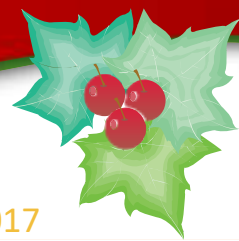


# Newsletter



December | 2017

Greetings valued friends, neighbors and customers. The Holiday Season has arrived bringing with it cooler weather and busy schedules. As this year come to an end, we would like to thank all of you for your patronage and support. We are very pleased to bring you the following tips and information for your gardening enjoyment.

## Daylight Savings Time

### **WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR OUR PLANTS - PLANT LIGHT REQUIREMENT**

Daylight saving time has ended for this year. We set our clocks back by one hour and thus gain an extra hour of light in the morning. It also means that we have lost an hour of evening light. Where does that manipulation of time place us with reference to our garden?

It is important to realize that nothing really has changed. November 1<sup>st</sup> was still ten hours and 3 minutes long. We will continue to lose two minutes of daylight each day as we slide down to nine hours and 20 minutes of light by the end November. The daily loss of daylight continues until the winter solstice on Dec. 21, when the day length will stand at nine hours and five minutes.

Why do gardeners have to keep track of day length? It is because our plants are measuring the light-to-darkness ratio daily and responding to the changes. It would be wise for us to keep up to date with our plants.

Why do plants find it necessary to stay aware of the ever-changing length of daylight? It is because there is more than a nine-hour difference in day length between the longest and shortest days of the year. Using a protein receptor, plants sense the daily changes in night length hence the terms "long-day," "short-day" or "day-neutral". It was believed 100 years ago that it was the length of day that governed plant growth. Now it is understood that it is the dark period that controls growth and flowering in many plants – animals, beetles and birds.

Are you aware of any short-day plants (remember they should be called long-night plants)? Think of fall flowering plants like chrysanthemums, poinsettias and Christmas cacti as plants that bloom when the nights are longer than the days. For long-day (short-night) plants, consider spring blooms like carnations, peas and violas that their critical photoperiod occurs when the days are lengthening.

The third category, day-neutral plants like roses, cucumbers and tomatoes do not require a given photoperiod to initiate flowering, but instead flower after reaching a developing stage or age, store of nutrients, or biomass.

Thus far we have looked at the effects of a single plant-governing factor, a phytochrome protein, that impacts a single response (flowering or not), yet a number of other genetic, environmental and chemical factors operating alone or interacting can stimulate, retard or otherwise modify plant growth.

One example that you may have experienced is seen with the Christmas cactus. As previously stated, it is a long-night plant. That is why six weeks before flowering is wanted, the plant should be located in the dark from 5 p.m. until 8 a.m. Provide light during the day, water as needed and allow 15 hours of darkness, and you can expect the plant to flower. However, it may or not, depending on temperature. Exposed to temperature above 70 degrees, the plant will not bloom. Exposed to temperatures below 50 degrees, the plant will flower regardless of day length, thus showing that, in this plant, temperature is more important than day length.

### **'NATURAL PLANT REMEDIES & TIPS'**

#### **EPSOM SALT**

(Magnesium Sulfate)

The following are just a few of the many uses for which Epsom Salt can be used in your everyday gardening.

#### **Uses:**

\*Helps improve the flavor of fruit and vegetables. (Makes fruit sweeter).

\*Greens up plants & vegetables. (Apply 1 tbs. per 12 inches of height once per month).

\*Helps plants produce chlorophyll.

\*Improves absorption naturally eliminating the need for processed chemical fertilizers.

\*Helps convert sunlight into food.

\*Helps plants produce more and larger fruit and improves flavor. (1 tbs. per gal. of water/or spread directly on the soil around the plants).

\*Helps increase nutrient absorption time.

\*Helps make lawns lush & green.

(Use at rate of 3 pounds per 1250 SF and water well).

\*Promotes larger, darker and deeper colors on rose blooms. –

(Add when planting and at time of bloom).

\*Helps roses produce larger and deeper colored blooms. (1 tbs. per 12" of height once per month).

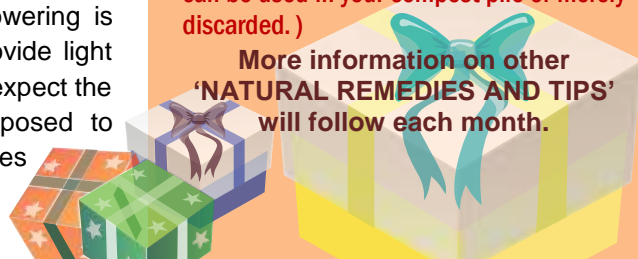
\*Makes a great seed soak before planting.

#To soak seeds: Use 2 teaspoons per 1 quart of water.

#For other purposes: Add two (2) tablespoons in 1 gallon of water (Use 1 cup full in a hose sprayer).

\*Use for stump removal: Works great as a stump remover for cut trees. (To use as a stump remover, drill several 1 inch holes into the stump and fill with Epsom Salt. Water and cover with tarp or plastic sheet. The stump will dry out and become decomposed creating pieces of wood that can be used in your compost pile or merely discarded.)

More information on other  
'NATURAL REMEDIES AND TIPS'  
will follow each month.



## Growing Indoor Plants With Low-Light

You may be wondering if there are indoor plants that can exist and survive in a home or office without any windows, or in dimly lit rooms.

Yes, many indoor house plants can tolerate low-light levels with little or no natural light. The operative word here is tolerate. This group of indoor plants would prefer more light, but they'll stick it out and contently grace your home or work desk and bleak corners with their cheery green foliage under natural or fluorescent light.



Years ago, botanists picked plants from the shady jungle floor and brought them into their parlors, and that is why they are made for shade. And now they have become adaptable to our modern Here are a few plants worth trying in low-light areas:

- Chinese Evergreen
- Heartleaf
- Golden Pothos
- Marginata Dracaena
- Parlor Palm
- ZZ Plant
- Snake Plant
- Peace Lily
- Lucky Bamboo

There are other indoor plants that may be up to the task of livening up your low-light living spaces, but these plants are a good place to start. These plants are also low-maintenance and easy to grow. So even if you don't have a green thumb, they should survive.

**Watering.** Determining how much to water your plant is going to require a little bit of attention on your part. And you will need to get your hands dirty, well, just a finger. Poke your finger about an inch into the soil of your houseplant. If it's dry to the touch, then it's time to water. If not, wait a few more days and check again. Roots need water, but they also need oxygen to grow. Allowing your soil to dry out between watering allows the roots to get a healthy dose of both oxygen and water.

Water in the morning and use room temperature water. When you water the

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plant, keep your eyes on the bottom of the pot. Water slowly and evenly around the surface of the soil. As soon as water starts to trickle out of the bottom, that's your sign to stop watering.

#### Tips to increase available light

Using light-colored backdrops will increase the light available to your plants. White plaster reflects about 90 percent of the light that falls on it, while beige or gray paint increases the reflection by about 50 percent. Mirrors reflect 80 to 90 percent of the light while wallpaper reflects only about 35 percent.

By following these guidelines you should be able to enjoy plants indoors that thrive all year long.

*For all of you that have been requesting vegetable plants... we now have tomato plants and pepper plants **available**.*

## Preparing Your Rooted Cuttings For Spring

The gardening season may be coming to a close, but there are always tasks to be completed and opportunities to get your hands dirty.

If you took cuttings of plants before the weather turned colder and rooted them in water, it may be time to pot up those cuttings in actual soil. Once the roots have grown to 1-2 inches long, the cuttings are ready to be planted in pots. Although the cuttings may look happy and green in the water, you shouldn't put off potting them in soil, or the roots will eventually rot and become mushy and slimy.

When your cuttings are ready to be potted, remove them from the water, gently tease the roots apart, and separate the individual cuttings. If you have saved small pots from your spring planting, you can reuse those for your cuttings. If you forgot to save them, or if you don't have enough, plastic disposable cups make a great substitution.

Just make sure to drill or cut holes in the bottom of the cups, so the water can drain. Once your containers are ready, simply put a small amount of fresh soil in the bottom of the pot, place your cutting in the pot, and fill the rest of the container with soil.

Be gentle, but make sure the soil makes good contact with the roots and there are no air pockets. Once your newly potted plants are ready, make sure the plants are well watered and place them in a sunny window or under lights for the winter.

As soon as the roots on your cuttings have grown a little, don't put off potting them up. Your new plants will thank you and you will be rewarded with healthy plants to create a beautiful garden in the spring!

*Merry Christmas  
and a  
Prosperous New Year!*

