



leading garden organization in the region.

Although I studied landscapes and garden design as part of my architectural education which included study in France and England, I am not the expert on plants that we have enjoyed with our past horticulturalist presidents. But I have great enthusiasm for all aspects of gardening!

I have learned much from the guest speakers over the years as a M.H.S. member, and look forward to the educational presentations of 2010. I see the promotion of horticultural education as a great goal of the Memphis Horticultural Society and hope to use my presidency to advance this position, and uphold the reputation of this fine group as the top garden related organization in the region.

It is truly an honor to accept the position of President of the Memphis Horticultural Society, the

## Second Life for Christmas Trees

Once the lights and trim are removed and back in their boxes, what do you do your Christmas tree?

A short-term solution can be as easy as decorating the tree as a food source for wildlife. After taking off all the decorations, re-decorate the tree with food items that can be eaten by the birds and squirrels. Things like popcorn or cranberries strung together and hung like garland on the tree become tasty treats for squirrels. Pine cones smeared with peanut butter and hung on the tree become ornament feeding stations for birds. You might also consider hanging apple rings or hollowed-out halves of an orange. Hang it in the tree and fill the 'orange bowl' with peanuts."

The tree can be set up and secured in a spot in the yard where all can enjoy the action as birds and other animals come to check out what kind of treats are available.

The tree also will be a place where the animals can hide from the cold winds.

After spending the winter out in the garden, the tree will need to be disposed of as spring approaches.

Move the tree, now probably bare of needles, to the vegetable or flower garden where you can plant annual flowering vines at the base. It won't be long before the tree becomes a trellis for colorful, flowering vines."

Another way to dispose of the tree is to offer it up to the chipper and turn it into useable mulch. "This chipped material can then be used in the landscape to act as a cover over the soil around trees, shrubs, and flowers.

Christmas trees make excellent material to build brush piles for wildlife. These piles provide cover for small animals and birds. The animals use the piles to hide from predators, as safe resting places, and to raise their young.

"The first step in building a brush pile is to have a base of large material such as large rocks, logs, or tree stumps. This provides a place for small animals to access the interior of the pile. Then pile on the Christmas trees.

Another approach is to remove the tree's branches. By cutting the branches from the trunk, they can be used as a nice "blanket" to place over perennials or other tender plants in the garden. The trunk that is left makes a great pole or stake for tomatoes.

—Condensed from

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with thanks to Illinois Extension Educator Greg Stack



## 'Tis the Season?

Since the last time I wrote to you I must have become a Scrooge, or a Grinch, or maybe just a disgruntled old lady, because when I walk into a store and see Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas decorations lined up beside each other it just puts me in a really, really bad mood. I mean, come on folks! Halloween and Christmas? Think they could be any more blatant in sending the message that the holidays themselves mean nothing and it's all about the merchandising and making that all mighty dollar?

Am I the only one that remembers when all the holidays were separate and special events, each one looked forward to with anticipation instead of being bombarded with skeletons, turkeys, and Santas all smashed together on crowded shelves? I can't imagine how confusing this must be for children, picking out a Halloween costume while their parents are buying Christmas tree lights! What are we teaching them? Do they know there's a difference from Thanksgiving, when we are supposed to give thanks for all we have and help those who might have less, and Halloween when they get a big bag of free candy when they go trick or treating? Do they understand that Christmas is about the spirit of giving and taking a moment to worship in whatever way you choose instead of getting to dress up like their favorite Superhero?

Most gardeners are seasonal people. We like Spring to be Spring, Summer to be Summer, Fall to be Fall, and Winter to be Winter. We like nature to be at least somewhat dependable and trust that when it isn't that our plants will be tough enough to adapt. We want our seasons separate the way they have been since the dawn of time. We like the anticipation of seeing those Spring flowers bursting out of the ground after a long cold winter. We get excited when we see the trees beginning to flush with color. We revel in the changes all the different seasons bring us and we don't want everything to happen all at once.

Well, this old gardener doesn't want her holidays jammed together any more than she wants her seasonal treasures smashed into a two month period. Maybe I'm not such a Grinch after all, maybe I'm just in tune with nature and know that for everything there is a season.

We are in for a seasonal treat at the January meeting! Felder Rushing will be sharing his knowledge in his own unique way. Plan to be there and bring a friend!



Glad to be back,  
Kay Little



## New Year's Trivia

The ball in Times Square was first dropped in 1908 to signal the beginning of the new year.

New Year's Day is the oldest of all holidays. It was first observed in ancient Babylon about 4000 years ago.

In Greece, New Year's Day is also celebrated as the Festival of Saint Basil. Children leave their shoes by the fireside on New Year's Day with the hope that Saint Basil will come and fill their shoes with gifts.

In Japan, on New Year's Day everyone gets dressed in their new clothes and homes are decorated with pine branches and bamboo, symbols of long life.

In Scotland, the New Year is called Hogmanay. In

the villages of Scotland, barrels of tar are set afire and then rolled down the streets. This ritual symbolizes that the old year is burned up and the new one is allowed to enter.

Many cultures believe that anything in the shape of a ring is good luck, because it symbolizes "coming full circle," completing a year's cycle. For that reason, the Dutch believe that eating donuts on New Year's Day will bring good fortune.

The Tournament of Roses Parade started in 1886 when members of the Valley Hunt Club decorated their carriages with flowers to celebrate the ripening of the orange crop in California. The Rose Bowl football game was first played as part of the Tournament of Roses in 1902. It was replaced by Roman chariot races the following year. The football game returned to the festival in 1916.

## Greening Your Gift Wrap

Gardening people are so creative! Here are some of techniques to get the most out of your wrapping materials and idea for using materials you may never have considered before:

- Use any sized brown paper bag as a gift bag. Simply turn the bag inside out to hide any printing on the outside. Use tissue paper inside to further hide the printing. Decorate with natural looking ribbon or raffia. You can also add candy canes or pine cones to complete the look. Or you can buy some festive rubber stamps and ink from a hobby store and add your own patterns to the outside of the bag.
- Collect some dried leaves from your yard. Open up a brown paper bag or get some plain brown paper on a roll. Glue the leaves in a random pattern onto the paper and use as wrapping paper. Finish with a raffia bow and some pine cones.
- To save on your use of bows, use strips of wrapping paper instead. Cut them to your desired width and then curl the edge with a pair of scissors. Cinch them together in the middle with a small piece of ribbon and attach to your gift as a topper.
- Make gift bags from pieces of fabric. Sew a large hem with an opening around the top for a ribbon to let you tie the bags closed. These bags can be saved from year to year to get the most out of them.
- Wrap your gift in a shawl, a bandana, or a scarf. Not only will this save on wrapping material, but it adds an extra little gift for your recipient. The wrapping becomes part of the gift.
- Instead of a gift bag, use part of your gift as a container. You can add smaller gifts into a purse, backpack, bucket or cooking pot.

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# Clippings

January 2010

## Memphis Favorite Felder Rushing Will Speak at January Meeting

We are very pleased to welcome back one of the Memphis Horticultural Society's most popular speakers, Felder Rushing, for our January meeting. Felder, a former Extension Service urban horticulture specialist, is author or co-author of 15 gardening books and has written thousands of gardening columns in syndicated newspapers. He has had hundreds of articles and photographs published in regional and national garden magazines ranging from "Garden Design" to the "National Geographic". Felder currently co-hosts a garden program called "The Gesalt Gardener."

This will be the first of Felder's over 100 garden lectures that he will give across the country in 2010 to flower shows, horticultural and plant societies, and Master Gardener conferences.

Due to early print deadlines caused by the holidays, the title of the presentation has not been finalized at publication. But attendees can be assured of an off-beat approach with humorous anecdotes and stunning photography with advice to help gardeners get past the "stinkin rules" of horticulture.

This meeting will be held at the Botanic Garden in Hardin Hall at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 5, 2010

The meeting is free for members who have paid their 2010 dues. The public is invited for \$5.



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