



The Kansas City  
**GARDENER**

A Monthly Guide to Successful Gardening

November 2012



*Not So Minor Bulbs*

**Hangin' Out For Winter**

**Care for Your Newly Seeded Lawn**

**Falling ... Into Winter Ponds**

**The Bird Brain answers your questions**

Independently owned and  
operated since 1996

**Publisher**

Michael Cavanaugh

**Editor**

Elizabeth Cavanaugh

**Editorial Assistant**

Lauren Cavanaugh

**Contributors**

Charles Anctil  
Leah Berg  
Betsy Betros  
Erin Busenhardt  
Barbara Fairchild  
Clarke Fry  
Diane & Doc Gover  
Patrick Muir  
Dennis Patton  
Diane Swan

**Distribution**

Publishers Delivery  
Solutions, Inc.

**How to  
Reach Us ...**

P.O. Box 8725  
Prairie Village, KS 66208  
Phone/Fax: 913-648-4728

For advertising information  
contact Michael Cavanaugh  
at cavsgarden@kc.rr.com.

Submit editorial questions to  
Elizabeth Cavanaugh at  
editorcavsgarden@kc.rr.com.

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# Thanksgiving blessing

**F**or the last several months, I've been a little out of sorts ... off track ... even derailed at times. I've been unable to pinpoint the problem. What I do know is that strangely, after the triathlon in July, all my good exercise and eating habits evaporated. It was as if I turned 180 degrees and went on a three-month vacation in the opposite direction. You know the kind, where for a few days you might escape — skipping exercise, indulging in a few extra calories, having a few cocktails, etc. Usually it ends when you return home and unpack the suitcase. Not for me. For weeks, I simply abandoned my commitment to health and wellness.

With the holidays fast approaching and my own wellness at stake, I knew a little soul searching and self examination was in order. The result? Apparently I'm in need of a little balance ... well, maybe more than a little. (Gee, you think?)

This is not unfamiliar territory. I've walked this path before. Finding balance is not simple. Lord knows I've looked. Through the

years of career and family, I've often found myself switching from one extreme to another, all in order to 'get it right',

This is why I garden. It seems that with muddy knees and dirty fingernails, the stress in my life fades. I'm able to unload expectations, either real or imagined, allowing clarity and balance to enter in. A day in the garden gives me a chance to gain perspective.

Does the garden help you sort out life's challenges? Is it the place that calms? Is it the place where you can find balance?

I was recently reminded that the road ain't always smooth. The rough ride indicates a little maintenance is required.

So after some time in the garden, I realized that I won't always 'get it

right'. In fact, getting it wrong is where the learning happens. When learning continues, I discover more about myself, my weaknesses as well as my strengths — and for that, I have much gratitude.

My gratitude spills over to you, dear reader. Thank you for sharing this journey with me. It wouldn't be the same without you. In this season of thanksgiving, I offer this blessing by Ralph Waldo Emerson for you.

"For each new morning with its light, For rest and shelter of the night, For health and food, For love and friends, For everything Thy goodness sends."

*I'll see you in the garden!*

*Elizabeth*



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**about the cover ...**

Allium in the garden is a spring showstopper. Learn more about this bulb and others starting on page 12.



# Year of the Heucheras

Heucheras are all-American. Literally. Different species hail from the islands off the California coast to the highest mountains in the Rockies to the Gulf of Mexico. With this diverse range of habitat, these plants are able to find a niche in everyone's garden. Breeders in America and Europe have taken a well-aimed swipe of a paintbrush between these species, and have assembled a plethora of plants with amazing flower and foliage forms that didn't exist a scant ten years ago. Not only are these plants aesthetically pleasing, but they have become stronger, fuller, and more disease resistant. With few pests, great adaptability to containers and a seemingly unending number of forms, heuchera should be in everyone's garden!

Heuchera require well-drained soil. If you've had problems with coral bells in the past, most likely you've tried to plant them in soil that's too wet or full of clay. To solve that, plant your heucheras in raised beds, on a berm, or in containers. Even mounding the soil slightly where you plant them will help. A premium organic planting compost will provide excellent drainage with enough moisture.

Other than keeping the soil well-drained and mulched, coral bells have very few other maintenance needs. Let them dry between watering, refrain from using excess fertilizer, and give them neutral or slightly acidic soil (the perfect pH is 5.8 to 6.3, but most aren't too fussy).

Many coral bells do well in part sun, but stay away from hot afternoon rays—foliage will often fade, wilt, or scorch under intense sunlight. Instead, provide shade during the hottest times of the day, or plant where your heuchera will get consistent full or filtered shade.

Heucheras are remarkable for needing little care. When flowers fade, they can be spun off with a flick of the wrist. If stems

get too long they can be cut off with the resulting stub resprouting and the piece in your hand replanted to form a new plant. This helps keep your heuchera compact.



'Georgia Peach'



'Mint Julep'



Heuchera combo

When using "heuchs" in the landscape, they are best triangulated with most varieties planted 24 inches on center. You will have to look at the spread on the label to determine the best spacing. Three words are essential: drainage, drainage, drainage. Most varieties are drought-tolerant as well.

Note that as coral bells grow, their crowns rise up and out of the soil slightly. Either mulch to protect the crown, or lift, divide and replant. It's best to divide them every two to three years, with the spring being the best time to do this work.

If necessary, cut back winter-damaged foliage in early spring to make way for new growth. Mulch your coral bells in winter, leaving the crowns unburied.

Source: National Garden Bureau

## Upcoming Garden Events



places to go, things to do, people to see

(continued from page 19)

Park Rd, Blue Springs, MO. No registration required (Ages 10 and up) Bring your camera and hiking shoes for a leisurely fall hike. Feed your soul by immersing all your senses in the season of autumn. We will take it slow to capture the moment. This moderate 2 mile hike begins and ends at the nature center. 816-228-3766

### Lake Quivira Holiday Bazaar

Nov 15-16, 1pm-9pm Thur, 10am-3pm Fri; in the Lake Quivira clubhouse. The Lake Quivira Garden Club is sponsoring its 2012 Holiday Bazaar. The event is free and open to the public. With the theme "Find the Elf in Yourself," the unique boutique will feature hundreds of holiday gift items offered by more than 50 vendors. Also included will be a raffle for great prizes and a bake sale. Cash, check or credit cards are accepted. To visit the bazaar, take Interstate I-435 to Holiday Drive (Exit 8A), then go one mile east to the Lake Quivira entrance.

### Rockin' & Readin' Nature Tales

Walk-in (Ages 2 and up) Nov 24, 11am-noon; at Burr Oak Woods Nature Center, 1401 NW Park Rd, Blue Springs, MO. Join us for a story hour as we lead you on fantastic nature adventures! We will meet butterflies, birds, mammals and all sorts of magnificent creatures! We will cross rivers, discover mysteries within the forest and fly across the prairies. Our imaginations are the only limits. 816-228-3766

### Farmers Season Evaluation: Next year, I'm gonna...

Thur, Nov 29, 6-8pm; at Rosedale Development Association, 1403 SW Boulevard, Kansas City, KS. "Next year, I'm gonna..." What do you want to do differently next year? Have you got any ideas on coping with more crazy weather? What went right, what would you like to do better? Get Growing KC is bringing together urban growers to look at the good, the bad and the ugly of 2012 and to start planning

for 2013. We'll be asking you to bring some information to help deepen the conversation—look for an email when you register. <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/259125>. Questions about registration? [info@getgrowingkc.org](mailto:info@getgrowingkc.org) or 816-226-7979

### Holiday Luminary Walk

Nov 23-Dec 1, 5pm-9pm; at Overland Park Arboretum and Botanical Gardens, one half-mile west of Highway 69 at 179th just past Antioch. Fridays and Saturday. Entrance fee \$7, children 5 and under free. Horse-drawn hay wagon rides \$3 per rider. Free parking. No pets please. Call 913 685-3604 or visit [www.opabg.org](http://www.opabg.org).

### December

#### Holiday Fun with Santa

Dec 1, 8 and 15, 9 a.m.-noon (Breakfast served until 10:30 a.m.) Reservations required: 816-697-2600 x209. Discuss that wish list with Santa in over pancakes and eggs—Chris Cakes style! Then take part in the rest of the fun: join Mrs. Claus for storytelling in the Grand Hall, make a craft to take home and go for a spin on the Holiday Express barrel train if weather permits. The price, which includes Garden admission and all activities: Ages 4 and under/\$7 or \$5 for members; ages 5-12/\$9 or \$7 for members; ages 13 and up/\$13 or \$8 for members. Reservations are essential—call 816-697-2600 x209.

#### Holiday Performances in the Marjorie Powell Allen Chapel

Dec 2, 8 and 9, 3-4 pm; at Powell Gardens

Dec 2: The popular hand bell choir Rezound! returns to Powell Gardens with a concert bursting with holiday favorites.

Dec. 8: Octarium presents eight singers whose voices blend as one with artistic polish and balance.

Dec. 9: String Theory brings together four women with a love of music and a complement of historic instruments. Their music ranges from classical to contem-