

SEEDERS AND WEEDERS
NEWSLETTER
OCTOBER 2023



Armstrong & District Garden Club

CONTACTS

EMAIL cfarris21adgg@gmail.com

WEBSITE <https://armstronggardenclub.com>

FACEBOOK

EXECUTIVE

President - Carolyn Farris 250-546-6083; cfarris@telus.net

Vice president - Vacant

Recording Secretary - vacant

Treasurer - Sue Weibe

Membership - Chris Williams

Newsletter Editor - Vacant

Sunshine - Diane Lockton and Heather Hayes

Door Prizes - Sue Rook

Directors - Heather Freeman

Paul Peacock

GENERAL MEETING

First Tuesday of month Sep to Jun in Oddfellows Hall, Armstrong at 7:00 PM

EXECUTIVE MEETING at 5:30 PM before the General Meeting and all are welcome.

Executive Report

November is the time to set up the club for the coming year. Elections (hopefully) or appointments or twisted arms will be used to fill the necessary jobs to keep the club running. Volunteers for President, Treasurer and Membership are willing to continue along with several volunteers for specific jobs. Please think about what you have time, energy and willingness to contribute and jobs can be divided up to make them manageable. WITHOUT VOLUNTEERS A CLUB CANNOT RUN. Lets all work together to make the Armstrong & District a strong and viable entity in our community. We hope to see you out at the November meeting.

The Executive

GUEST SPEAKER

CANDICE CHAREST spoke on "Tips for Winterizing Your Gardens"

Candice also has a garden design business called "Mums in the Garden"

Perennials can be done in the fall or spring. Day lilies clean up easier in the spring but in the fall they will require further cleaning in the fall. Grasses need to be cleaned in the fall to prevent mice from creating nests and killing roots over the winter.

Perennials such as black-eyed susan and rudabecia will go to seed so cleaning them up in the fall. Potentilla welcomes a really hard pruning and will flower in the spring on new growth.

Annuals should be cleaned up after the first frost. Many will self-seed such as Cosmos. Corn Gluten meal will prevent any seeds from sprouting but care needs to be taken to prevent seeds from going places you do not want them.

Vines will be pulled off trellises by snow in the winter. Clematis if early spring do not prune in fall, summer blooming clematis can be hard prunes and if late spring bloomers they can stand a light pruning in the fall. Trumpet vines are fairly hard but need some care to protect them from breaking

Bulbs such as gladiolas, canna lilies, etc. should be dug up, dried off and then place in brown paper bags in a cool place for the winter. In the spring pot them up and re-use. Some lilies can be stored in their pots without digging them up.

Cedar hedging is a great attractant for deer. Deer fencing that is wrapped fairly tightly on cedar hedges will have the deer leaving the area alone. It can be left on all year you wish.

Burlap in big or small rolls will help keep plants from getting sun burned but still allows air circulation to prevent mildew problems. Shelters can also be purchased that act like little tents that can be placed over rhododendrons or roses and they have hooks that can be pegged down like tents.

Roses need to have all the leaves cleaned up and get rid of all leaves that cover the ground which reduce pests and insects. Peat moss can be dumped over to protect from the cold. Only prune the hips and flowers off. Add bark mulch if you wish and spread out in the spring. Leaves can be bagged and put around plants and bushes as insulation from the cold and make it easy to remove in the spring.

Trees and shrubs do not need a lot of care. Hydrangeas do better with the flowers clipped off to prevent snow snapping the branches.

Veggie gardens need all the plants and leaf debris removed and placed in the compost. Top dress with bone meal and manure. Raspberries and blackberries need to be clipped back and get rid of all the canes that produced fruit this year leaving the new canes that grew this year.

Fruit trees do well with a dormant oil spray that will catch any pests currently affecting the tree. This should be followed by another dormant oil spray in the early spring. Cardboard wrap with sticky tar will prevent the need for spraying in the summer.

Irrigation systems need to be drained, end caps taken off and timers removed. Anti desiccant sprays work really well for rhododendrons, boxwood hedges, etc.

Rodents can be a real problem. Hard wear cloth wrapping the stems will protect them from being destroyed.

Make sure your plants are well watered going into winter before the ground freezes. Hand watering even after frost will help them survive later into the next year.

A liquid root booster can help transplants if fed before winter so they survive and thrive in the spring.

Peonies and irises can be dug and transplanted in the fall. Make sure you plant them shallow. They do not like to be buried. For other plants in pots plant them in a vegetable garden in the pots for the winter and replant in the spring.

GARDENING INFORMATION

How to Care for a Christmas Cactus, Year After Year



There's nothing quite like decorating your home with a festive plant for the holiday season. One of our favorites? The **Christmas cactus!**

Keep in mind that there are three types of holiday cactus plants: the Thanksgiving cactus (*Schlumbergera truncata*), the Easter cactus (*Rhipsalidopsis gaetneri*) and the [Christmas cactus](#) (*Schlumbergera russelliana*). Each variety has its own unique traits — the Christmas cactus is an especially gorgeous [houseplant for the winter season](#).

"This colorful plant will show off its petals in a variety of colors such as red, purple, orange, pink and white and is sure to brighten up any space during the holiday season and beyond," says Alfred Palomares, vice president of merchandising and resident plant dad at [1-800-Flowers.com](#). Plus, this [winter-flowering plant](#) is easy to care for indoors and, if tended to properly, can continue blooming year after year. "In fact, it can live up to 20 years," Palomares says. "And, if you have any furry friends at home, this plant is pet-friendly."

If you'd like to give the Christmas cactus a try, follow our guide including how to grow, bloom, propagate, prune and care for this popular holiday plant.

How to Pot a Christmas Cactus

According to Palomares, you should "choose a planter that has a drainage hole at the bottom to allow water to move easily throughout the soil, promote good circulation and avoid root rot." You want to avoid water getting trapped within the pot, as it

can be fatal. "Their new home should be larger than its previous container — about three to six inches bigger depending on its size and the length of its roots," he says.

Here are more of his top potting tips:

Give the roots a trim if they seem excessive.

Treat your Christmas cactus as a mini compost bin and **add a small amount of organic matter** that would typically be tossed out.

Make sure the plant isn't too soggy. "Be sure to wait a few days after it had its last drink of water," he notes.

Tap the top of the pot so the plant slides out easily. "Keeping as much of the original soil as possible, place your plant in the new planter, filling the sides in with additional soil as needed and compacting it as you go," he says.

Take Note: "If using soil from the garden, check if the soil contains any spores or critters to avoid bringing them into your home, as they can contaminate your other houseplants," Palomares says.

"Also, do not supplement with fertilizer until after six weeks of repotting."

How to Care for a Christmas Cactus

A lack of water and dramatic temperature swings can cause flower buds to drop more rapidly. Maximize your specimen's blooming period by paying attention to these six key factors:

Soil: Use quality soil rich in humus and other nutrients.

Temperature: Maintain an optimal climate of 65 degrees.

Watering: Keep the soil evenly moist while your plant is blooming, misting it frequently.

Light: Place the cactus in an east-facing window for moderate light and some direct sun.

Fertilization: Apply a [high-potassium fertilizer](#) every two weeks once buds form.

Transplantation: Repot your cactus each year after flowering.



Where to Put Your Christmas Cactus

"As a perennial plant, the Christmas cactus will flower year over year for you to enjoy if cared for properly," Palomares says.

"When the holiday season is over and its flowering season begins to wind down in January, it is best to keep your Christmas cactus in a cool, but humid spot in your home." He notes that the Christmas cactus grows best in temperatures that range from 60 - 70 degrees Fahrenheit and 50% - 60% humidity. "It is best also to keep them away from heating and cooling vents to avoid drying it out," he notes.

Common Christmas Cactus Pests

While Christmas cacti are typically low-maintenance plants, they aren't immune to pests and diseases. If you find your plant has been invaded by pests, [Gardening Know How](#) shares ways to avoid some of the most common types.

Mealybugs: These insects typically infect indoor plants. They have cottony masses that make them easy to detect and can attract mold if left alone over time. Pick them off with a toothpick or use a systemic insecticide formula to get rid of them.

Spider mites: While you may be unable to detect these tiny

insects on your cactus, their webbing on the leaves makes their presence known. These dust-liking creatures can be removed using [insecticidal soap spray](#).

Fungus gnats: Not only are these insects tiny, but they also fly and love soggy soil. You may notice a loss of leaves if the infestation is large. If insecticidal soap spray doesn't work, fill a clean pot with fresh and well-drained potting mix before repotting.

How to Encourage More Blooming



Keep plants cool (around 50°) following their blooming period. Water them to keep the soil just barely moist, and be sure to withhold fertilizer. When new growth begins, use the following strategy to encourage blooming: House the plants in an environment with a temperature between 55° 65° , and alternate between giving them 10 hours of light and 14 hours of total darkness for four to six weeks after the growth appears. Palomares also recommends holding off on watering your plant in early October. When the buds begin to set, then start giving it a weekly drink until flowering stops. "This colorful plant should also be misted every few days while in bud form and bloom season," he says. "Once flowering stops in January, a twice-monthly watering schedule is recommended throughout the rest of the winter to avoid over-watering." When buds appear, introduce the plant to warmer temperatures and begin regular culture, as described above. Plants should bloom in about six weeks.

How to Repot a Christmas Cactus

Your festive greens only need to be [repotted every three to four years](#). Take notice if the roots start to grow out of the container's bottom or if its overall appearance looks weary.

Tip : Never repot your Christmas cactus while it's blooming.

Choose the right container. Pick a pot that's slightly larger than your older one. Make sure it has a drainage hole at the bottom, since your Christmas cactus [will rot if it lacks air](#).

Make sure your potting mixture is lightweight and well-

drained. Never use soil that comes directly from your garden, says Plant Care Today, since it could contain bacteria and [viruses that would harm your plant](#).

Repot your Christmas cactus. After gently removing your plant, massage the roots to remove old soil, then place it inside the new container so the "top of the root ball is about an inch (2.5 cm.) below the rim of the pot," according to [Gardening Know How](#).

Water your plant moderately and put it in a shady location for two to three days, as an excess amount of direct sunlight can damage the leaves.

How to Prune a Christmas Cactus



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Prune your Christmas cactus using a sharp, sterilized knife or scissors. Trimming off one or two parts from the stem's end

every few years is recommended. "If flower buds on the Christmas cactus are shriveling up, I recommend plant parents look out for additional signs to see what their cactus might need," Palomares says. These are the signs he says to look out for:

"Any stems that have softened or that are yellowing are an indication of too much water," he notes. Make sure the soil is well-drained so water will move freely. "The plant should also be potted in a container with drainage holes, so that the roots don't sit in pooled water and develop root rot," he says.

"Stem wilting or wrinkling can also signify dry soil," he says. "If that is the case, then give the cactus a full drink of water."

You may notice bud loss if the plant lacks enough humidity or receives too much water. However, "flower buds can fail to develop and bloom if the light and water it received before early October (when watering stops) was insufficient," he notes.

How to Propagate a Christmas Cactus

"Propagating a plant is a great way to produce new plants to add to your space or give as gifts to friends and loved ones," Palomares says. Here are his steps for the propagating process:

"Start by cutting parts of the plant that include at least two flat stem segments and then further cut the segments at the joints," he says. The ends of the sections should start scabbing overnight.

"Place the sections upright in a container filled with perlite or coarse sand that has already been watered," he says. Place the container in a space that receives bright light. Cuttings should start to root within six to eight weeks.



MARIAH THOMAS
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Mariah Thomas (she/her) is an assistant editor for *Good Housekeeping*, where she covers home and lifestyle content. Mariah has more than four years of editorial experience, having written for TLC, Apartment Therapy, *Women's Health* and *Avocado Magazine*. She received her master's degree in journalism at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism and published her first book, *Heart and Soul: Poems of Thoughts and Emotions*, in 2019. She's also the founder of RTF Community, a platform for creatives of color to connect, learn and showcase their work.



KATARINA AVENDAÑO
SENIOR SEO EDITOR

Katarina Avendaño (she/her) is the senior SEO editor for *Good Housekeeping*, where she writes and edits lifestyle content and contributes to SEO strategy. Before joining GH in 2021, she was the digital editor at *New York Family*, where she was responsible for the website's content and strategy. Katarina received her bachelor's degree in communications and Spanish from the University of Washington.

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

ARMSTRONG AND DISTRICT GARDEN CLUB
GENERAL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2023, 7:00 PM
ODDFELLOW'S HALL, ARMSTRONG

GUEST SPEAKER -Candice from Shepherd's on "Tips for Winterizing Your Garden"

1. Call to Order

President, Carolyn Farris called the meeting to order at 8:15 with 12 members and two guests present.

Carolyn agreed to take the minutes in the absence of the recording secretary.

2. Approval of Agenda

Linda Meraw moved to approve the agenda as circulated. CARRIED

3. Approval of Sep Minutes

Nicole moved to approve the minutes of Sep 2023 as amended. CARRIED

4. Correspondence - none

5. Treasurer's Report

Sue Wiebe reports that we are in a healthy financial position. Speaker honorariums, Door prizes and bills from the Summer Potluck were paid.

Dianne Lockton moved to receive the Treasurer's report. CARRIED

6. Old Business

a. Up coming Meeting Plans were highlighted.

b. Volunteers needed - goodies for meetings. Please sign up or see Carolyn.

A Newsletter person and recording secretary are also needed.

7. New Business

a. November meeting - elections and speaker on Terrarium Building.

b. Petunia Planting for 2024 will be all the planters that will require 210 petunias. Other options were discussed but most were not really feasible. It was agreed that three yellow and two purple would be used for 2024.

8. Adjournment and next meeting

Yvonne Moore moved adjournment at 8:35 PM.

Next meeting Tuesday, November 7, 2023 at Oddfellow's Hall at 7:00 PM.

Dessert & Appie Social - December 5, 2023 at Oddfellow's Hall at 7:00 PM

No meeting in January

The Executive met at 5:30 PM before the general meeting to discuss meeting plans and elections.

THANK YOU

Thank you to Carolyn Farris for the goodies and tea/coffee at the meeting.

Thank you to all those who helped out with our information sessions at the curling club and farmer's market.

Member Discounts

Members of the Armstrong & District Garden Club receive discounts at a number of local garden centres:

- **Shepherd's Home Hardware Outdoor Living** in Armstrong: **15% Discount** on Regularly-Priced Garden Plants
- **Blue Mountain Nursery** in Armstrong: **10% Discount** on all products
- **Swan Lake Market & Garden** in Spallumcheen: **10% Discount** on all products
- **Nicholas Alexander Nursery** in Vernon: 10%-15% Discount on Regularly-Priced Garden Plants

Show your membership card at the till before the cashier rings up the total and kindly request your membership discount.