

President's Corner: January, 2023

Happy New Year, all! Now that we're in the doldrums of winter, what can we do to keep up our gardening activities? Here are some winter-related tips that will help with gardening indoors and out.

It's not enough to dust your furniture. As the **Missouri Botanical Garden (MBG)** advises, we should wash the dust off house plant leaves regularly in order to help them get light more efficiently and grow better. Setting pots of houseplants on trays containing pebbles and water will help those that need more humidity. They also recommend watering your houseplants with room temperature water.

Despite being careful when bringing houseplants indoors during the fall, insects will sneak in. **MGB** reminds us to watch for white, mealy bugs, touching them with a cotton swab soaked in rubbing alcohol will kill them quickly. You can also safely apply insecticidal soap sprays, if needed, to control pests indoors. Outdoors, they suggest brushing heavy snow from tree and shrub branches. If limbs are damaged by ice or snow, pruning them promptly will help to prevent bark tearing. Allowing ice on plants to melt, however, will help to reduce injury. Sand, bird seed, sawdust or vermiculite are good materials to spread on icy paths. They provide traction and keep from injuring plants.

Although in a different plant hardiness zone than Missouri, the **University of Minnesota Extension** has some good information on how to protect trees and shrubs from winter injury. You can find the article here:

<https://extension.umn.edu/planting-and-growing-guides/protecting-trees-and-shrubs-winter>

For those of you who had a real Christmas tree, how to best recycle it is always an issue. Here is a good way to reuse your tree as a bird feeder. The article has great tips for how to make food ornaments that are safe for birds to eat. Find it at: <https://thegardendiaries.blog/2022/01/03/bird-feeding-station-from-recycled-christmas-tree/>

A few virtual programs may be of interest to you, one that will pique the interest of history and garden buffs (**Please note: viewing hours have been changed to CST for those programs in EST**):

Thursday, January 12 – 1:00-2:00 p.m. *Tree Mob: Sweet Birch* offered by **Harvard's Arnold Arboretum**.

Join Horticulturist Brendan Keegan to learn about this fascinating tree and its role in ecological succession, its use by wildlife, and its importance to indigenous communities. Register here:

<https://arboretum.harvard.edu/events/event-signup/?id=62225>

Thursday, January 12 - 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. *Seed Starting* offered by **Seed St. Louis**. The basics of starting seeds, what is needed for growing healthy seedlings, and general tips and tricks will be presented. Register at:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/7716704279172/WN_IBJooVb2Su2yLKAsVjui7A

Tuesday, January 17th, 2023 - 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. *Making Gorgeous Pollinator Gardens: How to do it!*

Offered by the **North American Native Plant Society**. This talk will show examples of and highlight problems and how to overcome them. Register at:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/making-gorgeous-pollinator-gardens-using-native-plants-how-to-do-it-tickets-439138794957>

Wednesday, January 18, 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. *Herbs Used in the Civil War* presented by **St. Louis Herb Society**. Discover the role herbs played in the Civil War. Register at:

<https://slcl.evanced.info/signup/EventDetails?EventId=322617>

Sunday, January 22 - 3:00 to 5:30 p.m. *Functional Planting: Creating Adaptive Plant Systems*, *Joanne Walkovic Memorial Lecture*, co-sponsored with the **Hardy Plant Society/Mid-Atlantic Chapter**. An event held at the **Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College**. This talk presents a powerful alternative to traditional horticulture—designed plantings that function like naturally-occurring plant communities. Join landscape architect Thomas Rainer, a leading voice in ecological landscape design, to learn how to translate wild inspirations into designed systems, and how to layer plants in biodiverse assemblages. Register at:

https://support.scottarboretum.org/joanne-walkovic-memorial-lecture-functional-planting-virtual/?_gl=1*14v997p*_ga*NTk2Mzk2MTMuMTY3MjY4MjY0Ng..*_ga_Y8DSF1N8WS*MTY3MjY4MjY0Ni4xLjAuMTY3MjY4MjY0Ni4wLjAuMA