

Nottingham Country Garden Club

*Newsletter
December, 2011*



**NCGC Meeting /December 1, 2011
9:30 a.m. MUD Bldg. #81**

**Program: "A Lone Star Christmas"
Speaker: Meda Wogan**

We'll be enjoying a pot luck luncheon, so bring your favorite dish or dessert. (Please do your best to make it a "ready-to-serve" dish due to limited ovenj refrigerator space. Don't forget serving utensils!) There will also be a Christmas tree ready for some special decorations. If you would like, bring in decorations that you imagine might be on a tree back in the early days of Texas settlement. We will also be honoring our past presidents at this meeting, so you won't want to miss this wonderful morning with good friends, yummy food, and a great program.

A Word From Our President

Hello to all Nottingham Country Garden Club members. I hope that you all have time to enjoy the beauty of the season before you. I wish to share with you my love, good wishes, and healthy blessings. Spread love and kindness through your world. Enjoy the sparkle!

Love,
Sue

December Fieldtrip

**December 9th
6:30-9:30**

Come and enjoy the 49th Annual Candlelight Tour sponsored by the Heritage Society at Sam Houston Park (Bagby and Clay, Houston). Come see characters from Houston's past, historic structures decorated for the season, games in the Museum Gallery, carolers strolling the park's pathways, and much more. Tickets can be purchased that evening for \$10 (adults to 64) and \$5 (65 and over). Spouses and guests are welcome to join us. There will be sign-ups at the Dec. 1st meeting for carpooling.



Events and Workshops

Houston Federation of Garden Clubs

Just a reminder to those of you who have already purchased tickets for the Holiday Luncheon and Fundraiser:

Friday; Dec. 9th: Houston Civic Garden Center, 1500 Hermann Dr., Houston

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Program: "The Fifth Day of Christmas: A Remembrance"

Presenter: Jere Pfister

Don't forget to bring an unwrapped toy for the Star of Hope Mission, Toys for Children project. Please no guns, swords, or weapon type toys or toys requiring batteries. There is a special need for items suitable for teenagers 12-16. Gift cards are great for this age group. Donations by checks will also be accepted. Make checks payable to Star of Hope. Even if you are not able to attend donations are most appreciated. Bring your donation of choice to the Dec. 1st meeting and we'll be sure it gets there.

For more information or for carpooling call Donna Luther @ (281) 492-1512

Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens

December is a great time to visit Mercer Arboretum. They have some wonderful events planned. On December 2 & 3, from 1-4 p.m. will be their Chrysanthemum Society Show & Sale. On December 14th from noon-2 p.m. learn about winter vegetables with Scott Snodgrass from Edible Earth Resources.

Spend a Morning with the Fort Bend Master Gardeners

On Saturday, December 3, 2011, the Fort Bend Master Gardeners will open their Demonstration Gardens to the public from 9:00-11:00 a.m. You'll be able to stroll through the gardens and talk to the volunteers who design and maintain them. The gardens are located at the Agricultural Center, 1402 Band Rd., Rosenberg. Take one of the sidewalks back to the area behind the building.



Planning Ahead

*NCGC: Jan. 5th meeting will be a presentation on Water Conservation by Dr. Sheri Grahmann of the Fort Bend Master Gardeners.

*NCGC: January extra activity will be a hands-on workshop at the home of Gwen Heck. Each of us will be making a rain barrel of our own.

*Houston Federation of Garden Clubs' January 13th program will be "Famous Trees for Texas: Big, Bold and Beautiful", presented by Pete Smith.

*Fort Bend Master Gardeners' January 19th program will be a presentation by John Panzarella on citrus and fruit trees.

Last Chance to Help Our Fundraising Committee!!

The Fundraising Committee has some exciting raffles planned this year to raise much needed funds for our guest speakers, but they need our help! Look over the following list of items they need donated and bring in one or two (or even more!).

In order to allow time to arrange the baskets **please bring your contributions to the December, January, or February meetings** or contact Janet Blowers (janetblowers@hotmail.com) or Lori Fay (luvgingerpug@yahoo.com) to come pick them up.

Sweet Treats: Any baking item or sweet item (can be sugar free) Suggestions: baking mixes, chocolates, mints or hard candies, oven mitts, rolling pin, cupcake wrappers, decorations for cookies or cakes, sprinkles

Herbs: Any item related to herbs or herb gardening. Suggestions: Any herb seeds, pots, gloves, plant labels, gardening tools, spice jars

Your contributions are greatly appreciated! Thanks to everyone for your continued support.

Garden Club Polo Shirts

NCGC now has its own polo shirt with our club logo on it. Orders will be taken at the December and January meetings only. We want to be sure we receive them before our plant sale in the spring. The shirts are polo style in white and cost \$25.00. Look for the table at the meetings with the ordering information. Be sure to choose your size carefully as there are no refunds or exchanges. Payment is due with your order. Make checks payable to NCGC.

Magazine Donations

Just a reminder to bring in your old, "gently read" issues of magazines. Magazines can be on any subject (gardening, cookingjfood, healthjwellness, familyj parenting, decoratingjhome, traveljleisure etc.) Magazines will be available for purchase at each meeting.

DECEMBER BIRTHOAYS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY To:

JOYCE MERRETT: 12/1

ALICE BROWN: 12/3

LISA HOLDEN: 12/S

SHIRLEY PARMA: 12/6

PATPLESKO:12/7

JEWEL CULLINS:

12/20

DEBBIE GUNTER:

12/25



Monthly Gardening Tasks - December



Sources: Fort Bend Master Gardeners;

Dr. Doug Welsh, professor and horticulturist, Texas A&M University, Texas Garden A/mtnac
Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc. website (www.fbmng.com)

- *Finish mulching all flower beds before winter sets in.
- *You can still plant chard, collards, beets, sugar snap peas, radishes and spinach in your winter vegetable garden.
- *Begin planting fruit and nut trees in a well-drained spot. They do not like wet feet!
- *Feed snapdragons and other spring flowering annuals every two weeks.
- *Plant muscadine grapes. Plant 15 to 20 feet apart and prepare each row for trellising.

And what about those holiday plants?

*Poinsettias: Named after Joel Robert Poinsett, first U.S. ambassador to Mexico (1825-29) and avid botanist, they have become one of the most popular holiday gift plants. Choose one that has small, tightly closed flower buds, dark green leaves, and brilliantly colored bracts. Choose one that hasn't shed its pollen (check the bracts for yellow pollen stains). Select a plant that is about as wide as it is tall. Place in an area with bright light, temperatures in the 60s and some humidity to slow flowering. To speed up flowering, move to a sunny spot where the temperature is in the 80s.

*Amaryllis: Plant the bulb in a small pot with good potting soil and have the top (pointy end) of the bulb sticking up out of the soil about 1 inch. Add water and bright indoor light, and plant growth will begin. The foliage and bloom spike emerge together in about 14 days. To enjoy amaryllis for months indoors, start growth of multiple bulbs at 1-week intervals to produce dozens of blooms.

*Christmas Cactus: A favorite holiday plant, it produces a profusion of blooms ranging from hot pink to apricot, red, purple, and white. Buy plants that have many flower buds that are just beginning to open. This is not the type of cactus we think of that lives in the desert. This plant lives in tropical jungles in the trees. Take care when watering. Its soil should be moist but neither completely dry nor saturated. When the top 1 inch of the soil is dry to the touch, water lightly. Set the plant in bright indoor light. The stems will grow in low light, but it will not bloom without bright light.

Don't throw away any of your holiday plants. With care, you can rebloom your plants for years to come.

