

December 2019!



Merry Christmas!



Well, the merry month of December is here once again, and 2019 will soon come to an end. December is a lovely month, and while the weather can sometimes be a challenge, the lights are bright, the gatherings are plenty, and there are many events to make the time pass. I hope you enjoy the festive season while it's here, - after all, you can relax in January!

And just a reminder to everyone, to remember the birds who will be wintering in your yard over the next few months. Depending upon the severity of the winter, they may need a bit more help, other than the basics of shelter, and fresh water for drinking and bathing. When the freezing weather arrives, however short term, I temporarily will put out bird seed in various locations throughout my yard. And of course, my hummingbirds will be enjoying their heated feeder until the warmer weather returns! If you can, please take a few pictures of your winter visitors, - I'm sure our members would love to see them.

...Thanks for the Contributions...

I'd like to say a big Thank You to those members who have been making contributions to our newsletters, - articles or pictures, or tales of a trip taken. We love to hear what you've been up to, so please, keep the news coming!

Rosemarie has been busy again, and contributes the following article and pictures. I'm sure you will all enjoy it! Thank you Rosemarie.

Hostas, Hostas, Hostas!

By Rosemarie Daviduk



Hostas, which come in a variety of shapes and colors, are a favorite perennial to grow in the garden. Most species hail from Japan and are easy to grow in the garden or in containers. They appear in early spring and die down in the fall. This plant is usually grown for its leaves, not flowers. Leaves can be variegated, blue, green or yellow. The leaf shapes can be narrow, wide, round, oval, heart or blunt pointed. The flowers which can be single or double, usually bloom for about three weeks. Their colors can be white, purple or lavender.

Hostas can be bought at a local garden store or specialized nursery. A good supplier too, is a relative or neighbour who is dividing up their stock. I found I needed a small axe to cut thru the stock/roots as they were thick/tight and firm. Hostas are easy to grow. The seasons for planting them are spring – to allow the plant to settle in, and during the fall, to allow maximum growth before winter.

Planting recommendations are:

Choose a site that allows for the plant to grow and spread its leaves. To prevent root rot the soil should be well drained.

Dig a hole bigger than the plant. Fill the bottom of the hole with well-rotted manure or compost/organic matter.

Separate the roots of the plant and place the plant in the prepared hole.

Place soil in the hole and around the plant. Press down firmly.

Water well. Mulch helps keep the soil moist.

Feeding:

Hostas do like to be fed. One recommendation is a slow release fertilizer, and also blood meal and bone meal. These are best applied in the spring before growth commences.

Shade or Sunlight:

Dappled sunlight is usually best for hostas. They do need some sunlight to photosynthesize. Too much sun will burn the leaves. However, there are some hostas that can stand full sun. Some examples are Blue Umbrella, Invincible, Francee and Green Fountain.

Rapid changes in temperature/humidity and damp weather early in the spring may cause disintegration of leaves or pale leaves. These can be removed.

Pests:

Slugs and snails may be persistent. They enjoy eating the leaves. Some people who don't want to use pesticides have found scattering egg shells, ashes, coffee grounds or bark helped to deter them. Going out late at night and on rainy days and checking the plant and removing slugs and snails does help to save uneaten leaves.

Companion plants for hostas:

Some examples are foxgloves, bleeding heart, bluebells, primulas, Japanese maples, dogwood, and Japanese anemone.



Remember, if you have anything to share, - stories or pictures that you think our BRAGS members might enjoy, please send them on! If you've been on a vacation, or visited a local attraction, or saw something of interest, don't be shy. We'd love to hear all about it!

Send to Cheryl Fiddis at ecfiddis@telus.net.

Arborists in your Garden?

By Cheryl Fiddis

For many of us, there comes a time when hiring a professional is the right thing to do, and that can sometimes include your garden as well. Often, an arborist is only called in when there is a serious problem, - to identify or remove a diseased or dead specimen, a call often made too late in many situations, when severe damage could have been prevented if treated at an earlier stage.

When buying a new home, a local arborist can inspect an established garden for insects or diseases in that area, which could create future problems. In an established garden, arborists have the equipment, training and experience necessary to deal with issues that may be present, including climbing and pruning large trees, a potentially dangerous feat for most homeowners.

Arborists are also called in to access the aftermath of a storm, making decisions as to the safety or fate of hard hit trees, ultimately often making the call for removal.

City and Park Board arborists:

Maintain trees that line streets and boulevards, and in parks, assessing older trees in mature areas to ensure resident safety.

Plant many new replacement trees each year.

Prune and remove trees as necessary.

Deal with tree pests and diseases.

If you think it's time to call a professional, be sure to hire an arborist who has been certified, and ask for references. Your local Master Gardeners may also be able to assist you in finding the right fit.



Colin McCaffrey

Long-time BRAGS member Colin McCaffrey passed away on November 3rd at George Derby Centre after a lengthy illness. Colin served BRAGS as Secretary and as a regular volunteer at the Rhododendron Festival, especially helping Helen Reid to present her antique tools display.

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*Upcoming Meetings
Events/Club News*

December 4, 2019

Our December meeting will start off with our AGM, and then move right into our BRAGS Christmas party. If there is a position you think you might be interested in, or if you would like to try sharing one, please speak to Wendy. Sharing is a great way to learn more about a position you might want to try!

For the main event, bring your favorite dish to share, and a guest if you wish, and get ready to welcome the festive season!

2020 Here we come!

January 8, 2020

Join us for the first meeting of 2020! Speaker pending!

February 5, 2020

Stay tuned!

March 4, 2020

Good things coming soon!



Out & About Etc...

Gardenworks Customer Appreciation Day

December 19, 2019

Mark the date for 15% savings all day. A garden centre is a lovely place to visit around the christmas season, so beautiful and inviting! Why not make a plan and 'meet a friend' at one?

Heritage Christmas at Burnaby Village Museum

Starting November 23, 2019 and running until January 3, 2020, Heritage Christmas is a wonderful event for all ages. Free gate admission. For specific hours visit www.burnabyvillagemuseum.ca.



A winter Robin in Cheryl's garden...