THE GROWING NEWS

Published Monthly by The Inland Empire Gardeners, Spokane Valley, WA
Meeting the 1st Thurs of the month, 6:30pm at CenterPlace, 2426 N. Discovery Place

***"Mora na maidine dhuit."* - Top of the morning to you!**

Volume 18/Issue 3 **"May the leprechauns dance over your bed and bring you sweet dreams."-Irish Saying** **MAR 2012**

EDITOR: Chris Sheppard/PHONE/FAX: 509-535-TIEG
PUBLISHER: ViAnn Meyer/*tieg@comcast.net*

"St. Patrick's Day is an enchanted time--a day to begin transforming winter's dreams into summer's magic."
- Adrienne Cook

MARCH 2012

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1 meet	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17 talk
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

1 - TIEG Meeting, 6:30pm, CenterPlace Annual TIEG Seed Exchange (see pg 4)
1-4 - Sewing & Stitchery Expo, Puyallup
2 - Wine, Stein, and Dine, Greyhound Park, Post Falls, food and drink, $60
2-4 -Spring Arts/Crafts Show, Fairgrounds
3 - Tropical Plant Sale & Floral Lecture, sale 12-3pm, lecture 10am, Manito Park Mtg Rm, call 456-8038 to reserve seat
3-4-Beachcombers Fair, Ocean Shores WA
4-11 - Philadelphia International Flower Show, Theme--Hawaii--Islands of Aloha
9-11 - Spring Home & Garden Shows, Yakima & Coeur D'Alene
10 - March Mania Plant Sale, 9am-2pm, NW Perennial Alliance, Seattle
10-11 - Arts/Crafts Fair, Central Vly H.S.
11 - 70th Annual Kosher Dinner, Temple Beth Shalom, 11am-6pm, $16
11 - Daylight Savings Time Begins
15-18 - Big Horn Outdoor Adventure Show, Spokane Fairgrounds, $9
16-18 - Home & Garden Show, Wenatchee
17 - St Patrick's Day Parade, Spokane
17 - St Patrick's Day - Be Green
17-18-Daffodil Festival, Junction City, OR
18-19 - Home & Garden Show, Colville
17 - TIEG Event - "Cultivate Indoor/ Outdoor Citrus Trees" Talk, Manito Park Meeting Room, 11am-1pm, free
17-19 - Soroptimist Gala Garden Show, Speakers, Vendors, Sequim, WA
20 - First Day of Spring!
23-25 - Flower & Garden Show, Boise, ID
23 - 25 - Better Living Home Garden & Lifestyle Show, Portland
23-25 - Sandhill Crane Festival, Othello
23-25 - Spring Fair Home & Garden Show, Okanogan, WA - free admission
24 - "Easy Ways to Propagate Seeds w/ or w/o a Greenhouse" presentation by M.G. Steven Nokes, Manito Mtg Rm, 1pm, free
29-31 - Spring Fair, Pocatello, ID
30-31 - TCQG Quilt Show, Kennewick
30-May 1 - Tulip Festival, Wooden Shoe Tulip Farm, Woodburn, OR
31 - Spokane Orchid Show, noon-6pm, Southside Senior Center, $2
31 - Shamrock Gala, 6-11pm, Davenport Hotel, $150, Holy Family benefit
31- Apr 1 - Taste Washington! Seattle, $75

MARCH SPEAKER

TIEG is proud to be able to bring you the gardening insights of horticulturist Brian Minter. He is the president of Minter Gardens, a 32-acre world class show garden and Country Garden Store--leading edge retail garden center and greenhouse growing operation in Chilliwack, B.C. A syndicated newspaper, radio, and TV columnist, Brian has been sharing his gardening wisdom in Canada and internationally for over 25 years. Brian's broad knowledge of plants, trees, shrubs, and flowers makes him a valuable resource for avid gardeners. He is the author of "Brian Minter's New Gardening Guide"--a bestseller. His phone in show is heard in British Columbia Saturdays on STAR-FM 104.9. His talk is entitled**: "Taking Our Gardens to the Next Level."** In today's realities of smaller space gardens, changing weather patterns, and time poverty, we need to rediscover the fun, beauty, and inspiration our gardens can provide. Break out of the *good* and move into the world of *great* gardens. Brian will challenge the ordinary and not so gently, nudge us into the extraordinary. Hang on to your seats!

MARCH EVENT

On March 17, 2012 starting at 11am in the Manito Park Meeting Room (4 W. 21st Ave) we will be having a special presentation by Dan Jarms, Owner of Jarms Tropical Plants called "Cultivate Indoor/ Outdoor Citrus Trees." Brother and Sister founders Evan & Brenna Jarms started Jarms Citrus and Tropicals with their father Dan as they learned to care for his expanding indoor orchard. Their trial greenhouse is in north Spokane. A family owned business supplying true dwarf citrus trees to our area. This is a free event for TIEG members and guests. Refreshments will be served.

TIEG SEED EXCHANGE

March 1, 2012

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

When the story of our garden was published in the "Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul" book 10 years ago, my family had a grand total of 8 cats. Time takes its toll and now we are down to just one, Cricket, a stray that I took home from work after she was running around the warehouse for 3 days.

I have often wondered what Cricket's life had been like when she was out there on her own--cold, frightened, alone. What did she have to go through just to survive? Now she is part of our family and she has a home where she is warm, safe, and secure.

Cricket is an affectionate cat but it has taken 2 years of patience and tenderness to earn her trust. She had been basically wild and still occasionally nips at my fingers when I pet her when she becomes over-stimulated. The other day she grabbed my hand and I thought I was in for a bite and instead for the first time she softly licked it, a loving and lovely act.

Cricket appreciates her home and if you are reading this and still have not renewed your membership into the garden club this year, and thinking you may not, I want you to ask yourself what membership into TIEG offers you as a gardener.

Gardening is mostly a solitude endeavor. We are out in our yards and we kind of zone out everything else. It's easy to get lost in our own worlds. Membership in a garden club gives you a new perspective. Although we are not physically out there in the garden with you, we are there is spirit. Encouraging your new ideas. Increasing your horticulture knowledge through our monthly speakers and informative, entertaining newsletter. Stimulating your growing interests. Putting our hearts into everything you do. Celebrating your successes and helping you bury your mistakes.

Bottom line. We understand. Because we are gardeners like you. We get it. You don't have to garden alone--uncertain, underappreciated, and unfulfilled. Your garden club has your back. You were fortunate to find us in the first place and like Cricket the cat, it took the Luck of the Irish to find the home where you were meant to be all along.

Now if only we can get the new puppies to stop chasing the cat, life would be perfect. Next month, Ozzie & Ruby at 1 year of age, the adventure continues. Vinca Vi

"Oh, the music in the air! And the joy that's everywhere--sure, the whole blue vault of heaven is wan grand triumphal arch, and the earth below is gay, wild its tender green this day, for the whole world is Irish on the Seventeenth o' March!"
- Thomas Augustin Daly, Poet

GO GREEN WITH A ST. PATRICK'S DAY GARDEN

In Ireland, St. Patrick's Day is the traditional day to plant peas and potatoes. The timing works for most climates in the United States, so why not celebrate St. Patrick's Day with a really "green" activity: planting a garden!

Depending on where you live, you may find your garden bed is still covered with snow or the soil too frozen to work. Or your home may not have a back-yard. Luckily, peas and potatoes can be planted in containers, and you can enjoy the harvest on a deck, balcony, or sunny windowsill. Then you can decorate it with a shamrock plant marker.

What You Need: good quality potting soil; large flower pot with saucer (make sure the pot has drainage holes in the bottom and is at least 15 inches in diameter at the top); pea seeds and seed potatoes (don't plant potatoes from the supermarket. They may be sprayed with chemicals and won't grow well. You can buy them at a local gardening store); thin branches to use as support for vines; water

What You Do: Fill your container two-thirds full with potting soil. Press your pea seeds or seed potatoes into the dirt. Cover with an inch or two of soil. Stick long, thin branches upright in the soil. As the vines grow, they will wrap themselves around the branches. Put containers in a sunny indoor spot or outdoors in full or partial sunlight. If frost is forecast, bring containers indoors. Water every 2 to 3 days, keeping moist. Be careful not to over-water.

For potato plants: As your potato plant grows, add more soil around the base of the plant, making a little hill. In fact, this is called hilling. Hilling should be done every time your plant grows about 4 inches. Continue to water the plant regularly as leaves and then flowers grow. When the leaves of the potato plants begin to turn yellow and die, stop watering. After 2 or 3 weeks, baby potatoes will be ready to harvest, or you can wait another 4 to 6 weeks to harvest larger potatoes.

For pea plants: Peas are ready to pick when the pods are full and heavy. Use scissors to cut the pods from the plant. Pulling them off by hand can result in pulling the entire plant up and damaging the roots. When watering the pea plants, be careful not to get water on the leaves of the plant. Water can cause mildew to grow on the leaves.

GROW GREEN FLOWERS FOR LUCK

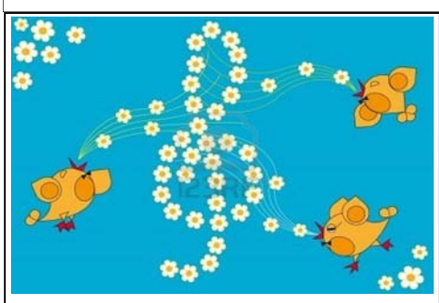
Saint Patrick's Day arrives and we all want to become part Irish. If you enjoy that feeling, why not try your luck at growing unique green flowers? Subtle, yet uncommon, these flowers will bring a smile. Green flowers were once rare, but now, dance a jig because there are many available.

A striking example of dramatic green flowers are Bells of Ireland (Molucella laevis). This plant is an easy-to-grow annual. The flowers look like pale green bells with tiny white flowers inside. This plant appears to be the work of a leprechaun. Another common name for this flower is Lady-in-the-Bath, because the green oblong calyxes (bells) are shaped like little bathtubs, and the inner flower, with imagination, appears to be a miniature lady bathing.

Bells of Ireland thrive in full sun and sandy soil. In mild climates, sow the seeds in late fall. In cold climates, sow after danger of frost has passed. Their seeds require light to germinate so don't cover, instead, press the seeds lightly into the soil. Plants are available in some nurseries now. In warm climates, they often bloom in time for St. Patrick's Day.

If you want green, fragrant flowers to fill a shady nook, then nicotiana is ideal. This plant is known as flowering tobacco, and comes in 'Lime Green' (Nicotiana alata). When you see this woodland plant covered with perfumed, lime-sherbet hued flowers, you will be charmed. Nicotiana are evening scented, so place them where you will enjoy their rich scent at night.

Green flowering gladiola bulbs are drought tolerant and can be planted as soon as the soil warms, and after all danger of frost has passed. These traditional flowers have been filling gardens for generations, because they are so bullet-proof. Give this old-fashioned flower a twist by planting 'Green star' a stately, green blooming variety.



All ye who love the springtime
and who but loves it well,
When the little birds do sing,
and the buds begin to swell.
Think not ye ken its beauty,
or know its face so dear,
Till ye look upon old Ireland in
the dawning o' the year!

By: Mary Elizabeth Blake

"A toast to your coffin. May it be made of 100 year old oak. And may we plant the tree together, tomorrow." - Irish Saying

MAKE A SHAMROCK PLANT MARKER

Make a festive shamrock plant marker to decorate your containers and to remind you what you have planted. What You Need: popsicle stick, chop-stick, or pencil; green paper, or white paper and a green marker or crayon; tape or glue; black permanent marker. What You Do: Trace and cut three small hearts from paper. If your paper is white, color your hearts green. Tape or glue the three hearts together to form a shamrock. Write "Peas" or "Potatoes" on your shamrock, depending on the container it will go into. Tape or glue your shamrock to your stick or pencil. Put the marker into the soil of the container.

"Geographically, Ireland is a medium-sized rural island that is slowly but steadily being consumed by sheep."

- Dave Barry

DEE'S Dog Grooming
Gentle - Prompt Loving Care
All Breeds & Cats - No Tranquilizers
Clean - Air-Conditioned Facilities
Recommended by many Spokane Vets
325-0017
3809 N. Walnut-Garland & Walnut

PET VITTLES WILD BIRDS WEST
919 N. Argonne Rd ~ 927-0675
email ~ *wildbirdwest@pet-vittles.com*
Premium wild bird seed, dog and cat food!
10% off TIEG

Northwest SEED & PET INC.
See Us For All Your Garden And Pet Needs
Garden Club Members Save 15% on Most Purchases
7302 N. Division · 484-7387
2422 E. Sprague · 534-0694
www.nwseed.com

Ritters Florist & Nursery
10120 N. Division
(509) 467-5258
http://www.4ritter.com
15% TIEG Discount!!

SECRET GARDEN & GREENHOUSE
DEE & ED PECK
7717 E. 18th
(509) 892-0407
Spokane, WA 99212

FOURTH AVENUE CHIROPRACTIC Clinic
Dr. Kathleen Lavis
Dr. Darcy Kelly
1625 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 200
Spokane, WA 99201
phone 509.624.5855
fax 509.838.5779

"Laughter is wine for the soul--laughter soft, or loud and deep, tinged through with seriousness--the hilarious declaration made by man that life is worth living."- Sean O'Casey

MEMBERSHIP INFO

Interested in joining TIEG? For further info, contact ViAnn Meyer at 535-TIEG. Membership includes TIEG monthly newsletter, *The Growing News*.

REGULAR/FAMILY MEMBER - $25
BUSINESS SPONSORSHIP - $60

SEND DUES TO:
TIEG
PO Box 13184
Spokane Valley, WA 99213

TIEG PLANT BOOTH AT EXPO

Spring and TIEG EXPO are coming!! Your seedlings and extra garden plants are needed for the TIEG Plant Booth. At the March meeting the Plant Booth Coordinators (Barbara A. Midtbo and Kathy Kinnear) will have pots/trays/labels for you to take and use for your donations. (Thank you Charles Gillingham for the many-many donated pots). The pots will be 3" and 4" pots in a standard nursery tray. This year we will not be coming to your garden to dig/pot plants. If you need special sized pots contact Barbara and she will bring them if available. Barbara A. Midtbo - phone - 276-9904 - email - bamidtbo@gmail.com. Think positive for a good gardening year!

THANK YOU'S

Thanks to everyone who helped with last month's Hospitality. Thanks to Library Assistants--Feb's Margaret Becker and Mar's Pat Hilleary. Thank you to everyone who has donated books to the garden club's library--the best garden library in town hands down! Finally, a big thank you to Karen Miller for helping out when Treasurer Carol McKenny was out of town.

BOOKMARKS

In March we add three interesting books to the TIEG library--one by our March 2012 speaker, another that will get you to look at the future differently, and the last will show you a different side of the plant world.

Brian Minter's New Gardening Guide by Brian Minter - Renowned gardener and radio personality Brian Minter has combined his passion for growing and his encyclopedic knowledge of plants in a spectacular guide. Included are his best bets--his favorite rose varieties, top ten shrubs for small yards, and hardiest groundcovers.

Tomorrow's Garden--Design and Inspiration for a New Age of Sustainable Gardening by Stephen Orr - With a keen eye for aesthetics matched by a strong concern for the environment, garden expert Stephen Orr has developed a sense of what a modern garden should be: small, visually pleasing, and responsible. A devoted supporter of the organic gardening movement, he advises gardeners to think about their gardens as part of an interconnected whole with the surrounding environment--with an eye to water usage, local ecology, and preservation of resources. However, for those who are afraid that a sustainable garden means a lack of flora and fauna, Orr believes that a garden, first and foremost, should be a thing of beauty. He encourages flower lovers to plant flowers, and he showcases gardens filled with traditional and exotic plants that are designed with both visual appeal and the environment in mind. With detailed case studies, stunning photographs, and an appendix of resources and information to help gardeners achieve their ecological best, **Tomorrow's Garden** will teach you the true definition of sustainability and show you how to create beauty without excess in the 21st century and beyond.

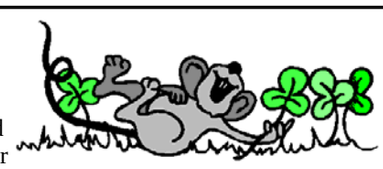
Secret World of Plants by Terry Underhill and Frances Donovan - DVD Video - Plants need an enthusiastic spokesman to release their fantastic stories of how and where they grow, what they grow with in the world of plans and fauna, how they were discovered and how they were used. A World of Plants will broaden your ideas about plants to put in your garden. Broadcasters Terry Underhill and Frances Donovan have teamed up to bring you the stories behind the plants, some you will know some most definitely will surprise you.

TROPICAL PLANT SALE & TALK

March 3, 2012
Hydroponics Lecture - 10am
Tropical Plant Sale 11:30am to 2pm
Manito Park Meeting Room, east of Gaiser Conservatory

The lecture by Laurie Bunch and Jordan Leach, from Spokane Organics North, will explain what hydroponics is about and the benefits of growing plants hydroponically. Bunch and Leach will also demonstrate and display different hydroponic systems. Seating is limited for the lecture, reservations are required. Reserve your spot by calling 456-8038. Presented by The Friends of Manito. A variety of exceptional tropical plants will be available and include colorful and extraordinary Alocasia lutea, A. "Polly" and A. "Purple Cloak," Colocasia "Diamond Head," and C. "Midnight," Cordaline "Fairchild Red," Hibiscus acetosella and H. "Snow Queen', Musa 'Zebrina," Polyscias "California," unusual cacti and ferns, Canna "Austalia," Euphorbia and Pelargonium. Tropical plants will also be available in mixed containers.

"When Irish eyes are smiling, sure 'tis like a morn in spring. In the lilt of Irish laughter you can hear the angels sing. When Irish hearts are happy, all the world seems bright and gay. And when Irish eyes are smiling, sure, they steal your heart away." - Chaucey Olcott & George Graff Jr.



GIBSON'S NURSERY
& LANDSCAPE SUPPLY
1401 SOUTH PINES ROAD
SPOKANE, WA 99206-5453
SPECIALIZING IN QUALITY NURSERY STOCK
10% TIEG Discount!
LORI CATES
PH. (509)928-0973
FAX (509)926-4352

Raindrop Raingutters
Kyle Davis, Owner
Sales & Installation
Call for Free Estimates * 509-218-8509 / 509-362-2151
RAIN GUTTERS ~ RAIN CHAINS
Seamless, Custom, Copper, Aluminum, Colors
RAIN CHAINS
Lic#RAINDR*931J
Rain Chain Showroom, open 9-4 Mon-Fri, Sat by Appt.
2172 N. Hamilton, Spokane, WA ~ www.raindropraingutters.com

Heavy Petal Nursery
Where Plants Rock
Bruce Bailey
Purveyor of Plants
HeavyPetalNursery
@WherePlantsRock
509.760.7848
heavypetalnursery.com

BLUE MOON
GARDEN & NURSERY, LLC
Terese Palaia
1732 So. Inland Empire Way Spokane, WA 99224
phone 509 747 4255 fax 509 455 5279
bluemoonplants.com

8093 W Prairie - Post Falls
208-773-3247
Northland Nursery
10% off
jdecker@my180.net

Meeting Perfection
CENTERPLACE
REGIONAL EVENT CENTER
A Premier Corporate Event Center at a Premier Location.
• Great Room for up to 450
• In-house catering avail.
• Free parking
2426 N. Discovery Place • Spokane Valley, WA 99216
(509) 688-0300
www.spokanevalley.org

"This very act of planting a seed in the earth has in it to me something beautiful. I always do it with a joy that is largely mixed with awe."- Celia Thaxter

WHY SAVE SEEDS?

1. To renew your age-old partnership with plants. Seeds are the life force. Plants, as living beings, desire to reproduce. By allowing them to go to seed and complete their growth cycle, you cooperate in a process essential to all life forms on Earth.

2. To retain control of your food supply. Some things are too important to allow other people to do for you. Food is a basic necessity and the cornerstone of our culture. Control of the seed is key to control of our food supply. By saving seeds you retain that lifeline. Over the past two generations, the seed industry has done almost no work to maintain, improve or develop open-pollinated varieties that will come true from seed. What little has been done has been accomplished by dedicated amateur seed savers and breeders. We need more such people. Instead, the industry has emphasized hybrid varieties whose breeding lines are trade secrets and whose seed will not come true to type. Lately, biotechnology research has almost completely replaced classical plant breeding at our universities and in the seed industry.

3. To preserve our heritage and our biodiversity. Farmers saved seeds and improved food crops for millennia. Seed companies have been on the scene for fewer than 3 centuries. Only in the last hundred years have farmers and gardeners become widely dependent on seed companies. Today the seed industry is so concentrated that just five large multinational corporations control 75% of the world's vegetable seed market. They add and drop varieties according to their own financial interests. Many of our present varieties have only one commercial source. If they are dropped, they will disappear and you won't be able to get them--unless you save seed.

4. To preserve the varietal characteristics you want. Most varieties being developed by the industry are for large-scale food processors and marketers. For the most part, they are bred for uniform ripening, long distance ship ability, and perfect appearance at the expense of taste and staggered ripening. If you want the best-tasting varieties, save your own seed from the ones you like.

5. To develop and preserve strains adapted to your own growing conditions. The large corporations who control the seed trade bought out scores of small and regional seed companies and dropped many of the regional specialties. They are interested only in varieties with widespread adaptability. If you want varieties and strains most adaptable to your specific climate conditions, you can get them only by saving your own seed. Over several generations, seeds can develop very specific adaptabilities to the conditions at your site.

6. To help preserve our right to save seeds. The industry continues to place more and more restrictions on farmers' and gardeners' right to save seeds. Variety patenting, licensing agreements, and restricted lists such as that maintained by the European Union, are industry tools to wrest control of the seed from the commons and keep it for themselves. Terminator Technology, now in its developmental phase, would render seeds sterile, making it impossible for farmers to save seed and forcing users back to the seed companies for every new crop.

7. To increase our available options. Contrary to industry claims, patenting has not encouraged creative plant breeding. Instead it has reduced cooperation among plant breeders and restricted availability of germplasm and plant varieties. For example, Blizzard snow pea has been off the market for over a decade because the patent holder dropped it but will not grant permission to any other company to propagate it for sale.

"But the sower going forth to sow sets foot into time to come, the seeds falling on his own place. He has prepared a way for his life to come to him, if it will. Like a tree, he has given roots to the earth, and stands free." - Wendell Berry, 'The Seeds'

TIEG FIRST ANNUAL SEED EXCHANGE

Last fall you were advised to save seed for a seed exchange at the March 1, 2012 meeting. If you did now is the time to prepare them for the TIEG Seed Exchange. Here are some helpful hints.

1. Fill the plastic packets which were provided last fall with ½ teaspoon (very small seeds) up to 1 tablespoon (extra-large seeds).

2. Other seed holders can be sealed envelopes, sealed plastic bags, or paper securely folded and taped. There will be some 2x3" zip plastic bags for you to use if you arrive early to fill/label them with seeds.

3. Label EACH packet please: Name of plant. Height. Plant Spacing. Color (if relevant). "A" for annual. "B" for biannual. "P" for perennial. Add any other relevant information. All of suggested information not required.

4. If seed was from a HYBRID please make a note as seeds from hybrids may not turn out "true."

5. Bring one picture and description for each seed type if possible. Cutout from catalog? Arrive early for display and setup.

6. Seed savers to be allowed to select/take packets up to the number of packets they provided. Honor system.

7. At half-time break (President ViAnn will announce) anyone will be able to select leftover packets on a first-come first-take basis. Thank you for your participation.

"Now seeds are just dimes to the man in the store, And the dimes are the things that he needs. And I've been to buy them in seasons before, but have thought of them merely as seeds. But it flashed through my mind as I took them this time, "You purchased a miracle here for a dime."

- Edgar A. Guest, 'A Package of Seeds'

THE SAFE SEED PLEDGE

Agriculture and seeds provide the basis on which our lives depend. We must protect this foundation as a safe and genetically stable source for future generations. For the benefit of all farmers, gardeners and consumers who want an alternative, we pledge that we do not knowingly buy or sell genetically engineered seeds or plants. The mechanical transfer of genetic material outside of natural reproductive methods and between genera, families or kingdoms, poses great biological risks as well as economic, political and cultural threats. We feel that genetically engineered varieties have been insufficiently tested prior to public release. More research and testing are necessary to further assess the potential risks of genetically engineered seeds. Further, we wish to support agricultural progress that leads to healthier soils, genetically diverse agricultural ecosystems and ultimately people and communities.

Own Root Hardy Roses

Northland Rosarium Nursery

Carol Newcomb

9405 N. Williams Lane
Spokane, WA 99224
509-448-4968
Fax/509-443-2202
web/www.northlandrosarium.com
email/Carol@northlandrosarium.com

Free Catalog

"Where The Plants Will Love You Back!"
Judy's Enchanted Garden
2628 W. Northwest Blvd. • Spokane, WA 99205
509-325-1081

STANEK'S
NURSERY, FLORAL, GIFTS & HOUSE PLANTS
Friendly People, tool
2929 E 27th Ave • 15% club discount
535-2939 • www.staneksnursery.com

Serving Local Garden Experts Since 1996.
nphc nw plant health care
• Pruning and removals
• Specialized tree and plant care
• 11 Certified Arborists on staff
Call The Tree Care Experts!
509.892.0110 – NorthwestPlantHealthCare.com – 208.687.2884

Julia Sells Homes
Your Spokane Area Realtor
KELLER WILLIAMS
Hotline: 509-701-1634
www.JuliaSellsHomes.com

A-1 ANIMAL CARE VETERINARY
Medical, Dental & Surgical Services for Companion Pets.
Mon-Fri 8:00 A.M- 6:00 P.M.
N. 101 Argonne Rd., Ste. F
Spokane, WA 99212
927 - 7367
"LOVE IS A FOUR-LEGGED WORD"

"There's a dear little plant that grows in our isle, 'twas St Patrick himself, sure, that set it. And the sun on his labor with pleasure did smile, and with dew from his eye often wet it. It thrives through the bog, through the brake, and the mireland; and he called it the dear little shamrock of Ireland."- Andrew Cherry

WHAT IS A SHAMROCK?

Legend has it that St. Patrick himself used a humble 3-leaf clover to explain the Holy Trinity (the father, the son and the holy spirit) when he was introducing Christianity to the Irish. Since then the shamrock has become synonymous with St. Patrick's Day in everything from décor to food.

The term shamrock is derived from the Irish word seamrog, which means "little clover." This is where things get a little tricky, because there are several types of plants that all end up being referred to as shamrocks, and which serve as Irish shamrocks during St. Patrick's Day celebrations. Some of these include the 3-leaf clover, red clover and oxalis, a shamrock-shaped plant sometimes called the false shamrock and often sold as a shamrock.

The elusive 4-leaf clover is a well-known symbol of good luck, and is actually an uncommon variation of the 3-leaf clover. According to tradition, finding a 4-leaf clover brings good luck to those who find one. It's estimated that there are approximately 10,000 3-leaf clovers for every 4-leaf clover, so you may be searching for a while! No one is completely sure whether the 4th leaf is caused genetically or environmentally.

Add a touch of Irish to your yard. In the spring and summer clover can make a gorgeous, green groundcover, so consider replacing your lawn with clover (which requires less watering and maintenance to keep it green than a standard grass lawn). Clover isn't as tough as grass, though, so it works best in areas that don't get too much foot traffic.

A clover lawn is best started in the spring or early summer, so purchase a large bag of clover seeds from a garden center. Mix the seeds with soil in a large container, making sure to mix evenly. Scattering seeds without mixing into the soil first can result in bare patches. Spread the mix evenly around the lawn using a rake for more even distribution. Then put down another quarter-inch of soil and water well. At this point the clover needs very frequent watering, but once your new ground-cover is established it needs minimal care. Clover will re-seed itself the first couple of years, but after that you might need to refresh the lawn by reseeding. And, by planting something green this St. Patrick's Day, you can enjoy the luck of the Irish year-round.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY & THE SHAMROCK

St. Patrick is known for bringing Christianity to Ireland but little is known of the connection that a simple plant such as the shamrock would have in history. St. Patrick used the tri-fold leaf shape of the shamrock to illustrate the doctrine of the Holy Trinity to his congregation when he simply picked a stem from the shamrock plant. But the plant he picked, or the Irish shamrock (Trifolium dubium), does not do well indoors and in doing so, floral shops and grocery stores do not sell the "true" shamrock. In its place, the Oxalis acetosella is sold to resemble the "true" shamrock for indoor use.

The plant that is sold now for St. Patrick's Day floral arrangements hailed from Europe, Iceland, and Asia. The Oxalis acetosella is easy to grow and thrives in environments that have cool air, and bright light. The shamrock likes to be crowded in moist soil. Fertilize the plant with an all-purpose fertilizer every 2 to 3 weeks while the plant is growing and flowering.

Regardless of how careful you take care of your shamrock, the leaves will begin to brown and wither. This symptom is normal. Oxalis plants go through dormancy two to three times a year. When this happens, remove any dead and/or dried plant material and stop watering. Place container in a cool, dark place and check for new shoots from time to time. This dormant period lasts about 3 months.

If the shamrock plant has outgrown its container, simply divide it after it has entered dormancy. Remove the shamrock from the container and remove the small side bulbs. Replant the bulbs in a mixture of potting soil and sand. Lay the bulbs on top of this mixture and cover with ¼-inch of potting mixture. Place the container in a north-facing window and water. Keep the soil moist to the touch until the plants are established.

While one may be tempted to mix the shamrock plant in a container garden or even a terrarium, avoid temptation. Due the dormant nature of the shamrock plant, it does not make a good companion for other plants. If one receives an arrangement with a shamrock plant in it, remove it from the planter as soon as the season is over.

Also, when one receives their shamrock, remember to either remove it from the foil liner or poke a hole in the bottom of the foil before watering. This will prevent the bulbs from rotting due to the standing water that pools in the foil.

When purchasing a shamrock, look for plants that do not show damage from insects, rot, wilt, or leaf and/or petals dropping. Also do not limit yourself to the old green standby. There are over 500 different types of shamrocks that can be used for this holiday. Try Oxalis acetosella with its pink blooms or Oxalis purpurea that showcases pink, purple or white blossoms. Oxalis regnelliia has purple foliage with white or light lavender flowers while Oxalis rubraa produces pink or lilac-colored flowers with dark veins on the leaves. Oxalis brasillensis produces dark pink flowers while the Oxalis oregana has white flowers.

Once your plants have been purchased, do not let your guard down as far as caring for your shamrock. Winter winds still blow through the month of March and can easily kill the shamrock on the way to the car. Before leaving with your shamrock, make sure it is covered in a plastic bag and placed in a warm car if possible.

So on March 17 while everyone is "wearing the green"; think about St. Patrick's life and how he brought Christianity to Ireland. St. Patrick's Day celebrates the anniversary of his death and heralds the arrival of spring with a plant that has become a symbol of rebirth.

4-LEAF CLOVER

I know a place where the sun is like gold, and the cherry blooms burst with snow, and down underneath is the loveliest nook, where the 4-leaf clovers grow.
One leaf is for HOPE, and one is for FAITH, and one is for LOVE, you know, and GOD put another in for LUCK--if you search, you will find where they grow.
But you must have HOPE, and you must have FAITH, you must LOVE and be strong--and so--if you work, if you wait, you will find the place, where the 4-leaf clovers grow.

By: Ella Higginson

RiversEdge Chorus
Women's 4-Part A Cappella Chorus
Let Us Entertain You!!
Liz Reynolds 509.489.5690 Lizzrbass@aol.com
Diana Thomas 509.928.4024 diathombari@comcast.net

The Plant Farm at Creach Greenhouses
10% TIEG Discount!
Stacey Bishop, Retail Manager, 509-926-9397, fax: 509-928-6750
14208 E. 4th Avenue, Spokane, WA 99216
Bedding Plants • Nursery Stock • Foliage
Seasonal Flowers • Garden Decor • Gifts

MIDDLE EARTH NIGHTCRAWLERS
Soil Builder Pure Earthworm Castings
DEALERS
Blue Moon Nursery - 1732 S Inland Empire
Spokane Boys - 1019 E Francis
Spokane Organic - 4823 E Sprague

Wabi-Sabi Japanese Gardens
pruning, shaping, training of trees
consult, design, build and care for japanese style gardens, nursery trees shrubs, plants, bonsai. Over 50 varietys of hosta.
10% discount to club members!
David Daniel
1719 so pines rd. spokane, wa 99206
509-999-6802
e-mail wabisabigardens@yahoo.com

GREEN THUMB NURSERY
Expect the best! TIEG Discount!
Specializing in Hanging Baskets, Perennials, Annuals, & Vegetables
16816 E. SPRAGUE (509) 927-0990
VERADALE, WA FAX (509) 927-5962
http://gthumbnursery.com gthumb@qwest.net

Wheatland Boarding Kennel
TIEG Discount
Marsha Hein
3013 E. Watt Rd.
Spangle, WA 99031
(509)828-3778 / (831)320-5733

"May your thoughts be as glad as the shamrocks. May your heart be as light as a song. May each day bring you bright, happy hours. That stay with you all the year long." - Irish blessing

THE GREEN LAND

Their green gives a shade of happiness to our planet. Know more about the fascinating world of plants that exist around us.

1 - When we like a flower or a leaf, we keep it in a book to dry and preserve. What do we call a collection of dried plant specimens mounted and arranged in some order? a. Herbarium, b. Plant album, c. Aquarium, d. Geranium

2 - In order to protect themselves from insect bites, Indians in the Amazon forest, in South America, use red dyes of plants to cover their hair and body. Name the tree which produces this dye. a. Rafflesia, b. Dandelion, c. Annatto, d. Maple

3 - All trees release oxygen during the day which helps us breathe and live. However at night, trees give out another gas which is not healthy for our lungs. That is the reason we are advised not to sit under a tree at night. Can you name this gas? a. Nitrogen, b. Carbon dioxide c. Sulphur dioxide, d. Carbon monoxide

4 - Approximately how many roses are needed to extract one-fourth of a gallon (almost one liter) of rose oil? a. 500, b. 3,000, c, 5,000, d. 10,000

5 - It was the first plant in space grown on board the Soviet spacecraft Salyut. Name the plant? a. Arabidopsis, b. Cactus, c. Lily, d. Dwarf hebe

6 - A native of Indonesia and Malaysia, it is the largest flower in the world. The flower grows to the size of a washtub, up to a meter across and can weigh as much as seven kg (almost 16 pounds). Which flower are we talking about? a. Rafflesia, b. Brazilian duckweed, c. Wolffia, d. Damask rose

7 - In 1928, Sir Alexander Fleming discovered Penicillin, an antibiotic to fight bacteria. Which family does this antibiotic belong to? a. Algae, b. Fungi, c. Moss, d. Conifers

8 - Nearly all the plants that we see around us are green. What is the pigment present in plants which makes them green? a. Xanthophyll, b. Carotene, c. Chlorophyll, d. Anthocyanin

9 - It is the fastest growing plant in the world and can grow up to 3 feet in a day. Name it. a. Bamboo, b. Willow, c. Sandalwood, d. Oak

10 - Which one of these words is a shade of green? a. Cerulean, b. Chartreuse, c. Vermilion, d. Titian

ANSWERS

1 - a	6 - a
2 - c	7 - b
3 - b	8 - c
4 - d	9 - a
5 - a	10 - b

SENIOR EMPOWERMENT EXPO

Resource/Referral Fair at Spokane Valley Senior Center, 2426 N. Discovery Place on Wednesday, March 28, 2012 from 10am-2pm. Free Admission!

LAST CALL

Last chance to renew club membership before you are taken off membership list. Also last time to sign-up for Gourmet Gardeners for the year so calendar can be set.

THE LUCK OF THE IRISH & THE 4 LEAF CLOVER

A 4 leaf clover, found in a field, So many traditional beliefs, The true Irish, Faith, Hope, Love & Luck, Count as one for each leaf.

Even back to the day of Eve, She carried from the garden a clover, With four beautiful leaves, That she used to cover her over.

A clover used to fight evil spirits, Known as a special charm, Carried to protect all, Keeping them from surrounded harm.

They say if you find yourself one, Luck shall come your way, Ownership of a 4 leaf clover, Will bring good things your way.

Not just on St. Patrick's Day, But the whole year through, Believe in Faith, Hope, Love & Luck, In all things that you say and do.

by: Rose Marie Rideout

The Inland Empire Gardeners
P.O. Box 13184
Spokane Valley, WA
99213

QUOTE OF THE MONTH: "Of all the wonderful things in the wonderful universe of God, nothing seems to me more surprising that the planting of a seed in the blank earth and the result thereof. Take that Poppy seed, for instance: it lies in your palm, the merest atom of matter, hardly visible, a speck, a pin's point in bulk, but within it is imprisoned a spirit of beauty ineffable, which will break its bonds and emerge from the dark ground and blossom in a splendor so dazzling as to baffle all powers of description." - Celia Thaxter