



Sandhills
Horticultural Gardens

The Bloomin' News

Sandhills Community College

Vol. 10, No. 4

Winter 2015

*The Sandhills Horticultural Society - dedicated to the support of the Sandhills Horticultural Gardens since 1987.
Please help the Gardens grow by becoming a Society member.*

The History of Christmas Trees

Dolores Muller



Have you ever wondered how some Christmas traditions started? According to the dictionary, a tradition is a belief or behavior passed down within a group or society with symbolic meaning or special significance with origins in the past.

The evergreen tree has traditionally been used to celebrate winter festivals (pagan and Christian) for thousands of years. Germany is credited with starting the Christmas tree

tradition as we know it, in the 16th century, when devout Christians brought decorated trees into their homes. The first recorded one on display in America was in the 1830's by the German settlers of Pennsylvania. As late as the 1840's Christmas trees were seen as pagan symbols. To the New England Puritans, Christmas was sacred. The "heathen traditions" of Christmas carols, decorated trees, and any joyful expression desecrated this sacred holiday. In 1659, in Massachusetts, any observance of December 25 (other than a church service) was a penal offense. That stern solemnity continued until the 19th century, when the influx of German and Irish immigrants undermined the Puritan legacy.

In 1846, Queen Victoria and her German Prince Albert, were sketched in the London News standing with their children around a Christmas tree. Victoria was very popular, and what was done at court immediately became fashionable—not only in Britain, but with fashion-conscious East Coast American Society. The Christmas tree had arrived. Europeans used small trees about four feet high, while Americans liked their Christmas trees to reach from floor to ceiling. Electricity brought about Christmas lights. Did you know that it was Thomas Edison's assistants that came up with the idea of electric Christmas tree lights? Christmas trees began to appear in town squares across the country and having a Christmas tree in the home became an American tradition.

Today there are many significant trees that adorn our cities, state capitals and the White House. The New York City Rockefeller Center tree dates back to the Depression Era with the first tree in 1931. It was a small unadorned tree placed by construction workers at the center of the construction site. Today the 85 foot tree in Rockefeller Center is laden with over 25,000 Christmas lights.

Franklin Pierce, the 14th president, brought the Christmas tree tradition to the White House. In 1923, President Calvin Coolidge started the National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony held every year on the White House lawn. The centerpiece for the Christmas at Biltmore celebration, America's largest home in Asheville, NC, is a 35-foot Fraser fir in the Banquet Hall. Another famous tree is in Trafalgar Square in London, England, which is given to the UK by Norway every year as a 'thank you' present for the help the UK gave Norway in World War II.

Christmas Tree Trivia:

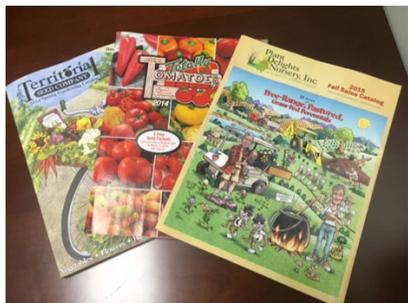
- Artificial Christmas Trees started becoming popular in the early 20th century. In the Edwardian period Christmas Trees were made from colored ostrich feathers. Around 1900 white trees were fashionable - so if you thought colored trees are a new invention they're not! Artificial trees have been made from feathers, papier mâché, metal, glass, and plastic.
- In 1979, the National Christmas Tree was not lighted except for the top ornament in honor of the American hostages in Iran.
- Between 1887-1933 a fishing schooner called the Christmas Ship tied up at the Clark Street bridge in Chicago and sold spruce trees from Michigan.
- The tallest living Christmas tree is believed to be the 122-foot, 91-year-old Douglas fir in the town of Woodinville, Washington.
- Christmas trees are grown in all 50 states including Hawaii and Alaska.
- 100,000 people are employed in the Christmas tree industry with 98 percent of all Christmas trees grown on farms.
- You should never burn your Christmas tree in the fireplace. It contributes to creosote buildup.
- In 1963, the National Christmas Tree was not lit until December 22nd because of a national 30-day period of mourning following the assassination of President Kennedy.
- Teddy Roosevelt banned the Christmas tree from the White House for environmental reasons.

Growing up in the Midwest our Christmas tree of choice was a Balsam. My recollection is they were scrawny trees with few spindly branches, leaving lots of space for ornaments, and the most wonderful fragrance. Here in North Carolina the Fraser fir is most popular. California, Oregon, Michigan, Washington, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and our own state of North Carolina are the top Christmas tree producing states.



Catalogs, Catalogs Everywhere!!

Johanna Westmen



It's that time of year again when devoted gardeners spend more and more time indoors instead of outdoors. When that happens, we tend to spend a lot of our free time thinking about the upcoming spring season and all of the wonderful plants we will be planting and growing. Another important part of

this time of year is the hours we spend dreaming and drooling over the myriad of seed and plant catalogs we receive in the mail. I am also guilty of this experience and subscribe to at least four different tomato seed catalogs alone! I have been known to even purchase plants in the mail, oh my!! For many it is difficult to know which catalogs are the best for seed purchasing and which are best for mail order plants. I have listed some points below which may help you in making those purchasing decisions.

When it comes to seeds, many companies are now specializing. Some may sell vegetable and flower seeds together where some may just specialize in one or the other. Many now are even specializing in just one particular type of plant, such as tomatoes or peppers. My best advice to you is to do your research before you begin to look at the catalogs. In other words, decide on what you intend to purchase by listening to what other people have recommended or suggested on websites devoted to your particular interest, such as tomatoes or flowering perennials. Today, there is a wealth of information on the internet on just about any particular subject, particularly gardening websites. People are not afraid to give you their opinion on how something grows or even tastes! Be sure when you are researching that the growing information relates to your locale. Just because it grows great in Michigan doesn't necessarily mean it grows well here in our heat and sandy soils! In particular when purchasing seeds, be sure you are aware of actually how many seeds you are getting. Some companies will sell seeds by the weight and not by the actual number of seeds you will be receiving. For instance, if you have purchased ½ ounce of tomato seeds, you would need to know how many seeds are in an ounce to know exactly how many you will be getting. I happen to know that there can be anywhere from 7,000-11,000 tomato seeds in an ounce, so perhaps receiving 3500 seeds is not quite what you had in mind! Other important information you

need is the cultural requirements to germinate this plant and even what the germination percentage for this particular seed would be. There is nothing more frustrating to buy seeds and then not be able to germinate them.

Another popular type of catalog we receive in the winter are from perennial, shrub and tree mail order nurseries who specialize in mailing your plants through either the post office or some other type of shipping company. I believe this can be the most deceiving and frustrating way to receive plants. Many times the pictures in the catalogs rarely resemble the plants you receive in the mail! Since these plants are being shipped they obviously are being shipped in a very small size so they are easily transportable. When they arrive at your door step many times you are left underwhelmed and disappointed and easily frustrated as you attempt to grow this plant into the plant you had seen pictured in the catalog. My best advice to you is to once again do your research to see what others who have ordered from these particular mail order businesses have felt about their purchases, whether they were satisfied or underwhelmed! Customers do not shy away from giving you their opinion, whether it be positive or negative. I'm not saying all mail order nurseries are bad! I was fortunate enough to have had the pleasure of doing my internship at one of the best we have in the country. They are located in Raleigh and do an amazing job of shipping their plant material through the mail. I know because I spent at least a month wrapping and shipping plants to enthusiastic gardeners all over the country and I personally know the care given those plants when packaged. I'm sure most of you have guessed by now that I am talking about Plant Delights Nursery in Raleigh. If you haven't looked at their catalog you should. The information given in the descriptions of the plants can be valuable if you are growing any of the ones listed.

I have personal favorites. The two that come to mind are Southern Exposure Seed Exchange and Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds. Both of these specialize in heirloom varieties of vegetables which have now become my new passion. Many of the varieties people recommend for me to grow tend to be found in either one or both of these catalogs.

Whatever your interest is, do your research first and I believe you can easily determine which catalogs best suit your needs when it comes to ordering either seeds or plants for the spring. Sometimes it is the catalogs we receive in the winter that keep us placated through the cold dreary days of winter until we can get outside again and do what we love the most.....gardening.

Winter Pruning

Jim Westmen

Many people may not think winter time is for pruning, but I believe it is one of the easiest times of the year to prune. The reason for this is the fact that the structure of the trees and shrubbery, particularly deciduous ones, are most evident. This makes it very easy to distinguish corrective pruning needs such as double leaders, thinning, removal of crossing branches, and spacing of branches on trees. For example, when thin pruning a deciduous shrub such as a flowering quince or forsythia, it is very easy to determine which of the branches are older and less productive. These branches are the ones that are typically removed. This type of thin pruning allows you to leave the younger, more vigorous branches in tact on these particular types of shrubbery.

The branch structure of trees can easily be seen during this time of year and this is a great time to space branches on a tree, both radially and vertically. If this procedure is done early on younger trees as they develop it will help you to avoid these types of pruning procedures on larger, more mature trees. This should be done during the first 3-5 years of a newly planted tree. Winter pruning on evergreen plants is beneficial because the plants tend to stay in the same form throughout the winter, remaining in the pruned state

for a much longer time. Another advantage to winter pruning would be the fact that insect and disease pressure remains low during this time of year. This is a definite advantage when we have insects such as borers and beetles which can attack a plant which has been stressed by heavy pruning.

The pruning of fruiting trees also happens during the winter time. We prune such plants as apples, pears, peaches and grapes in February. Not only is disease and insect pressure low during this time of year, but it allows us to see the structure of the plants for the special training of fruit bearing crops such as these.

As with all pruning, regardless of the time of year, you need to have identified the reason and the result desired for your pruning efforts. This will allow you to achieve what you have set out to accomplish.



Horticultural Society Events

Dolores Muller



Bob & Ruth Stoling
explain Bee Keeping

Our last two Lunch and Learn in the Gardens, in July and August, marked the end of the second year of this monthly program. These were two fun, informative programs, one by Adele Kushe and Peggy Hudson of Big Bloomers speaking about new plants on the market and in August Chris Burrows, Grounds Superintendent of Pinehurst Resorts on Growing Grass in the Home

Landscape. We received so much positive feed back we plan to continue these informal Lunch and Learn programs in 2016. Look for details of speakers we have coming in future Bloomin Newsletters.

Our 4th Annual Children's Treasure Trail Adventure was held the end of August on a most beautiful day. We had over 200 children and adults attend. On October 3rd many took advantage of the wonderful prices and interesting varieties of plants offered at the Sandhills Horticultural Society Fall Plant Sale.

It was a crisp, clear night for our first ever Star Gazing and Picnic in the Gardens on October 17th. Cindy Bingham, Director of the Planetarium at Neuseway Nature Park guided participants in identifying the constellations in the night sky.

As the year comes to an end we have a brand new instructor coming to teach Botanical Print Making in November. Participants will make 3-5 prints suitable for framing and gift giving. Maggie Smith will present her Holiday Flower Arranging workshop in December which is always very popular and we will end the year with our thank you to those that have supported the Gardens with our 2nd Annual Holiday Open House at Linda Hamwi's. If you did not get to this event last year be sure to put it on your calendar for this December 12th. See the complete list of events and workshop details in this newsletter and sign up and send in your check so you will not miss out.

Have a wonderful holiday season!



Aldena Frye
Fall Wreath Making/Keeping

Upcoming Events . . . December, January & February

To register for workshops & classes - Payment due at registration. 910-695-3882 to reserve a space. Please give your phone number & email address and *send payment with name of class to:* Sandhills Horticultural Society, 3395 Airport Rd., Pinehurst, NC 28374 **Att: Tricia Mabe.**

You will be on the waiting list until payment is received. Receipt of payment reserves your space in class.

Cancellation prior to 48 hours of the event required to receive a refund or credit toward another workshop.

Christmas Flower Arranging

December 8 (Tuesday) 10AM to Noon – Ball Visitors Center

Maggie Smith of Maggie's Farm designs will conduct this workshop. Participants will make a holiday floral arrangement to take home for the Christmas holiday

Horticultural Society members \$35, Non-members \$40.

Space is limited to 24. Payment due at registration.

Sandhills Horticultural Society Open House

December 12 (Saturday) 1PM to 4PM – Linda Hamwi's Residence

Last year Linda opened her home for members to experience a one of a kind Christmas treat. The open house was such a tremendous success that we asked her if we could do it again. This invitation is extended to Sandhills Horticultural Society members, Garden Club members, Master Gardeners and their guests only. Don't miss it!!!

Pruning Workshop

January 30 (Saturday) 10AM to Noon – Ball Visitors Center

Back again by popular demand is Taylor Williams, Moore County Extension Agent. Taylor's presentation will cover the basics of pruning with time for questions and answers followed by a hands-on demonstration outside. FREE but reservations necessary.

Register by email: landscapegardening@sandhills.edu or call 910-695-3882.

Growing Air Plants

February 16 (Tuesday) 10AM to 11:30AM – Ball Visitors Center

Air Plants are the new (old) rage in plant growing. They are houseplants in winter and can be put into almost any size container without soil or water. Learn air plant varieties and plant care and suggestions for display. Linda Hamwi and Dolores Muller will be your instructors. A variety of air plants and vessels will be available for purchase. Each participant will take home an air plant and display vessel of their choice.

Horticultural Society members \$25, non-members \$30.

Space is limited to 30. Payment due at registration.

Winter Gardening Tips

- ❄️ Winterize all equipment you will not be using throughout the winter.
- ❄️ Clean and oil all hand garden tools before storing for the winter.
- ❄️ Recycle those live Christmas trees for mulch or place in your pond for fish habitat.
- ❄️ Water those house plants you brought inside with tepid water, not cold. Watch for pests that might hatch once plants are in a warm environment.
- ❄️ Start planning any renovations to your garden once those new garden catalogs start arriving in the mail. Plan on paper before planting.
- ❄️ Don't forget to feed the birds and make sure they have some water available.



Sandhills Community College
 3395 Airport Road
 Pinehurst, NC 28374
 www.sandhills.edu

NON-PROFIT ORG.
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 PERMIT NO. 55
 PINEHURST, NC



A Gift That Keeps On Giving

Your gift of a Sandhills Horticultural Society membership includes a FREE subscription to Better Homes and Gardens magazine. In addition to BH&G a membership includes many more on-going benefits. Such as . . .

- Free Garden Seminars
- A discount at the student's spring and fall plant sales
- Access to Horticultural Trips
- Bloomin' News quarterly newsletter
- Use of the Ball Garden Visitors Center for garden related events
- Reciprocal admission to over 200 gardens throughout North America
- A member discount on Horticultural Society workshops and programs
- Continuing educational opportunities

The most important benefit of membership is support of the Sandhills Horticultural Gardens. Membership dues and Society sponsored programs provide the funds required for the planned development and maintenance of the Gardens.

Gift Membership Information 2015-2016

Name of Membership Recipient _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email Address _____

Please make checks payable to: SCC – Sandhills Horticultural Society.

___ Individual \$25.00 ___ Family \$45.00 ___ Individual Life \$350.00

Buyer's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email Address _____

Enclosed is a check in the amount of _____

We will send a card to acknowledge your special gift. Message you want included:

Mail to:

Sandhills Community College, Attn: Dee Johnson, 3395 Airport Road,
 Pinehurst NC 28374