

Florets
Twin City Garden Club
January 2024



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Meeting: 1 pm Tuesday January 16 2024

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 2101 S. Prospect, Champaign

Program: Houseplants 101 with Planted

Presenter: Kristyn McReaken

Join the owner of Planted, Kristyn McReaken, for a presentation on all things houseplants! The class will include a discussion about caring for your houseplants, choosing the best plants for you, using plants to enhance your home, and Q&A.

Flower Show 101 (from Tori Corkery)

In November we discussed the importance of the show schedule. It is "the law of the show" and contains everything exhibitors need to know. At our January meeting we'll discuss roles involved in staging and placement. We will also have a signup sheet for those who want to help write the schedule and/or help with staging for our upcoming show.

Refreshment break

Hostesses: Lisa Sur and Martha Tinsley

Floral arrangement by: Martha Tinsley

Penny Pines Jar will be present

Membership: Membership dues are payable starting this month

Business Meeting

Agenda

Call to Order

President's Opening Remarks

Recording Secretary Minutes/Approval

Treasurer's Report

Corresponding Secretary Report

Standing Committee Reports

Membership

Facebook

Sunshine

Program

Website

Philanthropy

Yearbook

Social

Unfinished Business

New Business: Nominating Committee Appointments

Adjourn

IN THE WINTER GARDEN

Surveying the winter pollinator garden, the scene may be dreary especially if left a bit untidy with blackened stems and small bits for the bird and small animal life to nibble and to provide habitat for overwintering bees. It is good to know that even though there is bleakness now, the remains of our carefully cultivated asters and sedums will return. What of their hardiness brings them back? For the determined botanist this is a complex story of evolutionary adaptation to environmental variations in exposure to temperature, moisture and light variation. The quick answer – their roots.

Whether native or assimilated, perennial-type plants have adapted to their particular location being able to thrive and multiply. In regions such as the northern states, it may appear that these have perished, due to freezing temperatures. As a protection against the cold harshness the more tender parts of the plants: the flowers, leaves, and stems do decline and wither. And the roots? How do those tolerate the cold temperatures of the underlying ground?

The primary consideration is the prevention of water freezing within the root. Without the need to maintain metabolism for the above ground parts, the roots have two strategies: 1) complete dormancy – all cellular processes within the root ceases or 2) freeze tolerance, a complex combination of the production of a mixture of proteins, lipids, and other constituents that together act to lower the freezing point of water within the root tissue. It is also noted that the outer layers of perennial-type roots are more dense with thicker cellular tissues thus adding another layer of protection. Roots of annuals tend to be more thin.

Soil temperatures do vary by depth. During the cold months, the surface temp is mostly close to the temp for any given day. Below the surface, temperatures are a bit warmer, especially at the beginning of the cold season. Actual data for this winter season, which started relatively mild indicate that the soil has not yet frozen, even at the surface on bare soil, with only one day (in December) recording a slightly less than freezing temp¹. Jan 2023 was relatively mild (no readings less than 32 F but there were actually some temps just below freezing in the colder Jan of 2022. Detailed info can be obtained at the Illinois State Water Survey website, <https://warm.isws.illinois.edu/warm/> This site does require a user log-in. Access is obtained at initial request for data and is open to the public by choosing “individual”.

Given that the Illinois average over-the-winter temps range in, or at, near freezing, most precipitation does result in snow, with its claim to be a good insulator against soil freezing. This could be another of layer of protection if it were deep and continuous, a situation that does not often occur in Central Illinois, though it is certainly true for northern parts of the state. Weather changes here are quite variable, just as now as the temps are changing from moderate cold to immoderate levels, with some forecasts for the end of January predicting a warming trend. This variability is not unusual for Champaign. Consequences of this are freezing-thawing cycles that can result in soil disruption (“heaving”) that may actually lift small perennial plants up out of their carefully niched spot leaving the crowns of the plant exposed which may result in frost damage to the plant. One tip for limiting heaving from the UI Extension Service advises leaving the plant debris and/or mulch in our perennial gardens to add another layer of insulation.

With a little bit of snow, mulch and luck – will the 2023 newly planted hyssop return this year?

¹ Starting Jan 12 2024, the trend is now toward freezing.