



Rainbow Garden Club Newsletter

Dallas, Texas

December
2009



Holiday Time ~ Winter Solstice ~ Christmas and The Yule Log

(Editor's Note: Although this article is not specifically about gardening, it is about the use of "a" tree; trees being of interest to those of us who enjoy gardening. I hope you find the following information entertaining at this holiday season, however you observe it.)

Need an excuse for a Christmas party? How about a "traditional" excuse. If this year's party is already planned, add this old tradition to it. Burning a Yule log is probably the oldest Christmas tradition there is. It started even before the first Christmas, in Germanic and Celtic pagan rites and rituals. It has always included the gathering of family, friends and neighbors for songs and stories, dances and romances, feasts and fun.



At first, burning a Yule log was a celebration of the winter solstice. In Scandinavia, Yule ran from several weeks before the winter solstice to a couple weeks after. This was the darkest time of year, and the people celebrated because days would start getting longer after the solstice. There was quite a bit of ritual and ceremony tied to the Yule log, for it marked the sun's rebirth from its southern reaches. The Yule log gets its name from the Scandinavian tradition, but the ritual burning of a special log during winter solstice took place as far west as Ireland, as far south as Greece, and as far north as Siberia.

In the fourth century AD When Pope Julius I decided to celebrate Christmas around the Winter Solstice, the Yule log tradition continued, but the fire came to represent the light of the Christ instead of the Sun.

In England the log was supposed to burn for the twelve days of Christmas, from Christmas eve on December 24th to Epiphany on January 6th. Some English Yule logs were large enough that a team of horses were required to drag it to the castle or manor. Some English preferred a log from an ash tree. In the Slavic and other countries oak was the wood of choice. Almost everywhere, the fire was started with that bit of the last year's log, to symbolize continuity and the eternal light of heaven.

On or about Christmas eve, a big log was brought into a home or large hall. Songs were sung and stories told. Children danced. Offerings of food and wine and decorations were placed upon it. Personal faults, mistakes and bad choices were burned in the flame so everyone's new year would start with a clean slate. The log was never allowed to burn completely, a bit was kept in the house to start next years log. The log brought good luck. Any pieces that were kept protected a house from fire, or lightning, or hail. Ashes of the log would be placed in wells to keep the water good. Ashes were also placed at the roots of fruit trees and vines to help them bear a good harvest.

The log also predicted bad luck. If the fire went out before the night was through, tragedy would strike the home in the coming year. If its flame cast someone's shadow without a head, supposedly that person would die within the year.

In Appalachia, as long as the log, or "backstick" burned you could celebrate. Often a very large "backstick" was chosen and soaked in a stream to ensure a nice long celebration. In the early nineteenth century, American slaves didn't have to work as long as the Yule log burned, so they would choose the biggest, greenest log they could find. If they did have to work while it burned their master had to pay them for the work.



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RGC December Meeting: Christmas Party!!

Sunday, December 13th, 4:00 pm

It's time to celebrate with our annual holiday party. This year we will meet at the home of Tom F and Glen H. Sunday, December 13th, at 4:00 p.m. Please RSVP to Glen and Tom by Wednesday, December 9th. Let them know you are attending and what side dish and/or desert you will bring.

2115 Siesta Drive, Dallas 75224

You can call them at 214-673-2450, or email them at, tyforsyth@sbcglobal.net

We will also be electing our board for 2010.

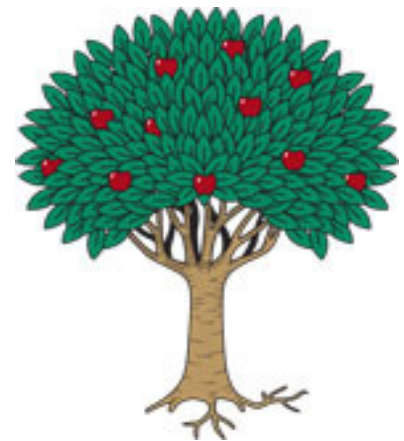
Happy Holidays Ya'll



Best Time to Plant Trees

Planting deciduous trees when they're dormant is advisable, since that's when handling them is least disruptive to the trees. Deciduous trees are trees that lose their leaves in the autumn. When do trees go dormant? The dropping of their leaves in autumn signals that they are entering dormancy. The unfurling of buds in spring signals that they are leaving dormancy.

With our mild winters in the DFW area, anytime after leaves have fallen off the trees is a good time to plant. You can plant as late as early spring before the new buds begin to bloom, although shortly after blooming is usually ok. Summer is a bad choice. The weather's too hot and an actively growing tree is too susceptible to damage.



2009 Rainbow Garden Club Officers:

Dennis H ~ President - (vacant) ~ Vice President - Tony M ~ Secretary - Shannon W ~ Treasurer
(vacant) ~ Membership Chair - Don K ~ Newsletter Editor





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RGC Member Birthdays for December



Happy Birthday to:

Richard W~12th
Carl Y~ 15th
Brad B ~ 17th
Alex C ~ 21st
Dean P~30th

Age is something that doesn't matter,
unless you are a cheese.

Age is a number and mine is unlisted.

If we missed your birthday or made a mistake, please email Shannon at Wyatt at Shannon-wyatt@sbcglobal.net.

Question and Answer

Your editor would like to add a question and answer column to our newsletter. Hopefully, this can be accomplished by your questions. Scratch your head and try to remember when you wondered "how, when, why, and/or where" regarding your gardening. Your question and an answer will appear in our newsletter to benefit everyone! Email your question to Singerred@yahoo.com.

December Gardening Tips

Many of us bring potted plants inside to protect them from freezing this time of year. The warm, dry indoor air is prime breeding ground for spider mites on your houseplants. Look very closely at the undersides of leaves, at the base of stems, and on new buds for fine webbing. Set any suspicious-looking plants in the shower to wash off the mites, and repeat frequently. Or, if it's a small plant, you can swish it around upside-down in a sinkful of soapy water. Insecticidal soap also works, but it's smelly to use indoors.





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Membership Information

Our club's roots began to grow in 1992 in the gardening chat rooms of the Internet. Two local gardeners found each other and agreed that gay and lesbian gardeners should organize and utilize their talents to aid not only one another, but also our community. The organization grew and today our members represent all levels of gardening skill and knowledge and enjoy sharing their gardening skills with each other. All gardeners, from novice to master, are invited to join Rainbow Garden Club of North Texas. Annual membership dues are \$15 per household, renewable at the beginning of each new year. Dues help to pay for club activities and programs. Other fund raising events, including annual plant sales, meeting raffles and our annual home tour, help to fund community beautification projects. All current paid members have the right to vote at meetings. The Rainbow Garden Club traditionally meets on the second weekend of the month, usually on a Sunday afternoon but occasionally on a Saturday. Please check our website for up to date information on meeting dates and times.

Benefits of membership include:

- ▲ ~ Monthly Meetings
- ▲ ~ Field Trips
- ▲ ~ Educational Programs
- ▲ ~ Community Projects
- ▲ ~ Monthly Newsletter
- ▲ ~ Networking
- ▲ ~ Discounts
- ▲ ~ Food and Fellowship

To join the club, please print and complete the form below. Please provide as much information as possible so we may be able to contact you. Emails are sent to members on a regular basis to communicate club activities, events and programs. Members will receive our newsletter by email. The newsletters are also posted on our website in PDF format for anyone to download and print. You can access our website at:

<http://www.rainbowgardenclub.com/>

RGC Membership Application

Your Name: _____ Birth Date: _____

Partner Name: _____ Birth Date: _____

(Please provide Partner's Name If Any - \$15 Membership Covers Both Singles & Couples - Birthday Info is Optional)

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Email Address(s): _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

MAIL TO: R.G.C. - Membership - P.O. Box 226811 - Dallas, TX 75222-6811

Please make your check for \$15, payable to "Rainbow Garden Club," .