



The News Vine

December 2023 Newsletter

Denise Bozeman, Corresponding Secretary



HOLIDAY PARTY LUNCHEON

11AM – 1PM Wednesday, December 13th

At the Home of Beth DeStefano *(Thank you!)*

1920 Palomino Road, Melbourne 32934

Hostesses: *Linda Paige, Sue Neville, Jenifer Marx, Denise Bozeman, and the lovely ladies who graciously stepped-up by bringing additional tasty delights to be enjoyed.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Jeri Ronaldson

Dear Garden Club Members.

Happy healthy holiday greetings to all! Throughout the year our Garden Club by the Sea has thrived because of your dedication, passion, and commitment. Each one of you has contributed to the growth and success of our club, and for that I am truly grateful.

Your passion for gardening and your willingness to share your knowledge and experiences with fellow members has created a strong sense of goodwill and lasting friendship that we are now mightily sharing with our community.

As we gather together, let us be mindful that we are making the world a better place. Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication. It is an honor to serve as your President and I am excited to see what we accomplish in the upcoming year.

Wishing you a holiday season filled with laughter, peace, and the good health and energy to enjoy it all.

Cheers,
Jeri

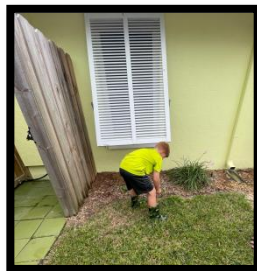
SERENE HARBOR FLORAL ASSIGNMENT

Carolyn Christ and Beth Evander

GARDEN OF THE MONTH AWARD

By Cathy Berkman and Mariane Brillante

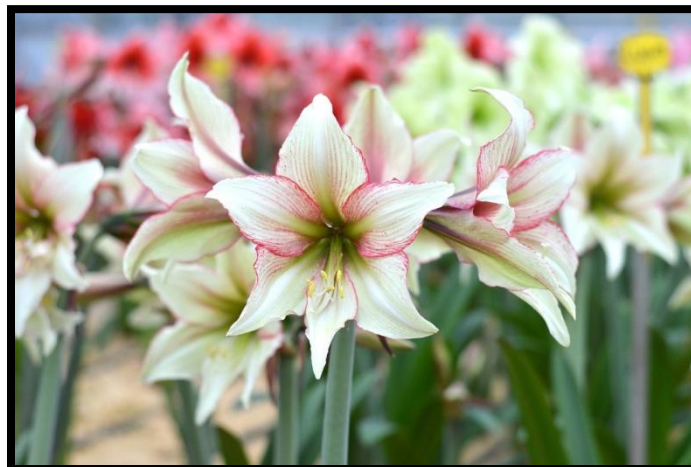
The garden club award for December goes to Justin Knox and Alexandra Ricek of 459 Michigan Ave, Indialantic. Justin's mother, Karen, owned the house previously and she and Justin did most of the landscaping. They live on a corner lot and have beautiful gardens in their front, side, and backyards which include Seagrape trees, Bromeliads and Palm trees. Most plants are tropical or native and require a little maintenance. They have four children who enjoy helping weed the gardens.



Their son weeding.

DECEMBER IN THE SEASIDE GARDEN

By Jenifer Marx



Our Pollinator Fair will be here before we know it. Now is the time to start propagating pollinator-friendly plants to sell at the event. The more potted plants we can offer, the more yards will be equipped to welcome pollinators to our barrier island environment.

Look around your yard. What plants seem to attract butterflies, bees, wasps, flies and ants. If you're lucky enough to have hummingbirds, what flowers do they frequent? And consider beetles, which were among the first insects to pollinate flowers during the Cretaceous period when flowering plants were first evolving. Don't forget the garden's nocturnal visitors, the moths and bats.

Take stock of the plants you think may be good pollinator plants. Confirm with a little online research. Then, see if a particular plant is easy to propagate by division, stem or leaf cutting or if it's easier by seed. It's too late to use the layering method.



Below are some links to inspire and assist you. **GET GROWING!**

PROPAGATION PRIMER

UF Bulletin on Plant Propagation

<https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/care/planting/propagation.html>

Easy Tips for Propagating Plant

<https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/highlandsco/2020/05/28/easy-tips-to-rooting-plants/>

and

<https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/highlandsco/2021/09/16/easy-tips-for-propagation/>

Plants That Grow From Cuttings in Soil

<https://www.thespruce.com/best-plants-to-grow-from-cuttings-1388585>

Rooting Cuttings in Water

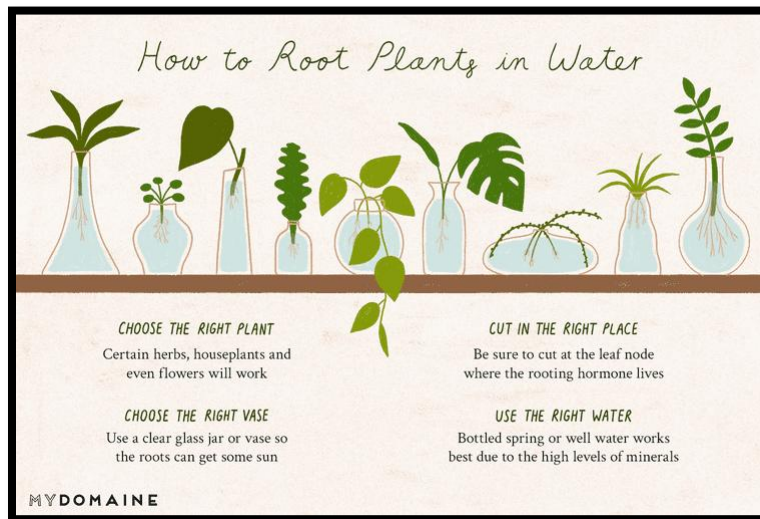
<https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/gardens-gardening/your-garden/help-for-the-home-gardener/advice-tips-resources/visual-guides/rooting-cuttings-in-water>

and

<https://www.homesandgardens.com/gardens/water-propagation-mistakes>

How strong are roots cuttings in water compared to soil roots?

Note -The roots cuttings develop in water are not as strong as soil roots. The longer you wait to transplant, the harder it will be for these sensitive roots to adapt to soil conditions.



How to propagate herbs

<https://www.ruralsprout.com/propagate-herbs-from-cuttings/>

How to propagate stem, softwood and leaf cuttings

<https://www.planetnatural.com/plant-propagation/>

Plant cuttings into pots filled with a soilless potting media just deep enough to support the stems and hold them upright. Do NOT use garden soil as it will remain too wet, causing the cutting to rot before rooting.

Recipe: Soilless Mix for Rooting Cuttings

This soilless mix is ideal for rooting cuttings, but should be replaced with a richer potting mix once they show signs of growth.

Ingredients:

- One part coconut coir, peat moss or vermiculite
- One part perlite or sterile builder's sand

Combine all ingredients with a small amount of water and mix thoroughly until evenly moist. A light solution of [organic starter fertilizer](#) or [seaweed extract](#) can be added to this recipe.



How to germinate seeds in paper towels – Paper and cardboard toilet roll starter pots are great because when you plant the transplants, the pot can be planted too. Be aware that over-wetting the towel has been shown to lower germination percentages. It can also raise the chances of mold. Formation. Before planting, make sure the potting mix and newspaper pots are thoroughly saturated and the pots are completely under the soil, so they don't dry out.

Paper towel germination is especially effective with seeds that are usually slow to germinate. The following directions are from a Florida Today article by Sally Scalera.

Paper towels can be used for any seed that needs to be covered. This is especially helpful if you have gathered seeds and you're not sure how long they take to germinate.

To germinate seeds in paper towels, gather the seeds, paper towels and silicone or plastic bags. Label the bags using tape (if using silicone bags) and a permanent marker, with the date and name of the plant.

Step 1: Take one sheet of paper towel, fold it in half and place it under running water until wet. If you have liquid seaweed, soak your paper towel in the liquid seaweed solution instead of just plain water.

Step 2: Place the paper towel between your hands and press them together, working your way down the towel until a lot of the excess liquid is squeezed out.

Step 3: Lay the paper towel out on a flat surface.

Step 4: Place the seeds on the paper towel, staying away from the edges. When using a new packet of seeds, decide how many plants you want to grow and only place that many seeds on the paper towel. New seeds will have a 100% germination rate in paper towels. When germinating seeds from an old packet, place extra seeds on the paper towel since some of the seeds may be diseased or no longer viable.

Step 5: Loosely roll up the paper towel so that it looks like a tube.

Step 6: Put the paper towel in the bag, but don't close it, and place the open bag in a warm location that is out of the sun.

Step 7: In a few days, carefully unroll the paper towel to see if the seeds have germinated. Germinated seeds will have roots and cotyledons, or a cotyledon in the case of corn. If the seeds have not germinated, loosely roll the paper towel up again and place it back into the bag. Repeat step 7 every few days, until all the seeds have germinated.

Once the seeds have produced roots and cotyledon(s), it's time to plant the seedlings in small pots. For the best success, fill the pots with a fast-draining potting mix and place them in a tray that will hold water.

Water every pot a couple of times, until the potting mix is thoroughly wet and there is excess water in the tray. Take a sharpie pen and poke a hole in the middle of each pot's wet potting mix. If the roots have grown into the paper towel, carefully cut or tear apart the paper towel.

Put the root in the hole (along with any paper towel that may be stuck to the roots) and lightly press the potting mix over the roots and around the stem. Place the tray of seedlings in the light conditions that the plants require, which are full sun, partial sun/shade or shade.

It is important to make sure that the seedlings have ample water at the beginning, as they will grow rapidly. It is fine to have water in the base of the tray for the first few days after transplanting.

After that, keep an eye on the seedlings and water when the potting mix begins to dry out. Once the seedlings produce their first set of true leaves, they are ready to be transplanted.



Easy Toilet Roll Seed Starter Pots

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjdeX0g34e0>

Two ways to make Newspaper Plant Pots (the simple way + the origami method)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9dkseng3MgE>

Tips for germinating seeds in paper towels - Viva Towels

<https://www.vivatowels.com/en-us/cleaning-tips/germinating-seeds-paper-towel#:~:text=Take%20the%20seeds%20you%20wish,layers%20of%20damp%20paper%20towel>

Don't forget whenever planting something inoculate the hole with a granular mycorrhizae.

What To Grow



Scarlet Calamint (*Calamintha Coccinea*) | Photo by UCF Arboretum

Links to 20 Easy-to-Grow Florida wildflowers

[milkweed \(*Asclepias* spp.\)](#), [Florida greeneyes \(*Berlandiera subacaulis*\)](#), [goldenaster \(*Chrysopsis* spp.\)](#), [false rosemary \(*Conradinaspp.*\)](#), [tickseed \(*Coreopsis* spp.\)](#), [twinflower \(*Dyschoriste* spp.\)](#), [Verbena \(*Glandularia* spp.\)](#), [sunflower \(*Helianthus* spp.\)](#), [St. John's wort \(*Hypericum*spp.\)](#), [blazing star \(*Liatris* spp.\)](#), [Spotted beebalm \(*Monarda punctata*\)](#), [Silver-leaved aster \(*Pityopsis graminifolia*\)](#), [black-eyed Susan \(*Rudbeckiaspp.*\)](#), [wild petunia \(*Ruellia* spp.\)](#), [sage \(*Salvia* spp.\)](#), [skullcap \(*Scutellariaspp.*\)](#), [senna \(*Senna* spp.\)](#), [rosinweed \(*Silphium* spp.\)](#), [goldenrod \(*Solidago*spp.\)](#) and [aster \(*Symphyotrichum* spp.\)](#).

Create a Native Wildflower Pollinator Pot <https://www.flawildflowers.org/pollinator-pot/>

Growing Native: How to Create a Beautiful Garden in a Container

<https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/polkco/2023/05/10/growing-native-how-to-create-a-beautiful-garden-in-a-container/>



Encourage Native Insect Pollinators to Visit by Meeting their Needs

<https://www.fnps.org/plants/pollinators>

Great pollinator plants for Florida

<https://www.gardenia.net/guide/great-pollinator-plants-for-florida>



What To Plant

December is a good time to start sprouting sweet potatoes, which are not only delicious but make an excellent, care-free ground cover. Stick three or four toothpicks into a sweet potato about 1/3 of the way down from the end with the little eyes. Position the potato in a glass or jar filled with water so at least half is submerged. In a few weeks, sprouts will appear. When they get 2-3" long, break them off and stick them into some soil. They'll root and the potato will continue making new sprouts, sometimes for months. By the end of February you ought to have plenty of little vines to plant.

Flowers: Alyssum, baby's breath, bacopa, begonia, bush daisy, calendula, California poppy, candytuft, carnation, chrysanthemums, delphinium, dianthus, dusty miller, foxglove, geranium, hollyhock, Iceland poppy, licorice plant, lobelia, million bells, ornamental cabbage & kale, pansy, petunia, salvia, shasta daisy, snapdragon, statice, stock, sweet pea, verbena and viola.

Shrubs and Trees: a very good time for most. Consider adding a Brazilian red cloak to your landscape.

<https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/charlotteco/2018/06/04/ behold-the-brazilian-red-cloak/>



Bulbs: African iris, amaryllis, anemones, bulbine, crinum, day lily, paper-white narcissus, ranunculus, society garlic, spider lilies, rain lilies

Vegetables: Beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, collards, horseradish, lettuce, mustard, onions, peas, radicchio, radishes, spinach, Swiss chard and turnips.

Herbs: Anise, arugula, basil, bay, chives, cilantro, coriander, dill, fennel, garlic, lavender, mint, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, sweet marjoram, thyme and watercress.

Bulbs: African iris, amaryllis, anemones, bulbine, crinum, day lily, paper-white narcissus, ranunculus, society garlic, spider lilies, rain lilies.



What To Do

The season's cooler less humid weather make spending time in the garden a pleasure. Many flowers and orchids bloom December. December is a dry month so lawns and landscape plantings will require about 1/2 inch of water each week. Hibiscus, gardenia, and other shrubs may suffer bud drop if not watered as needed.

Make sure the ground is moist before a frost or a freeze. Be prepared to move orchids and other cold sensitive plants indoors or provide protection when cold temperatures are predicted.

This is a good month to add or transplant trees, shrubs and other plants and to divide perennials. Add new cold-tolerant fruits to the landscape; delay tropical fruit plantings until spring. Because of the cool weather, water loss through foliage will be low and above ground new growth minimal. Start flower transplants. This is a good time to plant herbs and most vegetables. Start seeds of the cool season crops for transplants.

Yellowing turf areas generally greens up with application of iron or a minor nutrient spray. This is a good time to replant hard-to-mow and shady areas with ground covers.

Continue fertilizing hardy annuals and container grown plants monthly. Discontinue fertilizing other outdoor plants except vegetables. Delay any major pruning until after winter. Renew mulch to conserve water and control weeds. Hardy annuals that will provide color in your yard and survive our normal winter cold include alyssum, calendula, cleome, dianthus, pansy, petunia, phlox, salvia, snapdragon and verbena. Remove faded blooms to extend flowering.

Extend the life of poinsettias and Christmas cactus plants by putting them in a cool, bright location. Water them when the soil surface begins to dry.



Make a Holiday Wreath with *Flower Magazine's* step-by-step guide

Eight noted designers share beautiful holiday wreaths in a range of styles and materials from fresh flowers to foraged greenery, citrus, and berries—each with a detailed, step-by-step guide.

https://flowermag.com/how-to-make-christmas-wreaths/?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_campaign=03c02d8df6-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2023_11_09_05_51&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-03c02d8df6-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D&goal=0_ba3f316485-03c02d8df6-133645829&mc_cid=03c02d8df6&mc_eid=145506eaa3



1.



2.

(1.) *Hibiscus acetosella* aka cranberry hibiscus because of rich dark red of foliage and (2.) *Hibiscus sabdariffa* aka cranberry hibiscus because of calyx color and tart flavor.

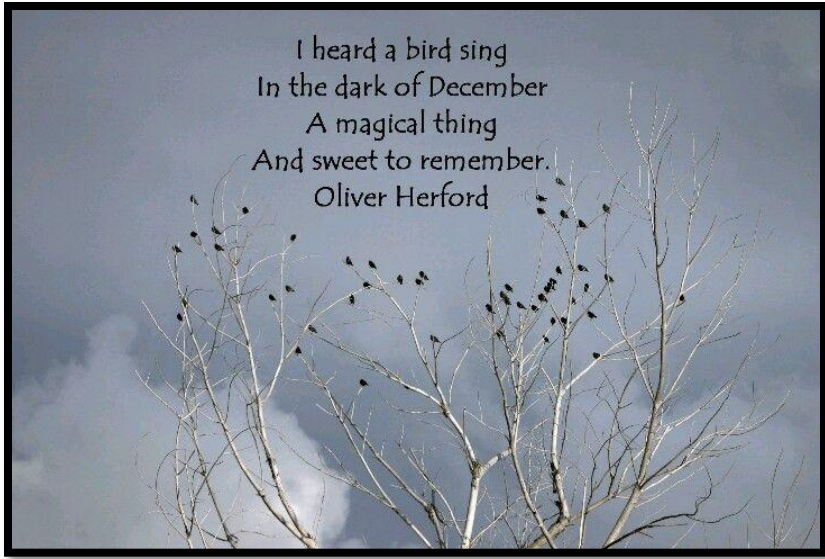
Cranberry Hibiscus

Two types of tropical hibiscus found in Florida gardens are often confused with each other. Both *Hibiscus sabdariffa* and *Hibiscus acetosella* are commonly known as cranberry hibiscus. *H. sabdariffa* is called roselle and sorrel in the Caribbean, where it is a very popular plant for making drinks. Sorrel calyces, or flowers, are commonly used in teas, juices, beer and wine and its tart flavor enhances jams, pies and other recipes. The young leaves can be used in salad or very lightly sautéed in stir-frys. The plant is nutrient dense and high in vitamin C and fiber.

Sorrel's leaves are green and it has reddish-pink flowers. It's hardy, fast growing and has a variety of uses. UF/IFAS, in collaboration with the University of the Virgin Islands, is investigating its potential as a new commercial crop for Florida farmers.

The *H. sabdariffa* that Kevin Brackett has generously offered to propagate for the Pollinator Fair, is a small shrub, primarily grown for its beautiful deep maroon-red foliage. However, the young leaves, have a tart, lemony flavor, are rich in vitamin C and thiamin and can be used to add color and flavor to salads. The edible red flower petals also add interest to salads. A refreshing drink can be made by steeping the petals and/or calyces in boiling water. When the infusion cools add sugar, sweetener and lemon or lime juice. Serve with ice.





Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.

Albert Einstein

