

Word of Mouth

January meeting: Clubhouse on the 14th

Our meeting will be held on our regular date of the 2nd Wednesday. The date was a misprint in our Yearbook. The meeting will be a presentation by a representative of the Volusia County Extension Office. The "Go-Green" theme will include ways we can make simple changes in our gardens to benefit our environment.

Join us for coffee at 9:30 before the meeting begins at 10:00 am.

"Go-Green" on Pests by Kathy Anderson

Weeds are a problem faced by everyone who enjoys gardening. When we carefully prepare the soil to make a good home for our garden plants, we're also creating ideal conditions for weeds to thrive. Weeds not only detract from the beauty of our gardens, but they also compete for the water and nutrition that is meant to be used by the more desirable plants.

So what's a gardener to do about weeds? We can smother existing weeds when creating new planting beds, but despite our best efforts, weed seeds will always be blowing into the beds. When those weed seeds germinate and grow, the weeds will once again make themselves right at home in the garden.

Now there's a natural product available that helps prevent weed seeds from growing in the garden, and surprisingly, it is made from corn.

Corn gluten is a byproduct of the wet-milling process and has traditionally been used in cattle and poultry feed and also as an ingredient in dog food. It was discovered entirely by accident that corn gluten can also be used to prevent weed seeds from germinating. Not only can it suppress weeds, but it will also help feed your garden plants since it is also a source of nitrogen. And corn gluten won't harm pets, people, birds or insects, making it very safe to use.

Corn gluten works by preventing germinated seeds from growing a root. A plant that has already grown roots will not be affected by corn gluten. For the best results, the corn gluten should be applied early in the season, before the weed seeds germinate and grow roots. As a pre-emergent herbicide, corn gluten tends to have a cumulative effect and becomes even more effective on weed seeds with repeated applications over time. One application of corn gluten continues to suppress weeds for 4-6 weeks, a bit less if the weather is unusually rainy or hot.

Corn gluten is typically applied by broadcasting it on the growing bed at a rate of 20-40 pounds per 1000 square feet. It may then be lightly raked into just the surface of the soil and watered in. Corn gluten will not be effective unless it is wetted and should be given a gentle shower after being applied. However, if there is a long rainy period after the corn gluten has been applied, it may lose its effectiveness. As with any herbicide, it can wash away, and weed seedlings may even recover and begin again to form roots if the soil surface remains wet for an extended time. Keep an eye on the weather and apply the corn gluten when no rain is expected for a few days. Always follow the instructions on the package when applying any herbicide or fertilizer.

Corn gluten will not harm mature plants and can be safely used in an existing flowerbed, vegetable garden or potted plants. Vegetable or flower seeds that are planted deeply, such as peas, corn or beans, won't be affected by the corn gluten. But avoid using corn gluten where shallow-seeded plants such as lettuce or carrots will be grown. The corn gluten won't have an effect on deeply planted seeds, but it will inhibit root growth in seeds that are planted close to the surface.

Corn gluten is sold under several brand names. Look for corn gluten herbicides at your local garden center or in the organic section of gardening catalogs. With a good dose of corn gluten on the garden, you can enjoy the garden more and spend less time pulling weeds.

Kathy Anderson has been an avid gardener for many years and has grown tomatoes by the acre, along with many other vegetables, flowers and landscape plants. Kathy recommends <http://www.freeplants.com> as a great place to learn more about gardening.

Build your own Dish Garden

Plants featured: lavender chrysanthemum, African violet, dracaena and nephthytis with an accent of curly willow in a moss-gray pot.



Bookshelf:

- Florida Gardener's Guide, by Tom MacCubbin & Georgia B. Tasker
- Tough Plants for Florida Gardens—Low Care, No Care, Tried and True Winners, by Felder Rushing
- Native Florida Plants—Low-Maintenance Landscaping and Gardening, by Robert G. Haehle & Joan Brookwell

President's Message

Hi everyone!

I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas or Holiday. I want to thank Dana for all her work on our Christmas luncheon—it was a very nice and we all had a good time. Thank you, too, Marlene, for wrapping the gifts.

I want to wish you all a very happy and healthy New Year. See you in 2009!

*Fondly,
Jeanne*





Simple Floral Design Tips for Professional Results

by
Angela England

Any garden club member can learn to arrange flowers in attractive, creative designs. Here are some basic guidelines to help design a beautiful flower bouquet, vase or centerpiece.

Select a Flower Arrangement Style

Most flower arrangements are considered either formal or informal in their overall style. Formal flower arrangements are often monotone or just a couple of contrasting colors, tend to have fewer types of plants in them and can have very ornate containers. Informal or casual flower arrangements have a looser symmetry, can have more flowers and colors involved, or simpler – often whimsical – containers for the arrangement.

Choose a Floral Color Scheme

The plant materials and container selected for a flower arrangement should portray a clear color scheme.

A **monotone** flower arrangement has plant materials in shades of a single color – all the same colored roses or sometimes flowers that are dark pink, medium pink and light pink.

A **complimentary** color scheme for a flower arrangement would have flowers in colors that are opposite on the color wheel such as blue and orange or green with purple.

A **related** color scheme involves combining flowers with colors that are near each other on the color wheel in the same arrangement such as blue with purple or red with orange.

Symmetry, Balance and Shape

Each flower arrangement needs a sense of symmetry and balance. This is achieved through the overall shape and can help an arrangement feel more formal or more informal. Often times a perfectly symmetrical flower arrangement, such as roses packed right into an oval shape, will have a more formal effect; whereas a loose arrangement of mixed wildflowers with some tall flowers, some short flowers and some drooping down around the sides unevenly will have a much more informal effect and give a nice casual air. The shape of the flower arrangement helps the hobbyist find that symmetry and balance by giving one a goal to work towards when building the arrangement.

Find a Container to Match the Arrangement's Mood

Different containers work better for different flower arrangements. In some arrangements a whimsical container accentuates the off-kilter balance of the arrangement or echoes the bright colors. In another flower arrangement a pure crystal container would be a more formal setting for wedding roses. Some containers are highly architectural adding a great deal of weight and shape to the floral arrangement while others are merely supports for the flowers and tend to not be seen.

Selection and Number of Plants

The other key ingredient for beautiful flower arrangements is of course – flowers! A standard, mixed floral arrangement will have four main components: focal flowers, intermediate flowers, short flowers and filler plant material.

Focal flowers are usually tall, large or unique flowers to grab your attention. Generally hobbyists would use only a few of these – one to five, depending on the size of your container.

Intermediate flowers are one-third shorter than the focal flowers or have smaller flowers that fit the chosen color scheme. Use approximately two times the number of these flowers in the arrangement.

Filler flowers are used to edge the container or fill in any gaps left by the taller flowers within the arrangement. These flowers solidify the color scheme and hide unattractive stems. Use as many of these flowers in the arrangement as necessary to complete the desired shape and balance.

Filler plant materials are often attractive foliage pieces, grasses or even feather and bark pieces and are used to fill in any gaps and provide balance to the arrangement.



I will be the gladdest thing under the sun! I will touch a hundred flowers and not pick one.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

Hints & Tips: January

- Add charcoal chips to plants grown in water, will keep the water sweet.
- After Amaryllis flowers have faded, remove them but keep the plant growing to replenish the bulb.
- A good idea before ordering from catalogs is to plan ahead, where you are going to plant and grow these new additions to the garden.
- Any Christmas Cactus that is still blooming, will appreciate a half cup of water every 3 days.
- Bring in your pots of early Tulips, Hyacinthus and Narcissus to begin forcing.
- Build or repair garden furniture and trellises.
- Camphor flakes in a saucer under African violets are said to keep off mites.
- Check now and make sure that you have enough plant labels, if planning to start any seeds indoors.
- Cut back fertilizer applications to your house plants.
- Make sure that all bird-feeding stations are kept filled.
- Making seed flats is a good indoor job, on cool days.
- Nothing solves a field mouse problem like a lean, hungry cat.
- On these garden-less days, take the time and draw up a planting chart or diagram of your garden.
- Place cyclamens in a cool room and keep their soil moist.
- Plant paperwhite narcissus in a shallow dish filled with water.
- Re-tie any Climbing Rose branches that may have worked loose and are whipping in the wind.
- Seeds can be tested for germination and vigor, by placing them on wet blotters. Be sure to count and label them accordingly.
- Start geranium seeds indoors now, for summer bedding plants.
- Start gloxinias in a moist soil mixture.
- Sow coleus and begonia seeds indoors now.
- Take cuttings of your African violets.
- This is a good time to repot Cactus.
- Try using sterilized soil in some of your seed flats this year.
- When Poinsettias drop their leaves, stop watering and put them in a cool place to rest.
- When watering house plants, be sure that the water is at room temperature.
- Wipe mealy bugs from house plants with a cotton swab dipped in alcohol.
- Wood ashes saved now can go on the Rose beds in April.
- You could start the New Year by exterminating aphids on house plants, but why not instead, mix up some eggnog and call in your neighbors.**

Happy New Year!

