to fit the house shape. You can use heavy duty scissors for this step.
4. Stack the toothpicks at least 3 high to make the stable or house.
5. Place the top toothpicks over the edge of each side wall to make an overhang on the roof.

Have some left over raw cranberries? Well, here is a recipe to use them...

Cranberry Nut Bread

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2 cups sifted all-purpose flour | 1 cup sugar |
| ½ teaspoon salt | 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder |
| ½ teaspoon baking soda | 1 cup chopped walnuts |
| 1 cup whole raw cranberries | 2 tablespoons vegetable oil |
| Hot water | 1 tablespoon grated orange peel |
| ½ cup orange juice | 1 egg, slightly beaten |

Heat oven to 325 degrees.

1. Grease a loaf pan.
2. Sift flour, sugar, salt, baking powder and baking soda into a large bowl.
3. Combine walnuts with cranberries in a small bowl; take ½ cup of the flour mixture and toss it with the cranberries and walnuts.
4. Put oil in a measuring cup; fill with hot water to measure ¾ cup.
5. Mix oil and water with orange peel and juice.
6. Stir into the flour mixture with the egg.
7. Gently stir in the cranberry-walnut mixture.
8. Turn into a prepared loaf pan.
9. Bake for 1 hour or until a cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean.

Remove from pan to a wire cake rack. Let cool completely. Wrap in aluminum foil and store overnight before slicing.

Makes 1 loaf.

