



Christmas Party - December Meeting Jeffrey Seifert & Tim Baldwin Host in GP

Our annual Christmas Party in December will be held at the Grand Prairie home of Jeffrey Seifert and Tim Baldwin. The Christmas Party is a time for members and friends of the Rainbow Garden Club to gather together for great food and fun. There is no formal program though an election for 2008 Officers will be held.

The Christmas Party has normally been a covered dish affair. Members who plan to attend are encouraged to bring a covered dish to the meeting. Jeffrey will

provide the main course. Please RSVP your plans to attend and also let Jeffrey know what you plan to bring. You can reach Jeffrey by calling 972 623-2271 or by emailing him at jlseifert@wans.net.

Tim & Jeffrey live in a fairly large home in a newer development in South Grand Prairie. Jeffrey is the main gardener and moved to Texas from Ohio in 1999. He is still adapting to the drastically different climate in this part of the country.

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Volunteers Sought RGC hosts booth at Oak Cliff Earth Day

Volunteers are needed to help with the Oak Cliff Earth Day Celebration, which is planned for Sunday April 20, 2008 in the Lake Cliff Park. Those interested in helping the Friends of Oak Cliff Parks to plan for this event can contact Van Johnson at oakcliffearthday@aol.com or can go to this website: www.oakcliffearthday.com.

The Rainbow Garden Club will have a booth at the Earth Day and will also need volunteers to work our booth. Just let us know at

info@rainbowgardenclub.com

if you are interested in working our booth at the Earth Day Celebration!

DECEMBER 2007

Members celebrating birthdays in December...

Gary Springer - Dec. 8
Richard Wood - Dec. 12
Kevin Keeling - Dec. 21

2008 MEETINGS

JANUARY 13th - TBD

FEBRUARY 10TH

Petal Pushers Nursery
"Plant Propagation"

MARCH 9th - TBD

APRIL 13th

Tom & Glenn's Home

April 20th

Friends of Oak Cliff Park
Earth Day Celebration

May 11th

Tony Martin & Gary Grenier

June 8th - TBD

July 13th - TBD

August 10th

Jesse & Jeff's
Pool Party

September 14th - TBD

October 10th

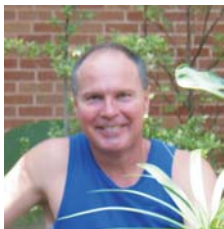
Chris Henderson

November 9th

Shannon Wyatt

December 14th

John Papp
Christmas Party



From the President Tom Forsyth

What a year it has been! We had some good times, great programs and interesting speakers in 2007! We have visited unforgettable

gardens such as Dean Brown's caladium garden, Anthony Klatt's rose sanctuary and Alan Rister's ornately sculptured landscape! We have learned from some of the best Dallas County Master Gardeners including Dean Brown, Alan Rister, Dione Lineberry and Brenda Cunningham!

Our speaker for November's meeting at Dennis' home was Michael Bosco, owner of Soils Alive!, who gave an awesome talk on Building a Healthy Soil. Among our other outstanding programs were ones on Rainwater Harvesting, Basic Principles of Landscape Design, Gardening for Evening Blooms and Growing Caladiums

We also have some great memories from 2007! Who can forget the truckload of plants that Dione brought from Brumley's Gardens and the giant gothic moth that encircled the mass of

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Christmas Party Jeffrey Seifert & Tim Baldwin ...

The garden contains a number of rose bushes which might still be blooming in December. The garden is a work in progress and there may not be much to see depending on whether or not there has been a frost before the Christmas party.

Tim and Jeffrey are amusement park and roller coaster aficionados and you will notice several collections of amusement park paraphernalia scattered throughout the house. Among the collections are amusement park ornaments featured on the main Christmas tree.

Jeffrey's home is located at:
3508 Pecos Way - Grand Prairie, TX 75052

Directions from Downtown Dallas

Directions to Tim & Jeffrey's home: From the Dallas area the recommended route is to take I-35 South then US 67 South to I-20 West. Stay on I-20 for 9.8 miles to exit 454, Great Southwest Parkway. Turn right (North) onto Great Southwest Parkway, go through the first light (Sara Jane Parkway), the next light is Forum drive, turn right onto Forum. Look for Cimmaron Estates on the left. Turn left onto Tamarack Drive, and continue 0.2 miles until Tamarack ends at Ranchview Drive. Turn right onto Ranchview Drive, travel 98 yards, then turn right onto Pecos Way. The house is the first on the left.

An alternate route is to come in on I 30. Take I 30 West to S.R. 360 South. Continue on 360 South 4.1 miles to Mayfield Road. Turn left onto Mayfield. Continue East to Forum Drive. Turn right onto Forum which curves around past a school. Continue past Great Southwest Parkway headed East on Forum. Look for Cimmaron Estates on the left. Turn left onto Tamarack Drive. Continue 0.2 miles until Tamarack ends at Ranchview Drive. Turn right onto Ranchview Drive, travel 98 yards, then turn right onto Pecos Way. The house is the first on the left.



At the Nov. Meeting Michael Bosco from Soils Alive delivers an informative presentation on composting in Dennis Heins backyard garden.

From the President - Tom Forsyth

... moon-vine plants in Robert and Harvey's garden on a lovely October evening! Do you remember the New Orleans style courtyard with the romantic smell of roses in Anthony's garden! And the summer fun we had enjoying the pool, hot tub and many secret gardens located in Jesse and Jeff's house!!

As you might expect, when there are great meetings, interesting programs and dynamic speakers, the people will come! We have set records in attendance (up to 40 at Anthony's event!) and also gained a number of new members! Many of the new members have jumped right in to serve as hosts and leaders!!

Shannon Wyatt, who joined in August, will serve as our new treasurer. Jon Papp will come back on the board to serve as Secretary. Anthony Klatt has volunteered his talents in graphic design to produce an exciting newsletter that will help us to communicate with our members and friends and to attract a wider audience!

Dennis Hein will continue to serve as Vice President and, yes, I'll serve a second term. But I'm heartened to know that we are bringing in new members who are willing to host meetings and volunteer as chapter leaders.

Any club is only as good and as vibrant as its members are willing to make it. To continue to these traditions, we need you to open your home or business to our club. Let our members benefit from your gardening ideas or to learn about your gardening passions! If you don't feel comfortable speaking, no problem! Just let us know what type of program you're interested in and we'll find a qualified speaker!

Our year ends on Dec. 8 with a great Christmas Party at Jeff Siefert's Grand Prairie home. You'll find more details in this newsletter! We hope to see you there!

Merry Christmas,

Tom



Earth Day Sponsors Spearhead Effort First Community Garden Planned in Oak Cliff ...

The planners of the Oak Cliff Earth Day Event, which is held in April of each year, recently met with officials of Paul Quinn College and the City of Dallas to discuss their plans to establish the first community garden in Dallas south of the Trinity River. Among the Oak Cliff leaders who met at the college were Van Johnson, coordinator of the Oak Cliff Earth Day, Hansa Jacob-Martin, manager of the Community Gardens of Oak Cliff Project and Barbara Barbee, Vice President of the Friends of Oak Cliff Parks.

The group toured possible locations on campus for their Phase 1 Community Garden. The first potential site is a desirably flat piece of land located north of the baseball diamonds, beside a perennial creek. Paul Quinn's landscape department will research the creek as a potential source of water that could be pumped for use in the garden. The site also offers the advantage of considerable exposure to the garden from Stuart Simpson Road (just south of the site) and from the college's baseball events.

The second site was on the northwest corner of the campus entrance, a large slightly sloping area in front of campus buildings. A paved area could be cleared for compost storage with enough access to it for trucks vehicle.



The group also toured three of the ten community gardens which presently exist within the City of Dallas. Their first stop on the garden tour was the thriving garden at the Stonewall Jackson Elementary School at the corner of E. Mockingbird and Matilda. This garden had vegetable plots maintained by the students, temperature monitored compost heaps, butterfly and bee attracting shrubs, a tool shed to secure tools, a green house and an in ground composting area among its many features.

The garden receives donated coffee grounds from Starbucks, tree chippings from a local tree company. Parents and surrounding community members serve as volunteers to maintain the gardens.

Mark Painter from Stonewall Elementary has offered his expertise and goodwill to the Community

Gardens of Oak Cliff effort. Bob Curry from the City of Dallas also gave insight into the role that the city would be able to play in the Oak Cliff community gardens effort.

The second community garden they visited was an urban East Dallas garden that grew onions, peppers, lettuces, root vegetable etcetera, various East Asian and African vegetables and herbs. This garden was maintained by the local community and is an excellent example of an urban garden.

The third community garden was also in East Dallas. It showcased what was possible in an extremely urban neighborhood. This garden has had a positive impact in the neighborhood. Residents of nearby apartment complexes had planted flowerbeds. This garden had several lots committed to supply basil to a local restaurant. There were green houses,

composting heaps and most of the lots were safely covered up to protect the produce from oncoming cold weather.

Paul Quinn college officials Pat Johnson and Edna Pemberton joined the Oak Cliff Earth Day planners on the tour of these community gardens. They plan to mobilize college staff and the neighboring community to help the Friends of Oak Cliff Parks

achieve their goal of bringing the community gardens concept to their campus.

For more information on community gardens in Dallas, you can visit the website www.gardendallas.org.

In order to bring this vision to life, the Oak Cliff Earth Day planners will need volunteers who can help them to develop a project plan and to execute the plan. You can join this effort by contacting Hansa Jacob-Martin at communitygardensof oakcliff@gmail.com.

To access information concerning community gardens in Dallas visit...

www.gardendallas.org

All you wanted to know but never asked Composting as a contributor to healthy soil

Since our November meeting was on the topic of Building a Healthy Soil, it seemed appropriate to run an article on Composting for our members and friends. The following article is composed of extracts from Compostguide.com. You can go to this website for the unabridged version.

Compost is one of nature's best mulches and soil amendments and you can use it instead of commercial fertilizers. Best of all, compost is cheap. You can make it without spending a cent. Using compost improves soil structure, texture, and aeration and increases the soil's water-holding capacity. Compost loosens clay soils and helps sandy soils retain water.

Adding compost improves soil fertility and stimulates healthy root development in plants. The organic matter provided in compost provides food for microorganisms, which keeps the soil in a healthy, balanced condition. Nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus will be produced naturally by the feeding of microorganisms, so few if any soil amendments will need to be added.

Composting is a one way to deal creatively with our own yard waste. such as leaves and grass clippings. Don't throw away materials when you can use them to improve your lawn and garden! Start composting instead and you will be rewarded with enriched soil and healthier plants!

Compost is the end product of a complex feeding pattern involving hundreds of different organisms, including bacteria, fungi, worms, and insects. What remains after these organisms break down organic materials is the rich, earthy substance your garden will love. Composting replicates nature's natural system of breaking down materials on the forest floor. Humus from all of decay of plant material keeps the soil light and fluffy!

Humus is our goal when we start composting. By knowing the optimum conditions of heat, moisture, air, and materials, we can speed up the composting process. Besides producing more good soil faster, making the compost faster creates heat which will destroy plant diseases and weed seeds in the pile.

Almost any organic material is suitable for a compost pile. The pile needs a proper ratio of carbon-rich materials, or "browns," and nitrogen-rich materials, or "greens." Among the brown materials are dried leaves, straw, and wood chips. Nitrogen materials are fresh or green, such as grass clippings and kitchen scraps.

Achieving the best mix is more an art gained through experience than an exact science. The ideal ratio approaches 25 parts browns to 1 part greens. Leaves represent a large percentage of total yard waste.

Grind your leaves and grass in a gas or electric chipper, shredder or mow over them first to reduce the size and to help them decompose faster. Leaves are loaded with minerals brought up from the tree roots and are a natural source of carbon. Avoid black walnut tree, Eucalyptus leaves, poison oak, poison ivy, and sumac since they contain poisonous parts. Pine Needles, which need to be chopped or shredded, can acidify your compost, which would be a good thing if you have alkaline soils.

Grass Clippings break down quickly and contain as much nitrogen as manure. Mix them with plenty of brown material. Avoid grass clippings with pesticide or herbicide residue, unless a steady rain has washed the residue from the grass blades.

Kitchen Refuse includes melon rinds, carrot peelings, tea bags, apple cores, banana peels - almost everything that cycles through your kitchen. You can successfully compost all forms of kitchen waste. However, meat, meat products, dairy products, and high-fat foods like salad dressings and peanut butter, can present problems. Meat scraps and the rest will decompose eventually, but will smell bad and attract pests. Egg shells are a wonderful addition, but decompose slowly, so should be crushed. Chop up these first!

Garden Refuse should make the trip to the pile. All of the spent plants, thinned seedlings, and deadheaded flowers can be included. Most weeds and weed seeds are killed when the pile reaches an internal temperature above 130 degrees, but some may survive.

Manure is one of the finest materials you can add to any compost pile. It contains large amounts of both nitrogen and beneficial microbes. Manure for composting can come from bats, sheep, ducks, pigs, goats, cows, pigeons, and any other vegetarian animal. As a rule of thumb, you should avoid manure from carnivores that may contain pathogens. It is best to let manures age a bit before putting them in the compost pile so you don't kill off earthworms and friendly bacteria.

The list of organic materials which can be added to the compost pile is long. There are industrial and commercial waste products you may have access to in abundance. The following is a partial list: corncobs, cotton waste, restaurant or farmer's market scraps, grapevine waste, sawdust, greensand, hair, hoof and horn meal, hops, peanut shells, paper and cardboard, rock dust, sawdust, feathers, cottonseed meal, blood meal, bone meal, citrus wastes, coffee, alfalfa, and ground seashells.

Above - November Speaker Michael Bosco from Soils Alive

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...All You Need to Know About Composting

Any pile of organic matter will eventually rot, but a well-chosen site can speed up the process. Look for a level, well-drained area. If you plan to add kitchen scraps, keep it accessible to the back door. Don't put it so far away you'll neglect the pile. In cooler latitudes, keep the pile in a sunny spot to trap solar heat. Look for some shelter to protect the pile from freezing cold winds which could slow down the decaying process. In warm, dry latitudes, shelter the pile in a shadier spot so it doesn't dry out too quickly.

Build the pile over soil or lawn rather than concrete or asphalt. If tree roots are extending their roots into the pile, turn it frequently so they can't make headway. Look for a spot that allows you to compost discretely, especially if you have neighboring yards in close proximity. Aim for distance and visual barriers between the pile and the neighbors.

Some decomposition will take place over the winter, but not a significant amount. Continue to put kitchen scraps in the pile, but it's not necessary to turn in cold climates. If you want your compost pile to stay active during the winter, you'll want an enclosed bin with insulated sides. A black bin situated in a sunny spot can help trap solar radiation during cold spells.

Compost can range from passive (allowing the materials to sit and rot on their own) to highly managed. Whenever you intervene in the process, you're managing the compost. Managed composting involves active participation, ranging from turning the pile occasionally to a major commitment of time and energy. If you use all the techniques of managing the pile, you can get finished compost in 3-4 weeks.

If the pile becomes too dry, the decay process will slow down. Organic waste needs water to decompose. The rule of thumb is to keep the pile as moist as a wrung-out sponge. If you're building your pile with very wet materials, mix them

with dry materials as you build. If all the material is very dry, soak it with a hose as you build. Whenever you turn the pile, check it for moisture and add water as necessary.

Once your compost is ready (crumbly and so that you don't see any of the original elements that went into the pile), then you should spread it in your gardens. One inch thick is enough to spread on your garden beds. To bolster poor soil with little organic matter, spread 2 to 3 inches of compost over a newly dug surface. Then work the compost into the top 6 inches of earth. A garden soil that has been well mulched and amended periodically requires only about a ½ inch layer of compost yearly to maintain its quality.

Some people recommend late fall as a good time to spread compost over a garden bed, and cover it with a winter mulch, such as chopped leaves. By spring, soil organisms will have worked the compost into the soil. Others recommend spreading compost two weeks before planting time in the spring. There is really no wrong time to spread it. The benefits remain the same.

Adding compost to the planting hole of small perennial plants is valuable, particularly perennial food plants. Annuals will also benefit from a dose of compost at planting time. Compost is the ultimate garden fertilizer. It contains virtually all the nutrients a living plant needs and delivers them in a slow-release manner over a period of years. Compost made with a wide variety of ingredients will provide an even more nutritious meal to your growing plants.

Compost is the best material available to enliven your soil no matter where you live. Farmers around the world will testify that healthier soil grows healthier plants that naturally resist disease, insects, and other environmental pressures. Adding compost to your garden is a long-term investment - it becomes a permanent part of the soil structure, helping to feed future plantings in years to come.

Notes from Stan's Garden - Pyracanthas

This has been an unusually warm fall for North Texas. Today, I was in my backyard and saw an iris in bloom. I have never seen an iris bloom in my yard in December! They usually bloom in March or April, so this is a first. I will even send a photo of this rare sight. Also, the pyracantha is incredible this year. If you have never thought of this shrub, it can make for some incredible fall and winter color from the berries. Enjoy the article on Pyracantha's that is copied from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia!

Pyracantha's spring blooms turn into abundant berries in the Fall! Pyracantha is a branching shrub that grows up to 6' tall with flowers that mature to with berry-like pomes in the fall. It is also known as Firethorn. It belongs to a genus of thorny ever-green large shrubs in the family Rosaceae, subfamily Maloideae. They are native from southeast Europe east to southeast Asia, and are closely related to Cotoneaster, but have serrated leaf margins and numerous thorns (Cotoneaster is thornless). The plants reach up to 6 m tall. The seven species have white flowers and either red, orange, or yellow berries (more correctly pomes). The flowers



are produced during late spring and early summer; the pomes develop from late summer, maturing in late autumn.

Pyracanthas are valuable ornamental plants, grown in gardens for their decorative flowers and fruit, often very densely borne. Their dense thorny structure makes them particularly valued in situations where an impenetrable barrier is required. The aesthetic characteristics of pyracanthas plants, in conjunction with their home security qualities, makes them a considerable alternative to artificial fences and walls.[1][2] They are also a good shrub for a wildlife garden, providing dense cover for roosting and nesting birds, summer flowers for bees and an abundance of berries as a food source. Pyracantha berries are not poisonous as commonly thought; although very bitter, they are edible when cooked and are sometimes made into jelly.

Selected hybrids and cultivars of Pyracantha's include:

'America'	'Golden Chарmer'	'Orange Glow'
'Golden Dome'	'Lalandei'	'Rosy Mantle'
'Mohave'	'Navajo'	'Teton'
'	'Santa Cruz'	'Watereri'