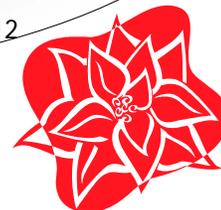




# Douglas County Dirt

Douglas County Master Gardener Association Newsletter

Volume 9, Issue 12



## News from the President of DCMGA

Happy Holiday Gardeners,

Our holiday party is this month. We will have a gift exchange, if you would like to participate, please bring a wrapped gift (\$10). Your gift should be garden related.

We will not be doing door prizes, so if you won one at the November's meeting, please bring a door prize to January's meeting.

I planted about 150 bulbs in a bed this week. I am looking forward to seeing if they come up beginning next Spring. I tried a few tulips which I hope will come up more than one year.

The leaves are really falling, and so has the rain. Our Greenhouse work has slowed down a little. Our next step is the concrete walkway, but we need to wait for a few dry days. We will keep you up to date as we progress forward.

Thanks for all the hard work everyone did this year on all of our projects. You guys are AWESOME! HOOOAAAHH

Judy

### Next Meeting:

**December 7, 2006**

Douglasville, GA

6:30 for pot-luck dinner

7:00 meeting

begins

**How to get to the meeting site:**

**St. Julian's Episcopal Church**

**5400 Stewart Mill Rd**

**Take Chapel Hill Road to Stewart Mill Road (Intersection at Target and Shell gas station)**

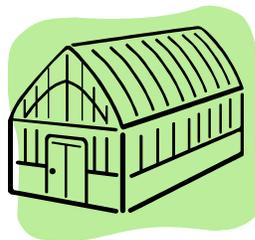
**From I-20 turn right on Stewart Mill Road. Church is about 1 1/2 miles on the right.**

**December 7, 2006**



## Greenhouse News

Everything is on hold until the mud dries, and we can get in and work. Things are looking good.  
Randy Cooper



# The Mystery of Mistletoe

Released 7 December 2000

by B. Rosie Lerner, Extension Consumer Horticulture Specialist

Most folks think of mistletoe as an excuse for smooching around the holiday, and today, there probably aren't too many people who have actually seen anything but plastic mistletoe!

But, in fact, there is a real plant that is the true mistletoe. Well, actually, several types of mistletoe exist, including American Mistletoe and European Mistletoe. These two are different, but related, species of parasitic shrubs. Both have small, leathery leaves and translucent, white berries.

American Mistletoe, *Phoradendron sp.*, can be found hanging around trees from New Jersey to Florida and west to southern Illinois and Texas. Though you can sometimes purchase seed of the American Mistletoe, it is generally not successful in cultivation.

Though these plants do have chlorophyll, as parasites they meet their nutritional needs by tapping into the flow of water and minerals of other plants, particularly trees, such as apple, hawthorn, linden and oak. The seeds actually germinate on the host plant and tap in immediately.

Though it may be great fun to catch the object of your affection under the mistletoe, both the berries and foliage can cause severe digestive upset if eaten and in rare instances may be fatal. Now that could explain why plastic mistletoe has become so popular!

FROM: <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/mistletoe.html>



## December Caution

Poisonous plants is a good topic because several Christmas plants are poisonous (holly fruit, mistletoe). Poinsettia is often reported to be poisonous but is not toxic as research has demonstrated.

From: <http://www.bio.net/bionet/mm/plant-education/1995-November/000233.html>

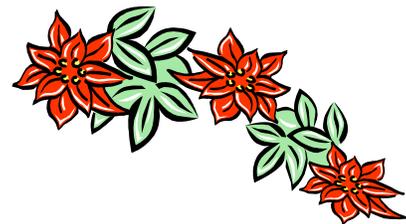


It is especially important to keep plants away from children and pets. Curious infants and pets will put anything in their mouths and chew it. Make a quick walk through of your home before having guests with small children arrive. Put all plants out of their reach. If you have pets in your home at all times, keep the plants out of their reach, too.

Getting a new puppy or kitten for Christmas sounds like a great idea, but the holidays are too stressful and difficult for new pets. They are already dealing with issues of separation and total change

to their environment. Wrap up a photograph of the pet-to-be and wait until after the excitement to move your new friend into your household!

# December To Do List



As the winter chill sets in this month, we might think there is little to do in the garden. As the temperatures drop, so do the leaves from the trees. One very obvious job this month would be to rake them up into piles and –what? Kick them to the curb and burn them? Instead, how about letting the leaves work for you? If you leave a pile of wet, matted leaves on the lawn, you'll have dead spots next spring. Fallen leaves need to be raked and put to good use. The pile you make this month could be raked to the back of the garden and be half rotted by next summer, especially if you turn it over once or twice in the spring. Leaves are an excellent source of nutrients, such as nitrogen, for our lawns and garden beds. Rake On!

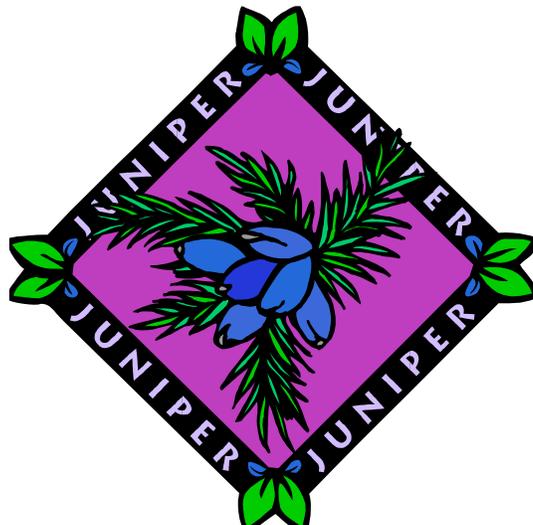


Amaryllis, ornamental pepper, Christmas cactus, Poinsettias, or Kalanchoe make great holiday gifts and can be enjoyed for many weeks with proper care. Check the soil often for dryness and water only when the soil feels dry. For good drainage, poke holes in the foil wrapping on pots of holiday plants and set them in individual saucers. Be sure to place them in the coolest, indoor spot possible to keep leaves and flowers from dropping prematurely. Indoor plants don't have a need for many nutrients in the winter so use houseplant fertilizer at half strength.

Prune evergreen shrubbery and bring the cuttings indoors. Mix juniper, holly, or magnolia leaves with holly and nandina berries for holiday decorations. When the camellias bloom, cut some blooms to use for a table centerpiece. Pansy blooms floating in a clear, glass bowl look nice for the dinner table, also.

Have a wonderful Christmas and look forward to a new gardening year!

Your sister-in-dirt, Elaine





## Dawn Redwood- Metasequoia glyptostroboides

Hardy to USDA Zone 5

**History:** Discovered as a fossil, the Dawn Redwood was thought to be extinct. In the late 1940's living specimens were found in remote areas of China. Seeds were sent to the Arnold Arboretum at Harvard University and to the University of California in Berkeley. From these seed sources seeds were then distributed to about 100 institutions in America and Europe. Many of the trees grown from that original seed dispersal are alive today, many being over 100' in height.

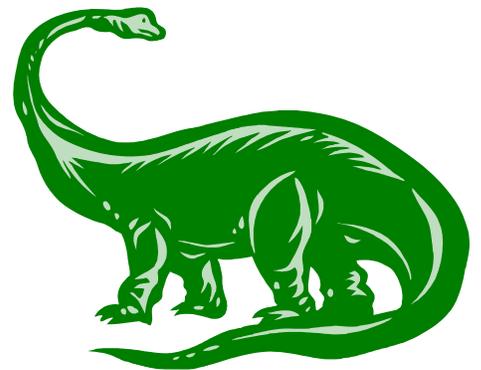
**Size:** 100' or more high with a spread of 25-40'

**Description:** Dawn Redwood is a deciduous conifer. The overall shape is upright and conical, with the top rounding with age. The leaves are feathery in appearance to about 6" long and arranged opposite on the branches. The bark is brown to reddish-brown, fibrous, shredding and peeling in thin strips. The trunk becomes fluted and buttressed, much like its Southern cousin, the Bald Cypress. The fall color can vary from tree to tree, especially those grown from seed. I have seen Dawn Redwoods growing locally turning tan, pinkish and coppery.

**Leaf Color:** Leaf color varies from dark green to a paler yellowish-green, and some yellow foliaged cultivars (Ogon, Gold Rush) and a variegated cultivar (Jack Frost), are available as well as a fastigiate (columnar) form called Sheridian Spire.

**Growing Conditions:** Dawn Redwoods will grow in any well drained soil, but will also tolerate wet and soggy soils like its Bald Cypress cousin. The rate of growth can be relatively fast, 3-4' per year or more is not uncommon. One tree in my front yard has grown from 7' to almost 60' since being planted in April, 1991. You are welcome to see my Dawn Redwoods located at 4012 Covey Lane in Douglasville.

**Comments:** Dawn Redwood is a very worthwhile tree when planted in a medium to large landscape. The rapid growth rate, adaptability to many different soils, the fall color and the majestic appearance deserve consideration when choosing a tree. Besides, how often can you enjoy a tree that was probably around when dinosaurs roamed the planet?



Randy Cooper

As a side note, the Georgia International Conference Center beside the airport at I-85 has a road lined with these. They are about 20 feet tall, and in December they are a lovely, red rust color.

# Douglas County Master Gardener Association

**President:** Judy Cole 770-489-0567  
**Vice President:** Jan Thomas 770-489-9276  
**Treasurer:** Jim Simms 770-942-4556  
**Newsletter:** Melanie Cardell 770-920-1278  
**Secretary:** Sharon Morton 770-949-4797  
**Web site:** Lori Mason 770-948-9294  
**Archivist:** Rachel Hendee 770-577-3493  
**Yard of the Month:** James Kirkwood 770-942-1663  
**Douglas County Extension Office:** 770-920-7224  
Douglas County Court House

## Your input is needed.

For newsletter articles, tips, hints, anecdotes, recipes, book reviews, website reviews, gardening and/or shops or online sources, and ideas: Email: MJ\_Cardell@yahoo.com  
Newsletter deadline is the 20th of each month.

Did you know this newsletter is also posted at our web site in full color, so you can get your dirt online?



## GMGA Mission Statement:

To stimulate the love for and increase the knowledge of gardening, and to voluntarily and enthusiastically share this knowledge with others.

# WELCOME



Did you know that the public is always welcome to attend our monthly meetings?

See the first page for times, program topic, and location.

## Continuing Projects & Works Days

**Butterfly Garden at Deerlick Park ~ On Hold**

**Butterfly Garden at the DC Cultural Arts Center —Call Randy Cooper at 770-920-2193**

**Children's Garden at DC Library ~ On Hold**

**Nature Trail Work Day ~ Generally Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m.**

**Vegetable Garden Work Days ~ Final crops are being harvested now**

**Greenhouse Work ~ On Hold at the present**



[www.dcdirt.org](http://www.dcdirt.org)