

The Glass Garden News

February 2005

 ENID A. HAUPT GLASS GARDEN



NYU
Medical
Center

Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine • 400 East 34th Street • New York, NY 10016 Phone: 212-263-6058 Fax: 212-263-2091

Glass Garden Winter Hours

Monday and Tuesday: 8:00 am – 3:30 pm

Wednesday – Friday: 8:00 am – 5:30 pm

Saturday and Sunday: 1:00 pm – 5:30 pm

The PlayGarden will remain open most days until dark, weather permitting.

Calendar 2005

January – March: *Leaping Lizards* in the Glass Garden

Thursday, March 17: *Spring Plant Sale*, Tisch and Skirball Lobbies, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

May & June: *Budding and Growing Gardener* Classes for young children. Sign up in the Glass Garden by April.

Thursday, May 5: *Mother's Day Plant Sale*, Tisch and Skirball Lobbies, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Sunday, June 12: *Community Festival* featuring baby farm animals, 11:00 am- 3:00 pm

Thursday, September 22: *Fall Plant Sale*, Tisch and Skirball Lobbies, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

December: Holiday plants available for sale in the Glass Garden.

We have a choice selection of plants for sale in the Glass Garden everyday.

Location

The Glass Garden is located off the Rusk Institute lobby at 400 East 34th Street, between 1st Avenue and the East River, in New York City. It is convenient to the Lexington IRT local subway stop at 33rd Street and Park Avenue, or to stops on the M34, M15, or M16 city buses.

For More Information

Tel: 212/263-6058 • Fax: 212/263-2091

E-mail: glassgardenrusk@msnyuhealth.org

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

“To Give or Not to Give...”

Every December, my husband and I spend a glorious evening at my cousin Ginny's home in Connecticut. And each year I bring a horticulture-related gift, such as pinecone candles, a vase shaped like gardening boots, and so forth.

This year, after thinking a long time about a gift, I thought we would give a jar of olive oil and a real olive tree. I thought it was a great idea, especially because Ginny and her husband Dick love plants and have a greenhouse in their home where they can winter-over the tree. I ordered a tree from a grower in California, and, indeed, the gift was a smashing success! Olive trees, with their gray leaves are distinctive and quite beautiful. They are not frivolous plants and have roots steeped in ancient history.

On our drive home after dinner, I told my husband I didn't want to give plants anymore as gifts. I felt I had put a burden on someone I care about to be responsible for the plant. I worried that, should the plant not survive, my cousin would feel terribly guilty. I don't want to burden people like that.

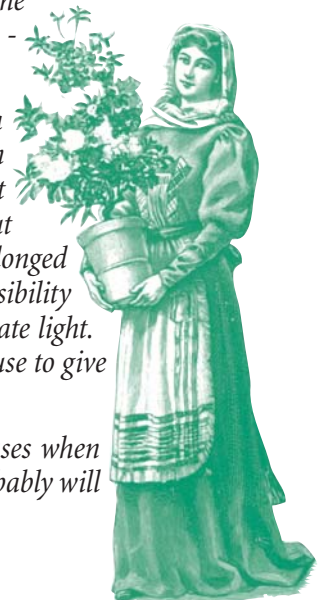
I asked the greenhouse volunteers and staff what they felt about giving plants as gifts. They understood my dilemma and all had similar mixed feelings. Many said they only give plants to people they know would really appreciate them. And they give clear instructions for care. None of us would give ordinary plants, such as philodendrons because, as horticulture professionals, we feel something more special is appropriate. Unfortunately, more special often means more care. We all felt it might be better to give outdoor plants, such as bulbs or shrubs, so that whether or not the plant thrives would in large part be the result of nature, not care.

Yet, one staff person mentioned how good the person who receives the plant feels when they are successful at keeping it alive. That is one of the benefits and, indeed, the basic premise of horticultural therapy - the positive feelings of successful nurturing.

The discussions went on and on. The issue clearly hit a nerve for us. Plants, because they are alive, can take on metaphorical qualities and can stand for many things. We get many visitors who talk to us about their plants and ask about their care. Often, they are caring for plants that previously belonged to a family member who died. They feel a great sense of responsibility in keeping these plants alive, despite pests and, often, inadequate light. The plants seem to stand for the deceased loved one. They refuse to give up on these plants.

I think the bottom line is that there are pluses and minuses when giving plants as gifts which should be considered. I know I probably will do it again.

Nancy Chambers



PlayGarden Renovation

Last Summer, we reseeded, resodded, replaced and replanted the grass that was supposed to grow through the grassmat in the rear third of the PlayGarden. It was the third summer that we went through that process. Each time to no avail. We finally gave up. The PlayGarden is so popular with the Rusk children and families and our community families, that we cannot get the grass to grow. The traffic is too heavy.



We realized that we needed, once and for all, to pull up the grassmat and replace it with *Vitriturf*, the safety surface that flows throughout the PlayGarden pathway system. This surface is safer, less labor intensive, and much more aesthetically pleasing than the black grassmat bereft of grass. *Vitriturf* is a registered product made from 100% recycled rubber tires mixed with a binder and poured, like cement, on site, then trowelled in evenly. The first poured layer is black shredded rubber and the top layer is colored to specification. The whole process takes two days. *Vitriturf* is seamless and porous so we never have standing water. It feels slightly bouncy when walked on. It is perfect under the swings and hammock should children tumble or fall.

Since we were giving up a bit of nature, we enlarged our garden beds to add more shrubs and flowers before the *Vitriturf* was poured. We hope you like the change when you visit this Spring.

This project was not inexpensive and we are extremely grateful to the Intimate Apparel Square Club for enabling us to complete this necessary renovation.

Pratt Institute Continuing Collaboration

Ever since Amy Brook Snider, Chair of Art and Design Education at Pratt Institute, was a patient at Rusk Institute in 2001, we have explored ways that our two programs could work together. Our first project was the *Blossoms, Bugs and Butterflies WallGarden*, the whimsical mural designed and painted by Pratt students on a wall in our children's PlayGarden.

In 2004, we were fortunate to have one of Amy's art students as an intern in our horticulture programs. Jackie was a pleasure to have working with us. Her fieldwork placement was especially challenging since she had no horticulture background at all. She needed to figure out how to integrate horticulture into her art-based projects, such as leaf sculptures in the Fall, printmaking, bookmarks, and nut arrangements. She was also very instrumental in developing and planning a new indoor wall mural for

Project FIND, a senior center on 43rd Street, where we offer a horticulture program.

Amy and I both believe in our responsibility to the community. In fact, beginning this year, in order to encourage more students to do community service, Pratt is offering a stipend to those students who assist in programs, such as ours, with special projects that benefit and enhance our work.

We are looking forward to a new student intern from Pratt this year and hopefully a new outdoor painting in our PlayGarden, designed again by a talented Pratt art student.



Spring Classes for Community Children

Budding Gardener (ages 3 to 5)

Growing Gardener (ages 5 to 9)

May 3 – June 9, 2005

The Glass Garden will again offer two garden-based, child-centered classes for young children that encourage hands-on learning about plants, small animals, gardens, and nature. The children will explore seeds, plant structure, adaptations, habitats, geography, history and folklore. They will plant in pots, directly in the garden, and in hanging baskets. The children will bring home herbs, vegetables, and houseplants, as well as horticulture craft projects. Green thumbs begin here.

The **Budding Gardeners** meet in the PlayGarden, rain or shine, on **Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30 – 11:30**, beginning May 3 through June 9, 2005. Twelve sessions cost \$180.00 per child. The classes will run with a minimum of six children, maximum 10. Parents or guardians must register and pay in advance for the program. First come, first served. Registration forms can be obtained at the Glass Garden.

The **Growing Gardeners** meet in the PlayGarden, rain or shine, on six **Wednesdays, 3:30 – 4:30**, beginning May 4 through June 8, 2005. The six sessions cost \$90.00 per child, with a minimum of six children and maximum 12. Again, parents or guardians must register and pay in advance.

Our six-session Fall class dates will be announced in August.



Effectiveness Studies for Horticultural Therapy Programs

Rusk Institute has a long tradition in treating the whole person. Current interest in complimentary and alternative treatment approaches in medicine has led to explorations of the tangible benefits associated with these treatment approaches. We feel that our horticultural therapy (HT) programs at the Glass Garden address many of the needs that patients bring to rehabilitation. In our restorative setting, patients have reported benefits in areas of stress reduction, improved mood, distraction from pain, as well as the social benefits from working in a group.

In 2001, we started to survey our patients who attended five or more horticultural therapy sessions. More than 200 patients responded overall. Of those, 61% felt a decrease in pain and/or discomfort while attending sessions in the greenhouse; 96% felt the HT group influenced their recovery; 96% felt more cheerful; 83% more energetic; and 83% of the patients reported a decrease in their level of distress. And, they stated that attending the horticultural therapy sessions positively affected their overall satisfaction with their rehabilitation stay.

In order to explore these results and further assess the effectiveness of our

program, another questionnaire was developed last year to determine if patients who participated in HT groups reported the same positive results three months after discharge. In addition, the ex-patients' use of the gardens was explored, as well as their memory of how HT affected their Rusk stay.

A questionnaire was mailed three months post-discharge to 88 patients who had attended at least two HT



sessions during their stay at Rusk. An astounding 40 were returned which represents a response rate of 45.4%!

Remarkably, 85% of the respondents reported improved satisfaction with their hospital stay as a result of participation in horticultural therapy. 75% of respondents noted elevated mood, and 55% found distraction from pain while gardening. Results such as these from a complimentary therapy appear quite noteworthy.

An "additional comments" space

was included in the questionnaire. The patients' comments are included below.

I found sitting in the garden was a great way to reduce stress. My grandchildren enjoyed the time they were there. In fact sometimes I felt they came because of the garden and the birds.

* * *
It is a wonderful program that you have for the patients. I was in the hospital for a month, and after four back surgeries it was a way of getting me out of my room and feeling useful.

* * *
Perfect respite from hospital routine! Staff was like unprescribed medicine.

* * *
Making cuttings to form new plants was very instructive for folks who never did it. It's helpful, I think, for older people to create new life and enjoy the warmth of plants.

* * *
I was enchanted by the garden. I found it a place of tranquility.

Based on these results, we are encouraged with the therapeutic benefits of patients' participation in HT activities and will endeavor to create opportunities for more of the patients at Rusk to participate.

Matt Wichrowski

Collaboration with Brooklyn Botanic Garden



We have had the pleasure of working with the professional staff from Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG) for several years. When the BBG was renovating their children's garden, their staff came to Rusk for training to acquire new skills for working with children with special needs.

Most recently, we have been working with Brooklyn Greenbridge, the outreach program of BBG, directed by Ellen Kirby. Brooklyn Greenbridge provides services for the diverse needs of Brooklyn's communities. In addition, they have become the focal point in Brooklyn for providing horticultural therapy support for the institutions that

service individuals with special needs, including public libraries, schools, and recently United Cerebral Palsy (UCP).

Ellen asked us to provide some specialized training for a new intern who was initiating the program at UCP. We offered sessions in group skills, activity analysis, and hands-on work with patients who have cerebral palsy. Two of Rusk Institute's pediatric occupational therapists spent their lunchtime talking about working with children with cerebral palsy. We have since had some follow-up discussions about program evaluation.

Brooklyn Greenbridge has also developed a Horticultural Therapy

Network of local institutions and facilities for special populations that can support each other as they develop and expand their programs. Nancy Chambers spoke at the Network's January 19th meeting to share some of the lessons learned during her many years of horticultural therapy practice.

This is another exciting collaboration for the Glass Garden and it is wonderful to see horticultural therapy blossoming in so many new places.



Leaping Lizards

Our Conservatory has been taken over by *Leaping Lizards* this January. More than 150 colorful (plastic) lizards can be located clinging to the glass, plants and trees or resting on the beds and floor. They range in size from two inches to six inches. Many visitors do a doubletake when they encounter their first lizard, but soon they begin to explore to see how many they can spot throughout the garden. We've developed a Lizard Factoid handout for visitors. See how many of the questions you can answer.

Are lizards and snakes related?

Yes. They are both part of a group of cold-blooded animals called reptiles. Lizards, however, have eyelids and usually have four legs.

Who are the lizards' ancestors?

They are descended from ancient reptiles of the dinosaur era that roamed the earth over 200 million years ago. They even look like their ancient relatives.

How many lizard species are there?

There are over 4,675 lizard species, including iguanas, chameleons, geckos, Gila monsters and skinks, which is the largest family.

Can lizards smell?

Yes, with their tongues. The lizard sticks out its tongue and pulls it back where there are sensory cells called the Jacobson's organ, on the roof of its mouth that interprets the scent.

What is the largest lizard?

The Komodo dragon from Indonesia. A meat-eater, the Komodo can be ten feet long and weigh up to 300 pounds. It is in danger of extinction due to loss of habitat.

How does the Komodo dragon kill its prey?

The Komodo dragon has disease-ridden bacteria in its mouth. After it bites its prey – deer, goats, and wild boars – they will sicken from blood poisoning within a day or two. The Komodo will then find the body and eat it.

What is the smallest lizard?

The dwarf gecko, which can fit on the tip of your finger.

Where can lizards be found?

Everywhere. The only places on earth that lizards cannot be found are Antarctica, the Arctic, and northern North America. These Polar regions are too cold for lizards.

Do lizards talk?

Geckos are the only lizards that make sounds. They make chirping and clicking noises to defend their territory or attract a mate.

What is a lizard's skin like?

Lizards have dry, scaly skin that does not grow with their bodies. They will molt their old skin in large pieces to make way for the new larger skin growing underneath.

What do lizards eat?

Different lizard species eat different types of food. Some are meat eating, some are mainly vegetarians eating leaves, fruits and flowers. Most lizards are insect eaters, grabbing crickets, flies, grasshoppers, and spiders with their long, sticky tongues.

Are lizards poisonous?

Only the Gila monster from the American southwest and the Mexican beaded lizard are venomous. However, their bite is rarely fatal to humans.

Can lizards swim?

Yes. Many lizards are good swimmers. The Basilisk lizard from the tropical rainforests of South America can also run across the surface of water for short distances, using its hind legs and holding its body upright.

What is the only lizard with a slimy skin?

The "lounge lizard."

Why are some lizards' tails special?

When some lizards are attacked, they can cast off their tail, giving them time to get away from the enemy. The lizard will regenerate a new tail. It is called tail autotomy.

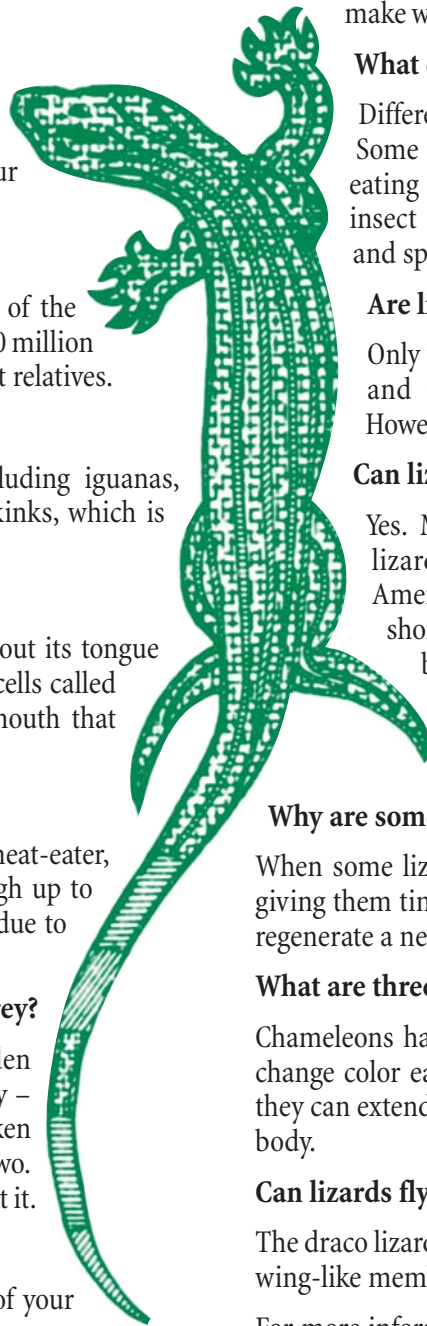
What are three special features of chameleons?

Chameleons have horns or casques on their heads, they can change color easily to blend in with their surroundings, and they can extend their tongues almost the entire length of their body.

Can lizards fly?

The draco lizards, found in India, can soar between trees using wing-like membranes that link their front and rear legs.

For more information about lizards, go onto the internet and search for "lizard facts."



CHILDRENS ACTIVITY- Tropical Fruit Seeds

We all know that, given a choice, children will choose to eat macaroni and cheese for every meal. They usually loathe new foods. This activity encourages them to try something new that is especially healthy.

In the cold winter months, why not take an imaginary trip to the tropics. Local supermarkets now carry a wide assortment of tropical fruits, both common and exotic, that enable you and your child to experience the smells and tastes of other lands. An added bonus is that many of the seeds from these fruits can be planted to yield wonderful houseplants. We have listed below some suggestions and instructions to get you started. Feel free to try others not on our list.

Buying

Don't be afraid to buy fruits not familiar to you. The fruits taste better when they are very ripe which means the seeds are more mature. Some fruits to look for: papaya, avocado, mango, dates, pomegranate, lychee, citrus and cherimoya.

Eating

After washing all the fruit and everyone's hands, the obvious way to begin is to let your child cut open the different fruits. We recommend using a plastic knife. Let him harvest the seeds, put them aside, and cut up the fruit into small pieces for tasting. They can pick their favorites for the seed-planting activity.

Planting

- Most seeds should be planted in a purchased sterilized potting mix in a clean 4-inch plastic pot.
- The pot should be filled with the soil moistened, and lightly tamped down.

Papaya – Rinse 12 seeds. Plant the seeds ½ inch below the top of the soil in one pot. The seeds take two to three weeks to germinate.

Avocado – Plant the undamaged pit two-thirds into the soil, with the point side up. Firm the soil around the pit. Takes four to six weeks to germinate.

Mango – Clean the seed and let it dry for one week. Cut a small ¼ inch in the seed pouch, to speed germination. Plant it flat, and horizontally, just below the soil surface. Cover it with ¼ inch of soil. Don't give up. Germination usually takes three to four months.

Dates – Plant the hard pit lying down horizontally ¾ inch below the soil. Keep in the warmest spot you have. Germination takes six to 12 weeks.

Pomegranate – Don't clean the seeds. They are too delicate. The uncleaned seeds should be planted ½ inch below the soil, five to eight seeds per pot. They usually germinate in two to four weeks.

Lychee – Plant the seeds 1 inch below the soil. The seeds take three to six weeks to germinate. The new leaves are brownish-red before they turn green.

Citrus – Plant any cleaned citrus seeds ½ inch below the soil, six to 12 in a pot. The seeds take three to six months to germinate. All citrus make exceptional houseplants.

Cherimoya – Plant the seeds of this fragrant pudding-like fruit ¾ inch below the soil. Germinates in eight weeks.

- When the seeds have been planted, the tamped down soil level should reach to ½ inch below the top of the pot.
- Soak the finished planting in a saucer full of water for 45 minutes. Watering from the top will displace the seeds.
- Invert a clear plastic bag over the top of the pot and seal it around the pot with a rubber band. Leave this alone until you notice some growth.
- Remove the plastic bag and begin regular weekly watering.
- Place the growing plant in a bright window.

Gwenn Fried

YES, I'LL HELP CULTIVATE YOUR GARDENS.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

Please check one.

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