

URBAN DIRT

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W I N T E R G A R D E N I N G



Finally, the weather has gotten cooler and we can get back into the yard for some serious shapeup and bed preparation.

Yes, I'm still talking about what I alluded to in the last issue.

Except I decided to do more than just hint. (This is your conscience talking). Get out that soil testing kit (or finally buy one) and think about adding some amendments to your beds. If you remember your lessons, normal ph is about 6.5 or 7, azaleas, camellias, gardenias and magnolias appreciate lower numbers, while most herbs and dry climate plants will be satisfied with more alkalinity. It's a good idea to look up plant preferences before planting and to maintain them by adding certain soil amendments. To acidify soils, add humus, peat moss, compost, or agricultural sulphur. If the plant leaves are yellowing, iron sulfate will help. Some people use a liquid solution of Epsom salts, gypsum, or magnesium sulfate. If a soil has high acidity, you can add lime, wood burning fireplace ashes or bone meal. Many herb growers swear by bone meal. Vermiculite will aid in soil abortion of these minerals.

One of the most important things you can do to help your beds is to dig them deeply before adding and mixing in the soil amendments. Our soil often must be worked deeper than one foot so that we avoid the "basin" effect that seals the area under the area worked and causes poor drainage.

Most of Houston's soil is the "black gumbo" type (mostly heavy clay) Parts of Houston may have piney forests and soil with sand, silt and loam. However, most of us have the kind of soil that drains poorly and becomes rock hard when dry. Lawns with this type of soil need aeration so that watering can actually enter the ground and not sweep off the surface carrying vital soil nutrients.

So now that I've got you to get down and dirty (after all what else is "urban dirt" good for) have a wonderful holiday season and happy planting! .

Pam Libby

NOVEMBER: 11/18/97

Executive Board 5:30 p.m.

Dinner 6:30 p.m.

General Meeting 7:30 p.m.

SUBJECT: "Water & Bog Gardening"

Speaker: Rolf & Anita Nelson, Nelson Water Gardens and Nursery.

This will be a covered dish dinner. You supply the covered dish (cassorole or dessert) and we'll supply the meat!

**NO MEETING IN DECEMBER
HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

The article that our president, Mary Lynn Randall, usually submits in this place, will not appear here due to her mother's death in Oklahoma. Our thoughts and prayers are with her.

**LETTER FROM
NANCY CANNON ON
THE DAY OF THE
ROSE GARDEN
DEDICATION**

Thank you so much.

Though I am unable to attend today's ceremony in person, I very much want to thank you for the remarkable kindness you have shown to me in the dedication of the Antique and Heritage Rose Garden.

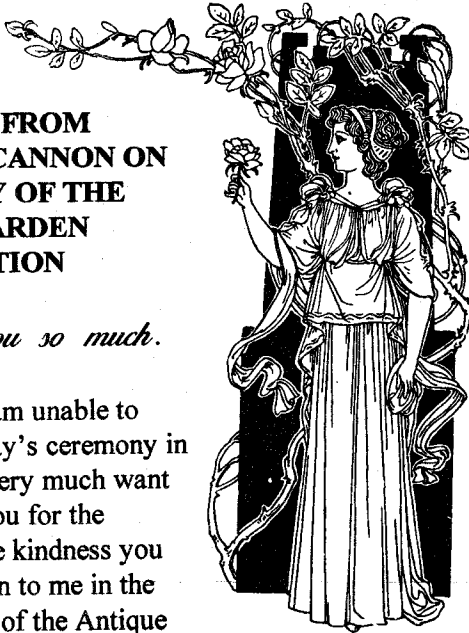
I know that the garden means so very much to Clyde - and I am sure that this dedication is very much a reflection of the time and effort that Clyde and his fellow Master Gardeners have poured into the garden's development.

When we were talking about this honor I was reminded of a verse in John 4 that speaks of one person "entering into the labors of another." By having my name attached to this garden, I know that I am entering into the labors of many of you and I thank you for this honor.

I have enjoyed all the friends I have made here.

Nancy

It is with much regret that we announce that Nancy passed away on Tuesday, October 20. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Clyde and his family in their time of grief.



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For a list of standing/special committee members, please see page 8.