

# URBAN DIRT

Published for the Harris County Master Gardeners

Nov/Dec 1996

Vol 5, No. 6

## HOLIDAY PLANNING TIME



You would be surprised at the number of marvelous items Mother Nature has provided for us to use as holiday decorations. I know that we are in the midst of that awful time of year when we are cleaning out our gardens, but many of the materials that you may be gathering to put into the compost

heap or to shred may come in handy to use in wreaths, mantel displays, and flower arrangements.

I thought about this as I wandered through the craft store and noticed the high cost of twigs that people are buying for floral arrangements. When I arrived home, I looked around my garden in a new way. I discovered a wealth of materials. First, I cut back my thyme bed of all dead twigs. Then, after carefully examining the wispy twigs for insects or other debris, I spray painted them gold and added them as part of a harvest arrangement for the dining room table. I did the same with pine cones, nuts and some seed heads. By the way, seed heads of different plants make interesting additions to floral arrangements as do any old twisted branches. Just make sure the branches are dead and free from insects. Old, thick vines that have naturally wrapped around sticks can make good bases for fantasy topiaries.

A look around the garden can reveal other treasures that the fairies have left us. If you have a patch of pansies or "Johnnie jump ups" (non-chemically treated) you can use two or three of them to form the center decoration in iced cakes. A single "Johnnie jump up" in the center of a cup cake is charming and quite edible. Herb gardens are great for finding decorative touches to add to food. A round of cheese sitting in the midst of some chive "grass" can be a refreshing and unique look. A beautiful spray of lemon verbena can be added to the punch bowl or lemon-ade pitcher. Herbs, edible leaves and even small fruits are beautiful arranged around a roast on a platter.

Enjoying and using the various "fruits" of our garden labors is what its all about. Have a wonderful and joyous holiday season.

*\_\_ Pam Libby*



### NOVEMBER: 11/19/96

Executive Board	5:30 p.m.
Holiday Dinner Meeting	6:30 p.m.
General Meeting	7:15 p.m.

### SUBJECT:

"Tropicals: Their Usefulness in Our Ornamental Gardens and in Our Health"  
Speaker: Gary Outenreach, Director of Moody Gardens

Please note this is a covered dish meeting, please bring wither a salad, vegetable or dessert. Meats will be furnished by the Master Gardener Association

**NOTE: THERE IS NO DECEMBER MEETING – HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**