

Flamborough Horticultural Society



December 2021 Newsletter

President's Message

Greetings Members

On behalf of the Board we extend a warm welcome to new members in November, Janine Belzak and Kathryn Spiwak.

Thankyou to those of you who were able to attend our AGM at Connon Nursery. The air vibrated with people happy to finally see one another. The fragrance of greenery made it all the better. Paul Zammit put on a lively PowerPoint presentation followed by a demonstration of Urn and wreath decorations. Though a bit difficult for Zoom attendees, Paul did his best to show the demonstration on Zoom with only the laptop camera. A special thank you goes to Arie Vanspronsen for being available to help Paul select and purchase greenery products and to Connon's for providing such a lovely venue.

The President's Award went to Roxanne Riley and Connie Godyn for their leadership and volunteerism in Co-chairing both the Speaker Series and Plant Sale Committees.

The Board also recognized Annamary Kilham with an award for her continued behind-the-scenes help with other committees, her years of chairing the Caring Committee, and taking care of so many others in need. The Society is only as strong as active members, so please consider volunteering on a committee.

On Saturday Nov. 27, several Society Members helped Past President Rosemary Brown celebrate her 100th birthday with her two sisters, four daughters and other family and friends. Rosemary had her much-deserved Award Certificate at the entrance table. For the occasion, Rosemary made a lovely water colour of a chickadee and had it printed onto bookmarks as mementos for attendees. Her cake in the shape of "100" was delicious. It was also nice for me to see members who are not able to use Zoom technology. Below are photos of Rosemary with her gift from the Society and at her celebration.

Best wishes and have a great December.

Susan MacMillan



Meeting and Speaker Information

Pam MacDonald, Halton Master Gardener.

Topic: Evolution of a Garden

January 2022

Date: Wed., Jan. 19

Time: **7 pm**

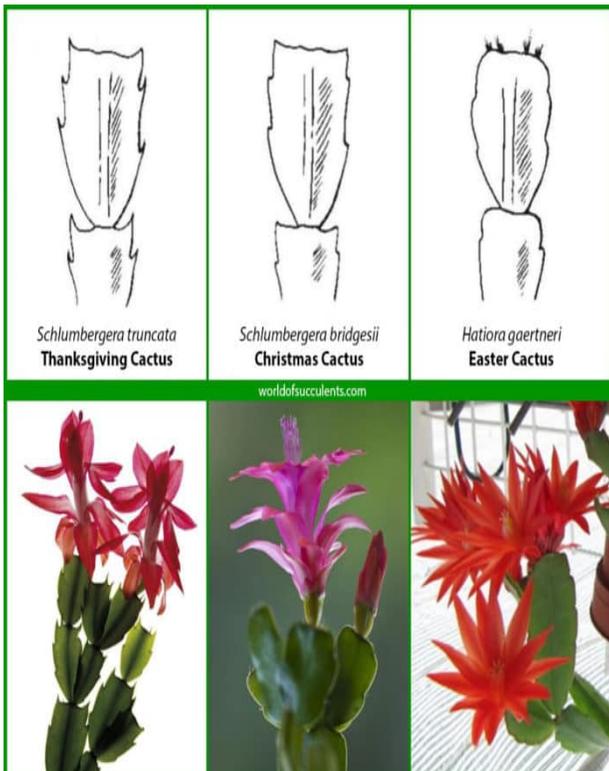
Location: online (Zoom)

Note: There will not be a meeting in December.

Flower show details for the next meeting will be in the January newsletter.

How to Distinguish Holiday Cacti

The key distinguishing feature is the leaf! A lesser known feature is if the color of the pollen is yellow, you more than likely have a Thanksgiving cactus, and if it's pink, you've got a Christmas cactus. One of mine is about to bloom. I will be checking the pollen colour!



Read more here:

[Holiday Cactus Know How](#)

November Flower Show Winners Theme: Christmas wreath

First Place: Liz Henderson



Second Place: Liz Visentin



Third Place: Susan MacMillan



December Garden Tasks

Gardening never stops!

1. **Start to winter-prune wisteria**, cutting back summer side-shoots to 2 or 3 buds.
2. **Prune Japanese Maples (Acers) and vines if needed**, as they will bleed sap if pruning is done any later.
3. **Move containers of shrubs or bedding planters to sheltered spots**; clustering them together helps protect the root systems from suffering frost damage
4. **Protect your poinsettias from cold draughts** and allow them to dry out slightly between waterings to make them last for the whole Christmas period and well into January.
5. **Turn your compost** to mix the ingredients and help the contents to decompose.
6. **If any of your rose bushes suffered from blackspot** or rust this summer, gather up and remove any fallen leaves before the heavy snowfalls arrive to reduce the chance of infection next year.
7. **Lift all tubers** that will be stored for the winter if not having done so already. Don't leave them in the ground if there is a long period of freezing weather.

Troubleshooting Your Amaryllis

My amaryllis is sprouting leaves, but no flower stems yet. Does this mean it won't bloom?

Some amaryllis bulbs sprout leaves first, and then the flower stalk emerges a little later. Others send up the flower stalk first, followed by the leaves.

Do I need to fertilize my amaryllis?

The stored bulb contains all the "food" your amaryllis needs to sprout and bloom. If you

decide to keep your amaryllis for reblooming next year, you'll need to fertilize it like you would any houseplant.

Can I use the blooms as cut flowers?

Yes! Amaryllis are becoming popular cut flowers, and, surprisingly, they often last longer in a vase — up to two weeks — than they do when left growing on the plant!

How do I get my amaryllis to produce multiple blooms?

This depends on the variety of amaryllis, and the quality and size of the bulb. In general, the larger the bulb (for the particular variety) the more flower stalks you'll get.

Do I leave the faded flowers on the plant or "deadhead" like I do my outdoor plants?

As individual flowers start to fade, carefully snip them off. Once all flowers on a flower stalk have faded, cut the stem back to within a few inches of the bulb.

Planting date	Bloom timeframe
Oct. 15	Nov. 19-Dec. 10
Nov. 1	Dec. 6-27
Nov. 15	Dec. 20-Jan. 10
Dec. 1	Jan. 6-28
Dec. 15	Jan. 19-Feb. 9
Jan. 1	Feb. 6-26

How to Reduce Height (and Floppiness) of Amaryllis



This tip comes from Larry Hodgson, one of our speakers from 2021. Place the bulb into a container of water and add some rubbing alcohol.

The actual technique was developed by Cornell University's Flower Bulb Research Center, following an incident that occurred at their 2002 Christmas party. A drunken student is said to have poured vodka into a vase containing Paperwhite narcissus bulbs that were being forced in water. They grew only about half as high as normal, yet produced perfectly healthy, full-size flowers.

Scientists then tested this further with other bulbs and various alcohols and found you could indeed reduce stem length of bulbs being grown in water by careful use of alcohol.

Apply the alcohol as soon as new roots begin to form under the amaryllis bulb, emptying the vase of its water and adding the alcohol/water blend instead. The recommended dose is 1 part 70% isopropyl alcohol (rubbing alcohol) to 13 parts water. If you prefer to use vodka, whiskey or another distilled alcohol, the dose

would be 1 part alcohol to 7 parts water. Avoid beer, wine, and other sugary drinks. You can also use this same technique for any bulb you force in water.

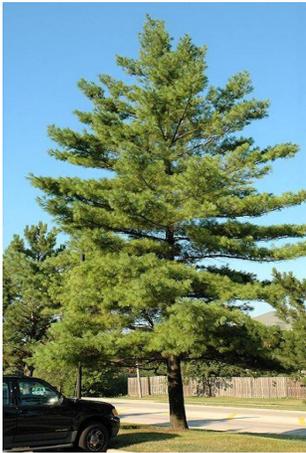
Do note, though, that bulbs forced in water or in stones set in water (with or without alcohol) are hard to recuperate. If you want to save the bulb for future blooms, grow it instead in a pot using potting soil.

I wonder how many will buy an amaryllis bulb and proceed to replicate this experiment?

Tips for Extending the Life of Your Cut Evergreens

- Mist the evergreens with water daily.
- Evergreens will deteriorate more rapidly in warm temperatures. Try to display them in a cool place. Indoor displays should be away from heat sources and direct sunlight. The ideal temperature range is 0 to 15 degrees Celsius.
- Holly is more fragile than other evergreens. The leaves will discolor if exposed to very warm or cold temperatures.
- If you're cutting your own fresh evergreens, be sure to wait until after frost, or at least until cool weather has arrived.
- Choose evergreens that are known to last a long time. Some last longer than others. For instance, white pine is not especially long-lasting, though it can look good for a few weeks. Balsam fir holds up longer. When possible, opt for evergreens that grow in your region.
- Commercially purchased anti-desiccants can also be used to provide a protective coating to reduce needle drop.

Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*)



Eastern White Pine forests originally covered much of north-central and north-eastern North America. Only one percent of the old growth forests remain after the extensive logging operations of the 18th century to early 20th century. It has the distinction of being the tallest tree in eastern North America. Today it is the provincial tree of Ontario. Consider planting this fast growing, native pine as a coniferous lawn tree (if you have the space). If you are diligent, it can be kept as a small, dense tree by regular heavy pruning.

White Pine: Interesting Facts

The Eastern White Pine is a long-lived species that can live up to 200 years or more.

The tallest tree has been recorded at 200 feet high, but most mature trees growing in the wild can reach 150 ft high and more than three feet in diameter.

The trees have long been sought out as a traditional Christmas tree, prized for their conical shape and soft, feathery needles.

Pine needle tea has a pleasant taste and smell and is rich in vitamin C (5 times the concentration of vitamin C found in lemons).

Take a handful of pine needles and let them soak in boiling water on the stove. The aroma will add a nice pine smell to the house.

In colonial times, these tall trees were used to make masts for the British Royal Navy ships.

Wind-blown white pines are a hallmark of northern lakes and, subsequently, landscape paintings.

Dense branching provides roosting and nesting sites for Great Horned Owls, Eagles and Red-tailed Hawks.

Seeds are favoured by pine siskins, juncos, white-winged crossbills, red-winged crossbills, black-capped chickadees, boreal chickadees and a host of other birds. Red squirrels, flying squirrels and chipmunks also depend on pine seeds for food.

Paul Zammit (our Nov. Speaker) on Evergreen Arrangements



Paul shared an informative slideshow to both the members in attendance and to those viewing on zoom. This was followed by the creation of an urn arrangement and a wreath which were both given away to the lucky raffle ticket winners!

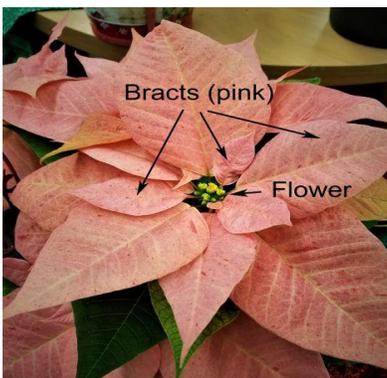
He worked quickly showing great expertise and entertained the audience with humorous anecdotes about his work while also sharing valuable tips for making various different types of arrangements. Some of the key ideas included:

- Use garden soil in containers to provide a more stable base.
- Dampen the soil
- Trim the base of the evergreen stems before inserting into the soil
- Save the small lower leaves and branches to use later to fill in spaces or in other arrangements
- Insert deeply in order to anchor the stems
- Use LOTS of stems to make a full arrangement. Avoid large gaps.
- Once evergreens are in place, add other stems of interest like magnolias, pine cones etc..Wire them well to the evergreen branches.
- Water arrangement every 2 to 5 days until the soil freezes.

Read more here about the best garden greenery for holiday decorating (and which ones to avoid)

[Greenery for Holiday Decorating](#)

Caring for Poinsettias



With care, poinsettias can stay in good condition indoors over the winter months. Poinsettias like consistent moisture, and quickly wilt when their soil becomes dry. The time to water is when the soil surface feels dry, and the weight of the container is lighter. A large pot with three plants clumped together will be filled with roots and may require daily watering. Dropping flowers and foliage is a sign a poinsettia is in distress. Flowers (the small yellow berries) and the colourful bracts which surround them will begin to drop if the plant is in a cold draft or the room lacks humidity or the soil in the pot becomes too dry or the light is too low.

But remember: wilting or dropping leaves can also be a sign of over watering. If the soil is soggy when the leaves fall, you've probably watered too much (my usual method of killing poinsettias)! If in doubt, it's better to keep poinsettias a little drier (rather than too moist) and to water them little and often, rather than rarely but in great quantity. For ideal light conditions, the best location is near a window with bright indirect light. Turn the plant each day to prevent the foliage from straining for light. Nighttime temperature should be no lower than 15°C. When light, temperature and soil moisture needs are adequate, poinsettias will keep their colourful display until mid-spring.

Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*)

If you happen to see a fern while out walking in the woods that is still green at this time of year, it's a native Christmas fern! This is a leathery fern which has glossy, green fronds year-round. In gardens, they are easy to establish and grow, requiring cool, moist, well-drained soil in shade. In the right spot, it can be a good, evergreen border or accent plant as it is a clumping fern.

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MISSION

The mission of the Flamborough Horticultural Society is to encourage interest and involvement in horticulture through civic improvement, preservation, exhibitions, the distribution of plant materials and regular instruction pertaining to the theory and horticulture.

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Past Co-President –Trudy Bliedung

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Roxanne Riley

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*"Every gardener knows that
under the cloak of winter lies a
miracle."*

Barbara Winkler