



# Horticulture Happenings

An Iowa State University Extension Newsletter for Mid-Iowa Gardeners

December 2004 Vol. 1 No. 4

## Santa says "Hoe! Hoe! Hoe? ..."

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IOWA STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
University Extension

**Helping you become your best.**

Comments and suggestions are  
always appreciated.

### Attention Master Gardeners:

Article submission may be counted  
towards fulfilling Master Gardener  
community service volunteer hours!



Have you completed  
your holiday garden  
wish list?

Many gardeners like  
to receive garden  
related gifts for  
Christmas, and with

all the tools available, there are  
many gadgets to choose from.  
(Please - no more Garden Weasels,  
Garden Claws or Bulb Hounds!)

If your family members are non-  
gardeners, be sure to describe  
exactly what item you would like to  
receive, or you may be in for a  
disappointment. After all, we  
gardeners know that there is a  
difference between a garden fork  
and a cultivator; and a trowel and a  
transplanter; and that a garden hoe  
is definitely not the same thing as a  
weeding hoe.

Several years ago, I had written  
"Spode" on my Christmas wish list,  
(After all—gardeners do like other  
nice things) and imagine my  
surprise when I received new spade  
for Christmas!

After inquiring why it was thought I  
needed a new spade, I was told that

I had written it on my Christmas list.

Perhaps it is a sign of a being a true  
gardener to have people assume  
that any thing you want must be  
garden related, and not to realize  
that "Spode" is the name of your  
Christmas china!

Speaking of names, are you familiar  
with *Euphorbia pulcherrima*? It's  
the poinsettia, and with many new  
introductions in recent years, there  
are many cultivars to choose from.  
With names like Candy Cane, Jingle  
Bells, Monet and Winter Rose; the  
diverse bract colors, some crimped  
twisted, and bract or leaf variegation  
make them all quite unique.

Rather than discarding, poinsettias  
may be kept to re-bloom next year.  
Why not try procedure this yourself?  
Extension publication RG 316:  
"Poinsettia Care" describes the  
schedule of light and darkness  
required for re-bloom (bract color).

Happy Holidays!

Yvonne Nilles  
Extension Horticulturalist  
*Serving Hamilton, Humboldt,  
Webster & Wright counties*

**Reminder:** Master Gardener  
Service Hour Report forms are due  
by December 31!

Master Gardener Interns will be  
calling all Mid-Iowa Master  
Gardeners whose service hours  
report form has not been received.

Please return your form as soon as  
possible as to allow accurate hours  
reporting to the state database.



## MID-IOWA AREA EVENTS CALENDAR

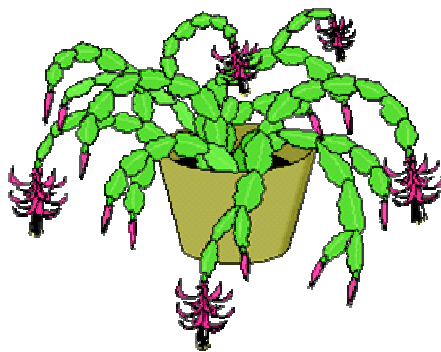
- Dec 2 ....Fort Dodge Area Gardeners  
Webster Co. Ext. Off. – 7 pm
- Dec 4 ....Wreath Making Workshop  
Hamilton Co. Fairgrounds  
10 am – Noon, \$10 fee
- Dec 5 ....Wreath Making Workshop  
Webster Co. Extension Office  
2 – 4 pm, \$10 fee
- Dec 8....Town & Country Garden Club  
Christmas luncheon, 11:30am  
2<sup>nd</sup> St Emporium Webster City  
Program: “*Care of Christmas  
Plants*”, by Delma Swanson.
- Dec. 16...Master Gardener Interns  
5:30 pm, Webster Co. Ext.  
Office. Course eval & tour.
- Dec 21...Fort Dodge Fed Garden Club  
Christmas potluck at noon,  
at the Izaak Walton with the  
Sunshine Singers to follow.
- Jan. 11..Mid-Iowa Master Gardeners  
*A new group to be formed!!*  
Anyone who has completed  
Master Gardener training is  
invited to attend. 6:30 pm at  
Webster Co. Extension Office.  
Election of officers & program  
planning will be held.

For further details on these events,  
call 515-832-9597

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### Submit your articles & events to:

*Horticulture Happenings*  
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Webster City, IA 50595-1436  
Phone: 515-832-9597  
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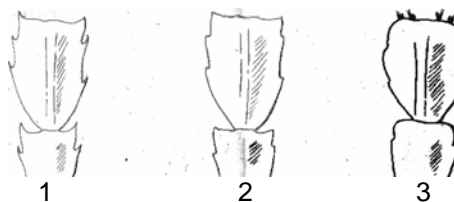
## Holiday Cactus I.D.

Did you know that there are actually  
3 different types of holiday cactus?

The 3 types can be distinguished by  
their different leaf forms, flower color  
and their different bloom times.

1. *Schlumbergera truncatus*, the  
Thanksgiving cactus, blooms from  
Thanksgiving through Christmas.  
This cactus is the most popular of  
the holiday cacti and can be found  
in stores in a wide variety of colors  
including lavender and salmon;
2. *Schlumbergera bridgesii*, the true  
Christmas cactus, blooming late  
December thru March;
3. *Rhipsalidopsis gaertneri*, or Easter  
cactus, blooms in March thru May  
with pink or red flowers.

Thanksgiving cacti (1) have sawtooth  
leaf margins, Christmas cacti leaves  
(2) have rounded scalloped margins,  
while Easter cacti (3) leaves have  
smoother edges and bristled tips.



For additional information on holiday  
cacti, visit your local extension office  
and ask for the publication RG 308:  
“*Growing Holiday Cacti*”.

This publication is also available on  
line at:  
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/RG308.pdf>

## RECIPE CORNER



### SWEET POTATO CASSEROLE WITH PECAN TOPPING

3 lb	Sweet potatoes
3/4 cup	Orange juice
2	Large eggs
2 Tbls.	Butter, melted
2 Tbls.	Sugar
1½ teas.	Cinnamon
1/2 teas.	Nutmeg
-----TOPPING-----	
1/2 cup	Flour
1/4 cup	Brown sugar
1/2 teas.	Cinnamon
1/4 cup	Butter, softened
1/2 cup	Chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350F. Place 3 pounds  
sweet potatoes in baking pan and bake  
until all potatoes are tender, about 1  
hour. Maintain oven temperature.

Butter 8x8x2" square glass baking  
dish. Scrap sweet potato pulp from  
potato skins. Using electric mixer,  
mash sweet potatoes. Add orange  
juice, eggs, melted butter, sugar,  
cinnamon & nutmeg.  
Beat until sweet potatoes are smooth.  
Season to taste with salt and pepper.  
Spoon potatoes into prepared baking  
dish.  
Combine flour, brown sugar and  
cinnamon in medium bowl. Add butter  
& cut in until mixture resembles coarse  
crumbs. Mix in pecans. Sprinkle pecan  
mixture over potatoes. Bake at 350F

## Fort Dodge Area Gardeners Install New Officers

The Fort Dodge Area Gardeners  
recently elected new officers. The new  
officers are: President: Marilyn  
Peterson-Shipp; 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President: Jeff  
Becker; 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President: Luben  
Hiszcynski; Secretary: Shirley Webb;  
Treasurer: Maurice Fields.

Fort Dodge Area Gardeners meet the  
first Thursday of each month.

## Meet a Master Gardener...

### David Moody



**Pictured L-R:** Bill Boon, retired ISU Professor, Landscape Design and David Moody at a recent FGCI Landscape Design school held at the Iowa Arboretum.

David Moody of Fort Dodge is our featured Mid-Iowa Master Gardener for the month of December. A Webster County Master Gardener since 1996, David is a member of both the Fort Dodge Federated Garden Club and the Fort Dodge Area Gardeners. He also serves as the Chairman of the Landscape Design Schools for the Federated Garden Clubs of Iowa, Inc.

David and his wife Peggy, who is the Vice-Chairman of the Mid-Iowa Horticulture Council, are both active Master Gardeners, and work to maintain several large garden areas and flower beds on their home's acreage landscape.

Over the years, David has volunteered many service hours at the Iowa Arboretum located near Madrid. Recently David was awarded the Iowa Horticultural Society Award for his efforts.

## Sweet Potato or Yams?

**Q. Is there difference between sweet potatoes & yams?**

**A.** Diners find sweet potatoes on many holiday tables. Many wonder if sweet potatoes, an excellent source of nutrition, are the same as yams. In the United States, yams are actually sweet potatoes with relatively moist texture and orange flesh. Although the terms are used interchangeably, the USDA requires that the label "yam" always be accompanied by "sweet potato."

**The real differences are:**

1. A sweet potato has a smooth appearance with a thin skin. A yam has a rough appearance with a scaly skin.
2. A sweet potato is short with



blocky tapered ends while the yam is long and cylindrical.

**3.** The taste of a sweet potato is sweet while a yam is more starchy tasting.

**4.** The sweet potato is high in Vitamin A content while the yam is rather low in Vitamin A.

**5.** The sweet potato is grown in the United States. The yam is imported from the Caribbean. For the most food value, choose

sweet potatoes of a deep orange color.

Most sweet potato dishes freeze well. Save time and energy by making a sweet potato dish to serve and one to store in the freezer. Canned sweet potatoes may be substituted for fresh in any recipe calling for cooked sweet potatoes as the starting point. Canned sweet potatoes are generally smaller because of their better canning qualities. Six to eight canned sweet potatoes are approximately the equivalent of four medium fresh sweet potatoes.

- By Paulelda Gilbert, ISU Extension Nutrition & Health Specialist.

Call Paulelda at the Webster Co. Extension Office, 515-576-2119, or E-mail [pgilbert@iastate.edu](mailto:pgilbert@iastate.edu), with your nutrition and health questions.

## Local Master Gardeners receive awards



**L-R:** Jim Patton, CEED, Webster Co. ISU Extension presenting award to David Moody, Fort Dodge.



**L-R:** Iowa Horticultural Society President Barbara Sylvester, Webster City presenting award to Jeff Becker, Fort Dodge.

Two Mid-Iowa Master Gardeners received the Iowa Horticulture Society's Certificate of Merit award at the organization's annual award meeting held at the Iowa Arboretum in Madrid on November 6, 2004. Jeff Becker and David Moody, both of Fort Dodge received recognition for their contributions towards promoting horticulture and volunteer service in the state. It is of interest to note, that Jeff's father, William Becker, also a Master Gardener from Fort Dodge had received this same award in the past. Congratulations to both of these Master Gardeners!

## Holiday Wreath Making Workshops Held

Mid-Iowa ISU Extension sponsored a series of workshops in the 4 county area. Participants created fresh evergreen wreaths and learned of the different types of conifers grown in Iowa.



**L-R:** Master Gardener Interns Maxine Larson and Barbara Ansel, both of Clarion, help at the Wright Co. wreath making workshop held 11-28 at the Clarion Depot.



Humboldt Co. residents created wreaths at Humboldt Co. Extension Office on 11-27. **L-R:** Gail Smith, Humboldt; Kathryn Ernst, Thor; Erma Ohnemus, Livermore; Marcy Illg & Connie Knight both of Humboldt; Linda Fort, Dakota City; Kim Schipull, Hardy; Erin Green, Rochester, MN; and Terry Silbaugh, Humboldt.

# A Mexican Native Moves Into Reiman Gardens

By Ed Moran  
Reiman Gardens  
Iowa State University

The poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*), a native to Mexico and Guatemala, has become the signature flowering plant during the holiday season. In 2000, retailers sold more than 65 million flowering potted poinsettia plants, making it the largest potted flowering crop in the floriculture industry. With over 100 cultivars currently available to growers, consumers can choose from a large variety of colors and forms to suit any taste. However, the classic red-bracted poinsettia still dominates all others cultivars produced.

Reiman Gardens' "Victorian Holiday" Conservatory display highlights many traditional poinsettia colors, yet with less common cultivars including the Gutiber V-17™ Angelika Red. Because of its taller growth habit, commercial growers do not commonly grow this cultivar.

This cultivar makes a great tropical shrub and offers striking visual impact when planted with smaller poinsettias and other seasonal flowering plants. In addition, the V-17™ Angelika is an excellent plant for single-stemmed or tree form poinsettias. This season, Reiman Gardens features 15 cultivars of poinsettias as well as other seasonal blooming plants.

Started in mid-July as small rooted cuttings, poinsettias began flower initiation in late September and now are in full bloom, approximately nine weeks later. Make your plans to attend the Gardens' Blossoms of Light events on the first two weekends of December, or come throughout the season to view the "Victorian Holiday" Conservatory display from Nov. 22 through Jan. 2.



The Angelika is an excellent plant for single-stemmed or tree form poinsettias.