

December 2025 Newsletter

Welcome to winter and the holidays ...

As the days ease into winter
and cold fills the air like a whisper,
streets are lined with ribbons and lights.

Evening's approach kindles anticipation;
we gather 'round inside to listen and soak it in,
as we watch embers in the fire ignite.

Warmth spreads slowly in the stillness -
a heartfelt exhale sown by contentment,
as old tales are given life once again.

DECEMBER GARDEN CLUB MEETING:

Date: December 10, 2025

Time: 9:30 AM - Set-up

10:00 AM - Business Meeting starts

10:30 - noon - Potluck Lunch

Program - Gift Exchange

12:30 - Clean-up

Location: Our Savior Lutheran Church
745 Front Street South
Issaquah, WA

Horticultural Corner: Tarragon - Gale B.

WHAT YOU NEED TO REMEMBER FOR DECEMBER MEETING:

1/ This meeting is a potluck:

Hostess: Lexie

Crew: Everyone brings potluck dishes

Last name of A - L - Sweet Treats

Last name of M - Z - Savory Treats

2/ Our "program" will be a White Elephant Gift Exchange

** Every one wanting to participate brings a *wrapped* garden themed gift

** Gift can be something you already own or you can buy something spending no more than \$15.00

** Gifts will be selected based on a number you will draw at the meeting

** You can steal gifts from others but each gift can only be stolen twice

3/ Bring money or your checkbook for making a donation to the Food Bank (the club will collect money and write one check so make your checks out to IGC)

4/ Save plastic bags from newspapers, Amazon deliveries etc. Helen will facilitate donation to 'Kids Advantage'. The bags get used to make packets that the social workers give to families in need.

5/ We will be having sale table to be sure and bring priced items for sale (a good time to move along some of those Christmas decorations you are not longer using)

January Meeting: January 14, 2026

Horticultural Corner: Mints by Debbie D.

Program: Tea Discovery Class

LETS SAVE ON KITCHEN SUPPLIES:

Please remember to bring your own plate, napkin and silverware so we don't deplete the club's supplies and reduces our garbage footprint! And, attention coffee and tea drinkers - remember to bring your own cup (THANKS)

YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED:

November Meeting:

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON REPORTS:

GARDEN THERAPY (LEXIE for JOAN H.):

** In December we will make holiday arrangements on December 17 since our meeting is so early in the month. Details will be shared at the December 10th meeting.

BLUE STAR MAKER (DIANNE T.):

** The Veteran's Day Celebration was held on November 11th. It was well attended and very nice. All Veterans that attended were graciously acknowledged. There was additional representation by the Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Local High School ROTC etc.

MEMBERSHIP (MARIE):

**** Marie** shared that she has assembled small bags to be given to new members.

The bags contain information about our club including an agenda and a small gift. For visitors she will be following up with an email.

HORTICULTURAL CORNER:

Jean presented on oregano. Oregano can be used both fresh and dried in cooking, flavoring oils, and even teas. Fresh oregano should be added at the end of cooking to preserve its flavor while dried oregano can be added earlier in the process. If using fresh oregano be sure and wash it thoroughly to remove any dirt.

To grow oregano from seed sow seeds indoors 8 - 10 weeks before the last frost by sprinkling them on top of moist soil. Place in a well lighted spot. Transplant them outdoors after the danger of frost has passed.

Keep in mind that oregano spreads easily so if you want to keep it contained plant it in a pot that does not have a drain hole in the bottom.

PROGRAM:

Four members of the Avant floral design group presented. Each made one or two floral arrangements and then talked about some design features, why certain flowers were chosen and other focal points were used. In the process they shared some tips and tricks including using the netting that comes around some flower blooms to secure flowers. They also discussed that photographing the arrangement when done will also show you a fresh dimension and help you see the balance of the design. This was learned during the pandemic when the Avant group started meeting via Zoom. They also discussed and encouraged the use of “underling” which the arrangement sits on and can be fabric, place mats, ribbon etc.

The arrangements were then auctioned to club members.

SAVE THE DATES:

December 17, 2025 - Garden Therapy at Avamere Nursing Home

February 23, 2026 - General Membership Meeting (GMM)

EDUCATIONAL CORNER:

Drop Those Pruners! 15 Plants You Should Never Ever Cut Back in Winter, Gardeners Say

Cutting plants back in winter can help certain trees, shrubs, and flowers grow back fuller and more vigorously in the spring. But not all garden plants [should get this treatment in wintertime](#).

In fact, some specimens—particularly those prized for flowers and even fruits—can be damaged by overzealous pruning during the cold months.

Winter Garden Maintenance

Winter might seem like a quiet time in your garden, but there are plenty of tasks to keep you busy. Inventorying your seed stash, planning next spring's plantings, sharpening tools, organizing equipment, and laying fresh mulch are all on the gardener's to-do list.

Pruning is another important winter task, especially for shrubs such as dogwood, smokebush, and sumac as well

as trees like oaks, elms, apples, pears, hawthorne, and more.

Before you pick up your shears, consider this list of plants you [should never cut back](#) in winter.

[Clematis](#)

Give your clematis vines a hard pruning at the wrong time of year, and you'll risk no flowers the following season. Prune early spring-blooming clematis right after flowering, but [prune clematis](#) varieties that bloom in mid-spring or summer in early spring, before they bloom.

[Azaleas](#)

Wait until right after your azaleas bloom to prune them back for size and shape. But don't wait too long—do it within 3 weeks after the blooms fade in summer, before the next season's buds set. Waiting until fall or winter can stunt growth next year.

Rhododendrons

Follow the same rule of thumb for rhododendrons—after all, azaleas are a type of rhododendron. Cut this plant back within a few weeks after the bloom period ends in summer.

Black-Eyed Susans

There's no need to cut back black-eyed susans or other *Rudbeckia* species. These long-blooming perennials won't benefit from it, but if you prefer, you can cut them back in the fall.

Climbing Roses

For climbing roses and a few others, including damask roses, wait until you see new growth to prune—which will help you identify healthy and unhealthy growth. This could be late winter or early spring.

Cherry Trees

Plenty of fruit trees benefit from pruning in winter, but when to prune cherry trees is up for debate. In places with

wet winters, it's best to wait until after trees have flowered (or fruited, in the case of fruit-bearing varieties) in summer.

Elsewhere, waiting until early spring once growth begins can reduce the likelihood of pathogens.

Lilacs

Avoid pruning lilacs and other spring bloomers like magnolias in winter. If you do, you'll remove the plant's flower buds and miss out on those fragrant clusters of blossoms.

Coral Bells

Colorful coral bells are evergreen in warmer regions and semi-evergreen in colder areas. Leaving their foliage in place through winter offers ornamental interest for gardeners while also protecting the crown of the plant through the cold months.

Jasmine

Annual pruning of these fragrant climbing vines will keep their growth vigorous, their shape compact, and their blooms low enough for you to enjoy their aroma.

Prune jasmine plants immediately after flowering—in late summer or early fall for summer jasmine and in spring for winter jasmine.

Milkweed

Milkweed plants provide an essential food source for pollinators like monarch butterflies, bees, and many more. That important role in the ecosystem doesn't stop in winter.

Leave milkweed plants standing until spring to provide an essential habitat for beneficial insects.

Lavender

Different kinds of lavender bloom on slightly different schedules, but none should be pruned in winter. Cut back English lavender after it flowers in the spring, then again after it flowers in late summer.

For English lavender hybrids, wait until after late summer flowering to cut back. For French, Spanish, and other non-English lavenders, give plants a light trim after their first bloom of the year.

Maple Trees

Cutting back maple trees in winter or early spring risks trees "bleeding" too much sap. Instead, wait until late summer to cut back these deciduous trees.

Ferns

The dried fronds of many fern species can add an attractive element to your garden through the winter. Hold off on cutting back the old growth until you see the new growth start to emerge in early spring.

Echinacea

Like black-eyed susans and milkweed, pollinator-friendly echinacea provides a valuable food source for wildlife during the winter—in this case, birds.

Pollinating insects can also benefit from leaving dead stems and leaves in place until new growth appears in spring.

Stonecrop

Stonecrop might be a succulent, but its tall stems, topped with attractive flower clusters, can add winter interest to your garden.

They can also be a food source and much-needed habitat for wildlife. Instead of cutting these plants back in winter, keep them in place until you see new growth the following spring.

2 Sources:

[Winter is a good time to prune trees and shrubs.](#) University of Minnesota Extension.

[Ask Mr. Smarty Plants - Wednesday, May 02, 2007.](#) Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, University of Texas at Austin.

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