



BLACKSTONE VALLEY GARDENERS

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January 2009

Volume XII - No 25

January Meeting

Thursday, January 8th
Sutton Senior Center
19 Hough Road, Sutton, MA
7:00PM

"Lotions and Potions"

Sue Smith, herbalist, runs *Earthcrafts Botanicals*, a mail-order herbal preparation business from her home. She'll share with us her experience managing three acres of gardens and woodlands organically, and how she provides sanctuary for endangered plant species. She'll also share some herbal home care and health tips.

MEETING PLACE

Sutton Senior Center
19 Hough Road, Sutton MA

From Rte 146 take exit 5 (Main Street Sutton & Northbridge)

Go west, the first left is Hough Road.

There are signs on Route 146 for Sutton Senior Center

January Munchies:

To whomever may have signed up: *Don't forget!* ☺

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Can you even believe that we are starting a new year? 2008 certainly went out with a bang with all those snowstorms in December.... They were predicted by the Old Farmer's Almanac which is forecasting similar snowy periods in early and late January. *Oh Boy!*

As I mentioned last year around this time, the deer are out in full force. They are beautiful, but will do their heaviest browsing from now through February. While the first rule in deer proofing is that there are really no deer-proof plants, here are a few they don't seem to enjoy: garlic, cotoneaster, yarrow, sage, cedar, hellebore, hydrangea, daffodil, poppy, dusty miller and zinnia. And, now for something really different: smelly old sneakers can be used as a deterrent to deer. Just stick the shoes on the tops of tomato stakes and watch the deer walk a wide circle around them. (No guarantee that this is effective, but it *was* listed out on the Farmer's Almanac web site.)



JANUARY TREK

There will be no formal trek this month.

If you have any suggestions for one, please contact Ann Hanscom: 508-278-3617 or A_J_Hanscom@msn.com.



January Activities

- **Rhode Island Wild Plant Society**

Meeting, Refreshments & Fellowship; Program: Leslie Duthie – "Propagation Techniques for Native Plants" from ferns to wildflowers to native trees and shrubs. Topics: seed and spore collection, storage, time and temperature for germination, hardwood and softwood cuttings. Q&A. Free and open to the public – bring a friend. No registration required.

January 10th at 1PM, North Kingstown Free Library, 100 Boone St.

- **Tower Hill Botanic Garden**

Hypertufa Workshop – "Students design and produce their own custom hypertufa (artificial stone) planters for their gardens. *See next page for general info and the insert for DIY recipes.*

Jan 21st from 2P – 4P. Register at www.towerhillbg.org.

A Gardener's Diary...

January is the perfect time to think about last year's garden so you can look ahead to the new season. One of the things you will want to do is collect those beautiful garden catalogs, sit down with a cup of tea, and browse...find those "must have" annuals and select some unusual varieties of perennials. It is the perfect time to plan a garden -- not only will it brighten your winter days, but you can plan the garden at a leisurely pace.

If you keep a garden journal check it to see what failed and what thrived; knowing this will help you make better choices. Or, maybe you have a collection of newspaper and magazine clippings that you want to review. Armed with this information you can sit down and map out a plan for your plantings to reflect your passions and showcase your successes

Board Positions

The two year terms of many of the board positions will be up in April, and positions will be vacant. We are seeking members with an interest in filling a board position. Participating on the board is a good opportunity to meet and work with great people, to get some really good experience, and to have a lot of fun. Please chat with current board members at the January meeting to we which positions will be opening up.



WANTED: Your Input

Share your interesting gardening experiences right here!
Email patricia.a.stellato@verizon.com or snail mail to 56 West River St, Upton, MA 01568

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**PO BOX 686
UPTON, MA 01568**



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Hypertufa

Exactly what is it? **Hypertufa** (pronounced *hyper-toofa*) is the term used for a type of artificial stone. It was first created in the mid 19th century by mixing sand, peat, various volcanic aggregates and cement. It's relatively lightweight compared to stone or concrete and no matter how cold your winter temps may be, if properly cured, is freeze proof.

Hypertufa is perfect for making long lasting garden troughs (plant containers), fake rocks and boulders, stepping stones, wonderfully whimsical garden spheres and all sorts of decorative garden accents. It takes a little more skill than making a mud pie. ☺ Smooth it over a form or mold, let it properly cure (dry) and you'll have a very durable DIY garden art treasure for years to come.

The garden crafts and accessories that can be made with this remarkable mixture are almost limitless. To give you an idea, you can make: hypertufa troughs (planting containers), stepping stones, birdbaths, pedestals, columns, spheres, and garden lanterns. You can make "tufa" castings of objects like giant plant leaves. You can free form sculpt it, hand mold it, sand-cast it, or mold it in a form. You can carve it, color it, or add mosaic pieces to it. It's really quite incredibly versatile.



This giant leaf is a sample mold for *your* potential "tufa."