

Winter Beds & Borders

~ The Royal Horticultural Society

Gardens are often neglected in winter once most showy flowers have faded, but with the right plants they can still be enchanting places at this time of year. Plants with winter interest often have special, rather subtle qualities, such as sweetly scented flowers, attractive stems, foliage, seedheads, berries, or structural shapes.

Winter flowers: Hellebores, such as *Helleborus x hybridus*, are among the best winter-blooming plants. Flowering from mid-winter to mid-spring, these clump-forming evergreen perennials are easily grown in light shade in any good soil, and form good ground cover when planted in drifts. Other perennials with winter interest worth seeking out include mauve-flowered *Iris unguicularis* and *Arum italicum 'Marmoratum'*, with its white-veined leaves.

Transient beauty: Frost and snow add an element of short-lived beauty to the garden in winter, often transforming it overnight. A light covering of snow or a hard frost can enhance structures, highlighting architectural features and plants, and briefly changing the whole feel of a garden.

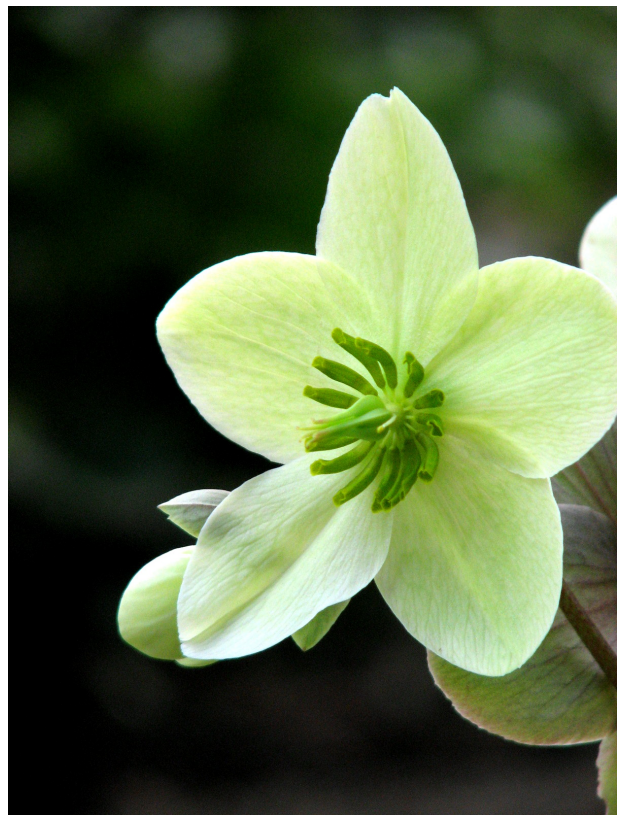
Scented highlights: Mahonias are among the finest evergreen shrubs for winter, with their spiny foliage and sweetly scented yellow blooms, flanked by blue-tinted berries. They are also useful for their architectural form, which makes them an attractive backdrop for other plants such as *Euonymus*, with its colorful fruit.

Graceful grasses: The seedheads of some grasses will survive well into winter, providing a touch of unexpected grace to plantings, especially when dusted with frost. Translucent, they allow views through to plants behind, such as the fruit-laden branches of a crab apple (*Malus*).

Scented shrubs: Some shrubs flower in winter, such as witch hazel (*Hamamelis*) with its orange, yellow, or red, spider-like blooms. Other shrubs worth considering for their delicious scent include the honeysuckle *Lonicera x purpusii* and *Chimonanthus praecox*.



Vancouver Medallion 2010 Helleborus x nigercors
~ photos by Cheryl Fiddis



Send me your secrets!

Send to Cheryl Fiddis @ ecfiddis@telus.net
We would love to have more members share their 'secrets' and garden thoughts. Don't be shy!

December is Here... Let's Make An Evergreen Wreath!



After the Christmas tree, wreaths are the traditional Christmas decoration. Wreaths are easy to make from common greens found right outside your home and provide a lovely welcome to greet your guests.

Difficulty: Easy to Moderate

Things You'll Need*

- Ribbons
- Wire Wreath Frame
- Floral Wires
- Garden Shears
- Gift Bows
- Pine Cones
- Scissors
- Wire Clothes Hangers

1 Gather a large shopping bag full of 6-inch garden trimmings. Some suggested trimmings are cedar, pine, fir, redwood, magnolia and oak. Remember to include holly or other red berries in your collection. The tip ends of the branches work best.

2 Use a wire wreath frame or make your own from a wire coat hanger. (Simply unbend it from the familiar shape into a circle; you can use the hook to hang your finished wreath.)

3 Attach #24 floral wire – sometimes called paddle wire anywhere along the wire wreath frame. Tie it to the frame at that point and keep unspooling it and wrapping as you go around the frame with the evergreen bundles of greens.

4 Select several of the garden trimmings and place them together in a bunch with the stems at one end.

5 Place this bundle on top of the frame where the floral wire is connected.

6 Hold the bundle in place and wrap the floral wire around the bundle and frame. You will need two hands for this: one to hold the bundle in place against the frame and one to wrap the wire.

7 Wrap the floral wire around the bundle a second time and then pull it tight. Make sure to leave the wire attached to the frame - you still have a long way to go.

8 Gather another bundle of foliage and place it so that the leaves overlap the first bunch and cover the stems. Make sure that the stems on both bunches face the same direction.

9 Continue overlapping each bunch of foliage and wiring them to the frame until you complete the circle.

10 Add pinecones by twisting a new piece of paddle wire around the base of the cone, leaving a tail of 8 to 10 inches. Tie the wired cone's tail to the wreath.

11 Lift the first bundle that you wired onto the frame and tuck the last bundle under it.

12 Twist the wire tightly around the last bundle. Knot the wire onto the frame, leaving 1 inch of wire with which to hang the finished wreath.

13 Trim the wire with scissors or pruning shears when you're finished. Add ribbons and decorations as desired.

*If you are pressed for time, consider buying a fresh plain green wreath at your local garden centre and simply add your own decorations and trims.

Read More: <http://tinyurl.com/7uwkk>

Membership dues:

Please note that the 'dues are due' for 2012! You can pay by cash or cheque at the December or January meetings. Please see Anne at the Membership desk. \$12.00 per year.

BRAGS 2011 EXECUTIVE

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Refreshments

Helen Vaughan
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Speakers

Rosemarie Daviduk
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Website

David Forsyth
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BRAGS Membership/Meetings

Annual membership cost \$12. Members share various gardening interests and enjoy 10% discount of regularly priced items at Garden Works by presenting their membership cards.

All meetings start at 7 pm at the Burnaby Village Museum, - Main Building, 2nd floor.

It's centrally located and there is ample parking. Refreshments are served. All are welcome. Bring your own mug to be eco-friendly!

Upcoming Meetings

December 7, 2011

This meeting will commence with our AGM/Elections and then we will all enjoy our annual Christmas party. Please come with a dish to share with your fellow members, and also bring your significant other to kick off the festive season. Look for the BRAGS name change sheets and make your suggestions while we socialize!

January 4, 2012

Arzeena Hamir, Co-ordinator at Richmond Food Security, will give a talk on one of 2 topics according to the outcome of the November vote, either Zero Mile Diet - How to assess your backyard and choose plants that you can successfully grow to feed yourself. What veggies are most productive in our climate? or Natural Pest Control - Learn different strategies for controlling some of the most common pests and how to do so without breaking the bank. Either topic is sure to be interesting!

February 1, 2012

Enjoy a special presentation by Lee Valley Tools on garden tools.

Special: February 25th, 2012 (Saturday, 11:00 am)

As advised in the November newsletter, a special visit has been arranged for BRAGS members to visit Westcoast Seeds in Ladner. Mark the date and see Rosemarie for more information and to confirm your interest.

Out and About

December 15th, Thursday - all day

Christmas Open House & Customer Appreciation Day at all Gardenworks locations. Start your holiday season with special events, sales and decorating inspiration.

15% Discount!

Seniors free Clinics & Workshops – Gardenworks

Burnaby-Lougheed location only. Call ahead to reserve: 604-299-0621.

“Tea With Victor” Wednesday mornings, 9:30 – 10:30 am.

~Wednesday December 7 – Christmas Wow Factor

~Wednesday December 14 – Spice It Up

~Wednesday December 21 – Season Treat-ings