

Plantings Provide Seasonal Decor

BY C. BRUCE WILLIAMS
Area Extension Turfgrass Agent
Running cedar, boxwood, holly, chestnuts and mistletoe are just a few of the plants that contribute to the sights and smells of the holiday season. I have always been interested in the botany of plants used for seasonal decoration. Many plants have long traditions coupled with an equally long myth.

Mistletoe (*Phoradendron serotinum*) is undoubtedly my favorite Christmas plant. The traditions following this plant certainly add to my Christmas cheer. Mistletoe plants can be either male or female. Female plants are the most attractive when covered with sticky white berries. These beautiful white berries are poisonous, so be careful when you use this plant for decoration. Mistletoe is a parasite on living hardwood trees and under the right conditions can cause serious injury to the host tree.

In my youth, I remember the

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most beautiful wreaths were made from running cedar (*Lycopodium clavatum*). Running cedar is not cedar at all but a primitive plant related to the clubmosses. Due to overharvesting and loss of habitat, running cedar is relatively rare in today's Christmas plant market. I understand some states have protected running cedar from harvest because of the plant's slow growth and relative rarity. Enjoy running cedar in nature rather than on your wreath.

Hundreds of varieties of holly have been developed but the most beautiful species for holiday decoration is the English holly (*Ilex*

aquifolium). Unfortunately the English holly is not easily cultivated in the eastern part of North Carolina.

Fortunately, horticulturists have hybridized the English holly to better adapted species to produce numerous varieties that grow beautifully in our area. The variety "Nellie Stevens" with its dark green leaves and red berries makes beautiful "boughs of holly" for holiday decoration. Several other varieties that make beautiful decorations include Foster holly No. 2, American holly and "Tinga" holly.

Boxwood (*Buxus spp.*) wreaths are beautiful and traditional in the holiday season of North Carolina. This is an excellent time of year to prune boxwood (an art in itself) and to make use of the prunings in wreaths, arrangements and other decorations. The fine texture, dark green color and smell of boxwood remind me of cozy gatherings and eggnog.

I have never roasted chestnuts

(*Castanea spp.*) over an open fire but I do enjoy occasionally eating oven-roasted chestnut. Our native chestnut succumbed to the blight decades ago, but the blight resistant Chinese chestnut (*Castanea mollissima*) can be grown in its place. The Chinese chestnut is easy to grow but makes a spreading shrub or small tree that needs plenty of room.

A native miniature version of the Chinese chestnut is the chinquapin (*Castanea pumila*). My dad harvested his first crop of chinquapin chestnuts this fall. This species forms a large gangly shrub rather than a tree. The nuts are slightly smaller than acorns and are quite tasty. Commercially developed varieties should be planted since most seedlings will eventually succumb to the chestnut blight.

Send your gardening questions to the Plant Doctor, P.O. Box 109, Bolivia, N.C. 28422.



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

Griffins Take First Place

Jim and Joann Griffin of 135 Burlington St. took first place in the Holden Beach Beautification Committee's Christmas decoration contest. Pictured with the couple, at right, is beautification committee zone captain Lib Carpenter. Second place was awarded to John and Adeline Broadnax of 114 Lions Paw Dr. James and Janet Shafor of 147 Brunswick Ave. took third place.

CLUB BRIEFS

Brierwood Lights Luminarias

The Brierwood Ladies Club will spread Christmas spirit in their community with a special lighting of luminarias today (Thursday) and again on Christmas Eve.

A luminaria is a traditional Mexican Christmas lantern consisting of a paper bag with a lighted candle inside.

The Brierwood Ladies Club kicked off its Christmas season activities with a dinner dance at Sandpiper Bay Golf and Country Club Dec. 5.

Garden Club Meets

Members of the Sunset Sands Garden Club exchanged gifts at the group's Christmas luncheon last Thursday at Derbster's in Calabash.

Following the lunch, members went to the home of club president Marie Summerlin where they packaged home-made cookies. The cookies will be given to shut-ins and elderly residents in the community.

Weingartens Win

Bob and Chick Weingarten of 5 Buoy Court have been named winners of the Carolina Shores Garden Club Christmas decoration contest.



Together 50 Years

Mr. and Mrs. Ira T. Smith of Calabash recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. They were married in High Point and have two children, Judith Riley and Darrell Smith, both of Calabash. They have three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. The couple was honored Dec. 16 at a reception hosted by their children.

Birthdays And Anniversaries

Thursday, December 20
Cheryl Barton, Russell Kennedy, Vangelyn Green, Betty Edwards, Frances Stephens, Jessica Pigott; Mr. and Mrs. Mike O'Neal, Mr. and Mrs. Maynard Owens, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Watts, Mr. and Mrs. Wendell Bennett, Michael and Melissa Sims, Mr. and Mrs. Kim E. Carter.

Friday, December 21
Carol Jones, Roy D. Trest, Scott Hewett, Vicky Crawford, Rifton Evans, Raymond Howard, Jimmy Bellamy, Kathy Quaintance, DeWayne Simmons, Debbie Long; Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Hardee, Mr. and Mrs. David Kanoy.

Saturday, December 22
Jean Ellis, Lucile Kirby, Hope Thomas, Baxter Cheek, Travis DuBois, W.H. Lee Wescott, Kathi Hostetter, Carolyn Hewett, Ophelia Bellamy, Lucille Kirby, Freda King, Bryan Cheers, Dr. Ben Ward; Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Martin, Mr. and Mrs. William A. Stanley, Mr. and Mrs. Billy Bland.

Sunday, December 23
Chris Ballou, Jessica Wolf, Donna Lynn Hawes, Vanessa Bryant, Kathy Meissner, Hope E. Thomas, Nancy Norton, Audie Hewett, Mr. and Mrs. Virgil Roberts, Mr. and Mrs. Rex Gore, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Price, Mr. and Mrs. Dewey Sellers, Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Wolf Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Terry Sharp, Mr. and Mrs. Jennings Faircloth, Mr. and Mrs. Mike Sharp.

Monday, December 24
Sylvester Stevenson, Gary Bozeman, Wanda Todd, Susan M. Gore,

Darlene Powell, Jennifer Joyner, Stephen Schutte, Virginia Gibson; Mr. and Mrs. Ralph King, Mr. and Mrs. John M. Young, Mr. and Mrs. Hoyt Inman.

Tuesday, December 25
Jesus Christ, Heather Clemmons, Ann Willis Hucks, LaVerne Norris, Ashley Thorsen, Mary Williamson; Mr. and Mrs. T.M. Phillips.

Wednesday, December 26
Betty Maerker, Ian Lee Evans, Clayton Cooper, Erika Hunter Faircloth, Tommy Edwards, Billy Clemmons, J. Harry White, Cleus Clemmons, Amy Galloway, David Ward, Brenda Lewis, Al Parker Jr.; Mr. and Mrs. Randy Holden, Mr. and Mrs. Lenue Green, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Frink Sr.

Isn't it nifty, our mom Carol is going to be fifty!



Happy Birthday Mom! We Love You! Terry & Shannon

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4-H Accomplishments Recognized At Dinner

Lakeside 4-H Club of Boiling Spring Lakes was recognized Dec. 6 as the county's outstanding 4-H club for 1990.

The award and others for individual achievement were presented at the annual 4-H Achievement program and dinner Dec. 6 at Town Creek Township Park Community Building, according to Billy Privette, county extension agent for 4-H.

The honor club is directed by Faye Layman and Julia Bailey.

Also recognized for their outstanding efforts were Amy Caison, Outstanding Senior 4-H Girl; Joseph Hunt, Outstanding Senior 4-H Boy; Heidi Layman, Outstanding Junior 4-H Girl; and Chris Conner, Outstanding Junior 4-H Boy. These four students received trophies and 4-H scholarships.

A number of 4-H members received recognition for project work completed during the year. These were as follows:

Bird project: Andy Barbee, Logan Page, Abigail Larson, Kevin

Larson, Christina Hatch, Joanna Hatch and Nathan Lindsay;

Clothing: Jessica Mays, Kristy Collette, Kim Mays, Jessica Jones, Heidi Layman, Chris Conner, Chrystal Shaver, Amy Caison and Rachel Turner;

Cooking: Karen Kelly, Chris Conner, Chrystal Shaver, Jessica Jones and Erica Watts;

Horse: Stephanie Turner, Tiffany Casteen and Amy Wallace;

Dog Care: Heidi Layman.

Amy Caison was also recognized

for electric, marine awareness, horticulture and leadership projects. During the achievement program 4-H members also received awards for work in other areas. These included presentations, talent, cumulative records, clothing workshops, fashion revue, Extension Home-maker fashion show participation, horticulture judging teams, camps, 4-H Congress, favorite food show and several other workshops.

Information on 4-H membership is available by contacting the Brunswick County 4-H office at 253-4425.

We welcome the opportunity to say thanks and merry Christmas.
Dr. Marilyn Boehm, M.D., Ph.D. and Staff

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