

Geddy Garden News

I love winter months. Some feel winter coldness creates a lonely, desolate atmosphere, but I see beauty in winter. The quiet, restful, dormant garden causes me to reflect on the previous gardening season and the energy of life contained therein. The cycle of growth reminds us that nature has a beauty all its own. In winter we are forced to accept nature on its own terms. We constantly attempt to take control and impose our will on living things, but in winter we lose control and the force of nature reminds us of its power.

My imagination is challenged by the bleakness of the garden and I focus on the future as well as the past. I can almost hear my garden thanking me for my helpfulness in nurturing it and that serves to encourage me to plant again.

We at the Geddy House enjoyed decorating the Dining Room with a little holly, as was the tradition in the 18th century. The sprigs of holly leaves and berries are visible through the windows. Mistletoe and holly berries are toxic so, of course, we are conscious of that and we are especially careful with our small visitors. Some of the other 18th-century decorations that can cause physical problems are Boxwood and English and American Ivy. Many people are highly allergic to these plants. Rashes and throat irritation can occur in some cases when people who are sensitive come into contact with such plants. We repeated our annual Christmas custom of wassailing.

We sprinkled the trees with our wassail with the purpose of petitioning God's blessing for a bountiful harvest and healthy trees. This is an age-old custom which was practiced in many parts of the world and later the wassail bowl developed into the egg nog bowl that is associated with Christmas celebrations today. Our wassailing culminated at the home of Jennifer and Noel Poirier and we all enjoyed partying and their warm hospitality. Karen Putnam shared her creative talents with us and taught us how to craft some homemade ornaments and Christmas decorations. An award was presented to Sara Finkelstein for the completion of her sampler this year.

I wish to thank all our junior interpreters for their generosity in sharing toys and food with a family in our community that was in need this Christmas. Their gifts expressed the true spirit of Christmas.

I quote Poor Robin's 1695 Almanac,

*"With holly and ivy
So green and so gay,
We deck up our houses,
As fresh as the day.
With bays and rosemary,
And laurel compleate,
And every one now
Is a king in conceite."*

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Janet Guthrie