



TAG TALK

November 2020

President's Message.....Olivia Ford

The Art of Thanksgiving

The art of thanksgiving is gratitude in action.

The sharing of one's personal bounty.

In thankfulness for your talents and abilities, invest them for the common good.

In thankfulness for opportunities to act, accept them as challenges for achievement.

In thankfulness for happiness, strive to make others happy.

In thankfulness for inspiration, try to be an inspiration to others.

In thankfulness for the beauty of this world, help to make it more beautiful.

This is why we exist as a Garden Club!!

Happy Thanksgiving to everyone!!

*By C. June Bryant-Porterfield
Garden Club*



In these uncertain times, I think that we need a little or a lot of inspiration! I'm really sorry that we cannot meet and all be together. However, we WILL Keep Safe and evaluate each month as we go along. I remain hopeful that we can meet soon.

We are now making our community more beautiful with our decorations. Thank you to everyone for your participation and especially to Barbara Holmes and her helpers.

President, Olivia Ford

Birding.....Dick Phillips

Northern Cardinal

The Northern Cardinal is a mid-sized songbird in the genus *Cardinalis*. It is also known as the redbird, common cardinal, red cardinal, or just cardinal (which was its name prior to 1985). You can find Northern Cardinals in dense shrubby areas such as forest edges, overgrown fields, hedgerows, marshy thickets and ornamental landscaping. Cardinals nest in dense foliage and they look for conspicuous, fairly high perches for their singing. Originally found more in the southern U.S., the growth of towns and suburbs through the eastern U.S. has introduced the cardinal from Texas to Maine, and south through Mexico, Belize and Guatemala. The male Northern Cardinal is perhaps responsible for getting more people to open up a field guide than any other bird. They are a perfect combination of familiarity, conspicuousness, and style – a shade of red most of us can't take our eyes off of. Even though the females are brown, they have a sharp crest and warm red accents. Cardinals typically don't migrate and they don't molt into a dull plumage, so they're still colorful year round.

One of the most popular birds in the U.S., the Cardinal is the official state bird of no fewer than seven eastern states. Abundant in the southeast, it has been extending its range northward for many years, and it now can be found on bright winter days as far north as southeastern Canada.



The Northern Cardinal is a mid-sized songbird with a body length of 8 – 9 inches, and it has a distinctive crest on the head and a mask on its face, which is black in the male and gray in the female. The male is a vibrant red, whereas the female is a reddish olive color. The northern cardinal is primarily granivorous (feeds on grains), but it also feeds on insects and fruits. The male cardinal behaves territorially and will protect its nesting site and female cardinals from other males in a vigorous fashion. Cardinals will compete with cat birds and

mockingbirds for nesting sites. Cardinals typically will live for 3 years in the wild, although several individuals have had life spans of 13 to 15 years. The known longevity record for a captive northern cardinal is 28.5 years!

Black oil sunflower seeds, white milo and safflower seeds are among a northern cardinal's favorite seed options. They also enjoy eating crushed peanuts, cracked corn and berries. During the winter, small chunks of suet is another cardinal favorite.

Finally, northern cardinals are named for the male's brilliant red plumage, which reminded European settlers of the rich red vestments of Catholic cardinals.

Horticulture.....Ann Clayton, Rosemary Kratz

HORTICULTURAL NOTES FOR NOVEMBER/DECEMBER BY ANN CLAYTON

How rewarding to have such wonderful Fall weather, enabling us to have the pleasures of the fall flowers and foliage. We sure do need our time outside and forget the trials and tribulations of the present lifestyle we are having to endure. Try planting lettuce seeds, parsley, thyme, rosemary, sage, oregano and cilantro in pots by the back door, in a sunny, windless spot.

SASANQUA CAMELLIAS These vigorous and hardy camellias in bloom right now are excellent choices for hedges or specimens. Flowers may be single or double in range of colors from white to pink to red. Prefer partial shade and acid soil. The flowers are attractive when floated in shallow bowls. When you cut them to bring into the house check for the tea scale, which appears as white patches on the undersides of the leaves. Horticultural oil is good for control. Coat the leaves entirely.

MAGNOLIA is the quintessential Southern Christmas greenery; use it generously to create good looking holiday decorations. Soak them in fresh water overnight once you have brought them indoors. Cut tips 4 or 5 inches long and arrange down the full length of your table as you would a fabric runner. Add candles, golden or silver ribbon, nandina berries or ruby colored apples for attention. Out of water the magnolia leaves stay fresh and supple for about 5 days, then they begin to dry and curl.

POINSETTIA *Euphorbia pulcherrima* A few reminders with regard to this popular Christmas Plant. Potted plants should be placed in good light, out of direct sun and out of the way of drafts and PETS. Soil should be evenly moist. Water well about twice a week when the dirt feels dry. Best to remove the foil wrap and place the container into a decorative pot (don't forget, hole in bottom) !!!! better drainage. Don't fertilize poinsettias. **IMPORTANT NOTE** The latex sap of Poinsettias can cause nausea, diarrhea, vomiting and irritation if swallowed. Skin contact will cause irritation to the skin.

Horticulture continued on following page....



Horticulture continued....

Did you know there is also a **THANKSGIVING CACTUS** , turns out that must be what I had last year. It is beginning to produce numerous buds again, just in time for Thanksgiving. They have slightly different leaf segments, it likes moist soil when it's actively growing and blooming and slightly dry soil when it's not. Again good drainage.

Looking back on my successes in the year 2020 I would say my top 4 plants, all of which I moved to my new home in pots or as seeds were astonishing. **Roses, Morning Glory, Datura and Pineapple Sage**. Months of beautiful blossoms. All still flowering. **DATURA** (botanical name is Stramonium,) it is in the same family as **Angels Trumpet** (Brugmansia, is its botanical name) it is poisonous. My Datura grew into a bush this Summer and Fall, surrounding my drive-way lamp. A mass of purple and white trumpet flowers, never ending. Full sun, fertile soil and regular watering. During winter they sustain themselves with adequate moisture. Cut back erratic stems and fertilize again in Spring. **PINEAPPLE SAGE** I kept in it's pot. The leaves smell like pineapple, it grows to medium height and is covered in bright red flowers, looks like a purple salvia/sage flower) Another great plant. All perennial.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO YOU ALL - STAY SAFE - HAVE FUN

ANN C.



Jr Gardeners.....Sandy Stern

During the Covid-19 pandemic, while schools were closed and/or in hybrid learning mode, the **Jr. Garden Club** has been unable to meet.

However, TAG and school volunteers were granted permission to go in to work on cleaning out both the Korosi Vegetable Garden and the Butterfly Garden. On two such occasions, Ann Clayton, Sandy Stern and Beth Cooler (parent volunteer) worked for hours emptying out the vegetable beds, weeding, pruning and discarding debris.

One afternoon, we were lucky when four students during recess time in the courtyard helped with the garden project. They all wore masks, enjoyed the hour and asked if they'd be able to join in and help us once again when **The Avid Gardeners** planned to return.

We appreciated their help and enthusiasm and look forward to the time when our **Jr. Garden Club** will be re-established.





Holiday Decorations for Neighborhood Signs

Thanks to all of our members who are helping decorate the neighborhood signs for the upcoming holidays. I know how much I enjoy driving around the plantation during the holidays and seeing how much our efforts add to the festive atmosphere. And this year, especially, it's so important to keep our holiday traditions in place, as long as we all can remain safe.

As a reminder, your decorations need to be in place by Thanksgiving. You don't need to have the lights plugged in as Maintenance will do that for us the day after Thanksgiving.

You can remove the decorations anytime between January 1st and 5th. You should return the decorations to the Plantation House on Wednesday, January 6th, anytime between 10 a.m. and noon.

Many, many thanks to my wonderful and fun committee members: Louise Gorny, Mary Ann Snyder and Jan Fatzinger!

Barbara Holmes,
Committee Chair

Healthy Eating.....Anna Broecker

CRANBERRY JALAPENO DIP

12 oz fresh, uncooked cranberries
 1/4 cup green onion
 1-2 fresh jalapeño peppers
 2 Tbsp. cilantro (optional)
 3/4 to 1 Cup sugar (according to taste)
 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
 1/8 tsp. salt
 16 oz. cream cheese (whipped)

Instructions

Use hand food chopper to chop cranberries. (It is best to not use a food processor to chop these as the cranberries liquify too much.)

Chop green onion, jalapeño peppers and cilantro. In a medium-sized bowl, add chopped cranberries, green onion, cilantro and jalapeños.

Add sugar, lemon juice and salt on top of cranberry mixture and stir gently until blended. Cover with plastic wrap and place in refrigerator overnight.

Take cranberry mixture out of the refrigerator and stir all ingredients together. Strain out all liquid using a colander with small holes.

Whip softened cream cheese with hand mixer until smooth (about 2 minutes) and spread cream cheese over bottom of a pie plate or 9x9 dish.

Pour cranberry mixture atop cream cheese and keep in refrigerator until ready to serve.

Serve with Ritz crackers and enjoy!





Deadline for submitting articles for this newsletter is the second Sunday of the month.

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