

# The Notice Board

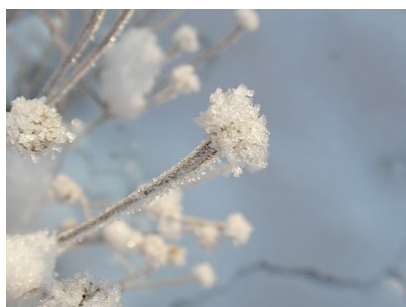
The President, Chair and committee wish all members a very Happy New Year, full of good gardening

## New Year, new ideas

This is your newsletter, and should be full of the things you want to read. If you have any ideas about what you would like to see in the Notice Board, please let Marilyn Tippett know on 01547 528842, email [marilynetippett@hotmail.com](mailto:marilynetippett@hotmail.com)

We get very little feedback about what you really think (unless there is a mistake made of course, when we do hear from some people!) and so we give you what a small group of people think you want to read.

So, if you feel strongly about the Notice Board, or about the Gardeners' Club, please get in touch. New writers or occasional contributors are always welcome.



**Nature has undoubtedly mastered the art of winter gardening and even the most experienced gardener can learn from the unrestrained beauty around them.**

- Vincent A. Simeone

## Meeting report: December 2010

Most unfortunately, the weather once again proved a false friend and our December feast (for that is what it always is) was cancelled due to the poor weather conditions, along with many other similar celebrations, so that we are all feeling a little starved of company as January arrives. Hopefully you will be reading this edition of the Notice Board at our January Bring and Share evening, which has of course now become the celebratory meal instead! Confused? Blame the weather, not the writer!

### Garden Blogs

In January when it is hard to get out and do actual gardening, even if the weather is kind, it can be an excellent time to start having a look at some of the garden blogs that are now quite commonplace on the Internet. I give my apologies here to anyone who has not yet ventured onto the net, but as many of our gardeners have, this article is for them.

One or two of these blogs come by personal recommendation, the others are there for you to have a dip into and see if you like them enough to follow them for a while in your "spare" moments.

Recommended by our President is the Scottish Rock Garden Society bulb blog, which can be found at <http://www.srgc.org.uk/logs/index.php?log=bulb>. A weekly blog, this one is seven years old and full of information for the keen alpinist, of those who just love bulbs. Even if you garden on a balcony or a windowsill there will be something for you here.

If you are interested in growing vegetables and cooking the results, then the blog at <http://www.mytinyplot.co.uk/> might be of interest, it is slightly quirky and has excellent photographs.

If you are international in your gardening outlook, you might like to have a look at the Allium Blog (not all about alliums, sadly) at <http://alliumgardenblog.wordpress.com/>. This is an American site but is well-presented and you get a different perspective on gardening from the other side of "the pond".

The Guardian has a gardening and lifestyle blog which is interesting—in January there was a recipe for Spruce Beer to make use of those left-over Christmas Tree branches! Have a look at this at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/gardening-blog>

An interesting seed based blog from Ireland can be seen at <http://brownenvelopeseeds.blogspot.com/>. Lovely photos here too—it seems that even Ireland had snow over Christmas this year.

And finally, if you just enjoy looking at lovely pictures and finding links to lots of other sites, mostly about propagation and house plants, have a look at <http://blogginghouseplants.blogspot.com/> for inspiration.

## New Year Resolutions?

The name January is derived from the Roman God called Janus, who presided over the gate to the new year. He was revered as the God of gateways, doorways and of the journey. Janus protected the 'Gate of Heaven', and was also known as the Lord of Beginnings. He is often symbolized by an image of a face that looks forwards and backwards at the same time. This symbolism can easily be associated with the month known by many as the start of a new year which brings new opportunities. We cast out the old and welcome in the new. It is the time when many reflect on events of the previous year and often resolve to redress or improve some aspect of daily life or personal philosophy. In the garden, there are always resolutions to make, so here are some of the ones that might make sense for the coming year.

***I will not buy more seeds than I can fit on one page of the seed company's order form!*** This of course is almost impossible to achieve, but one can have fun trying to decide which of the initially-chosen plants are for the chop.

***I will not walk over my lawn when it is frosty or snowy.*** Who said that this was a sensible idea? Perhaps someone who never had a small garden with a lawn in the way between house and road! However, whilst it is true that walking on frozen grass will result in brown patches, it is also true that grass is the most ineradicable plant in the garden and will soon recover from whatever you do to it, especially if given a Spring feed.

***I will empty my water butts at the end of October.*** A very sensible resolution this one, as anyone who has had a split water butt this year (hands up from me, the second year this has happened) will agree. In Finland all water butts are emptied by the end of October and this seems to prevent the frozen water swelling up and splitting plastic butts.

***I will prune all shrubs at the correct time, plant all new plants in the correct positions and remember where I have planted all my new bulbs.*** What are you, some kind of Superman or Wonderwoman?? No-one manages all of these things, and if you do you are probably a hermit with a bad case of obsessive-compulsive disorder!

***I will keep all my garden tools clean and sharp.*** A good resolution this, as good hygiene in the garden will help to keep many noxious pests at bay. Keeping all your tools clean and sharp might be a bit of a stretch, but you could make a start by sharpening, or getting sharpened, the secateurs whilst you are not able to get out into the garden.

***I will remember to take cuttings and grow them on ready for the Gardeners' Club to sell in order to raise funds, or to share with friends and neighbours.*** If I am very good, I might remember to note down those plants which people have asked me for cuttings of, and make a note of who wanted them too-or maybe this would be just too much perfection?

***And finally,*** I resolve to try and keep at least one of the resolutions printed above. Promise!

Marilyn Tippett

## The January garden: tasks and ideas

As I sit typing this the snow is falling yet again and the garden is covered in white stuff. As we have had only a week of "green" since the end of November, it is hard to remember what the garden looks like, let alone what it will look like after all the hard frosts and heavy snows of the Winter so far. Still, nil desperandum, and on to the new gardening year.

Armchair gardening is the best sort in January, and it is a good time to get your seed orders in whilst seed companies still have most of the varieties in stock; leave it until March to do your ordering and you will find that the choice varieties are long gone. Why not try something new alongside the old favourites? Perhaps you could trial two varieties of flower or vegetable alongside one another in your garden, greenhouse or

window sill this year, and let us know via the Notice Board how you get on?

There are of course plenty of jobs to do when the weather allows, including finishing any tidying up you didn't manage to complete before the bad weather set in. Indoor plants need checking over regularly too, as pests thrive in the warmer air indoors. Several people have tried, like me, to rid their ponds of excess weed by lifting the ice sheet from the top as soon as the thaw sets in. I have always found this a freezing and unsatisfactory job, but you might have more luck and it is a great way to get rid of some of the duckweed. If you are itching to get sowing and have not yet sown your sweet pea seeds why not have a go now, keeping them frost-free and slightly moist, to help them get growing early in the season?

Happy Gardening in 2011 to all of you,

Marilyn Tippett

## Some more seed companies

*These are some more alternatives to the usual companies, all of whom still offer good value.*

**Brown Envelope Seeds** sell vegetable seeds from Ireland, and you can reach them via the net at

[www.brownenvelopeseeds.com/index.php/shop/](http://www.brownenvelopeseeds.com/index.php/shop/); their address is Church Cross Skibbereen, Co. Cork.

**Derry Watkins** at the Special Plants Nursery sells an amazing range of hardy herbaceous and rockery plants as well as many tender perennials. She is found at [www.specialplants.net](http://www.specialplants.net), telephone 01225 891686

**Original Touch** specialises in flower and vegetable seeds from across Europe, and their web address is

[www.originaltouch.co.uk](http://www.originaltouch.co.uk), telephone 01673 866677

## Plant Profile: *Eranthis* (Winter Aconite)



This early Spring flower belongs to the native British family [Ranunculaceae](#), the buttercup family. The plant is small, with large, yellow, cup-shaped flowers and finely divided foliage of a good fresh green, darkening as it ages. It is commonly known as Winter Aconite. This plant grows from a tuber and has a low habit. All parts of the plant are poisonous when consumed by humans.

An efficient ground cover plant, it quickly spreads to become a carpet of pure golden yellow, just as the first snowdrops begin to bloom. Dry tubers can be bought in the autumn, but they are generally not as successful as plants bought 'in the green' (in leaf) either during or just after flowering time, which will establish much more readily. Unfortunately, mice just seem to love these tubers and it would be as well to protect them with some chicken wire when planting if you do not want to lose them.

They are not happy naturalised in grass, being a woodland plant in nature. The plant doesn't like being disturbed, and doesn't like it too dry. Sun or part shade suit it best. It will grow initially to 10cm when flowering, then growing up to 20cm. Try to leave it in peace to spread slowly and, if you are lucky, to seed.

Some good cultivars include:

**HYEMALIS** :The common Winter Aconite with deep green hand-shaped leaves and bright yellow flowers

**CILICICA** :Finely divided bronze foliage growing after the large, deep golden flowers

**SCHWEFELGLANZ** :A truly distinct variant with flowers the colour of old straw