



# *Lake Owasso Garden Club*



*Irish Sky Garden Crater*

*February*

# Next Meeting, Monday, February 12, 2018

**6:30 Social** - Member provided snacks

**7:00 Meeting** - At our February, we'll learn about the Organics Recycling Program in Ramsey County. Organic waste is the largest portion of what remains in our trash. Recycling these organics (including meat and dairy) and non-recyclable paper (like tissues and paper towels) keeps waste out of landfills and converts it to a resource all gardeners love – compost! Master Gardener, Frank Dolejsi will walk us through the organics recycling program used in Ramsey County. Come and learn what you can do to help the environment in your area.

**Presbyterian Church of the Way  
3382 Lexington Ave North,  
Shoreview MN 55126**

## *Presidents Message*

*Had a boxelder bug and ladybug emerge today so maybe they know something I don't. This ladybug really went for water.*

*Groundhog day is coming up soon, will we have an early spring?*

*By our next meeting, the sun will be setting at 5:36.*

*South Cedar Greenhouse has their 2018 catalog online already and I received the Green Earth Growers catalog a couple weeks ago.*

*Plant Sale meeting is coming up soon so winter is moving right along.*

*I have my seed orders done.*

*For the first time we have an entry in Art In Bloom.*

*Think Spring!*

**Ron Kvaas**

## *Treasurer's report*

**The LOGC bank balance is \$12,367 as of January 20, 2018**

**Mary Fowler**

## *Secretary's report*

**Meeting notes: January 8, 2018   Members Present: 18   Non Members: 1**

**The speaker for the evening was Kim Billing, who spoke about outdoor winter seed sowing and demonstrated methods. Several members voiced interest about trying this ! Perennials can be started in late February.**

**Ron Kvaas, president, called the meeting to order.**

**The next Federated winter quarterly meeting will be at Penn Lake Library, 88th and Penn, Bloomington. We all received a notice.**

**The Plant Sale Selection meeting will happen in February. Ron will schedule it.**

**There is an event March 3 at the Rosemount Community Center called "Let's Get Growing". It is from 8 A.M. to 2:30 P.M and the cost is \$40. Ron sent out a brochure about it. It is a good deal; for \$40 you get breakfast and lunch and more!**

**The MIA Art in Bloom event is April 26 - 29 this year. (<https://new.artsmia.org/visit/annual-events/art-in-bloom>) Our club could possibly submit an entry. Ron is going to go to a meeting Jan 26, 10-12, to find out the requirements for an entry. If you are interested in going to the meeting, contact Ron.**

**We welcomed Lorene as our Treasurer.**

**Brianna led a discussion about what each of us is planning to do differently in our gardens this year, which was interesting !**

**The new directory will be ready next month.**

**Rebecca asked members to complete a survey of annuals they plan to grow this summer that could be used in the Flower Show display.**

**Thanks to Rebecca and Vatsala for the delicious refreshments.**

## **January Event – Winter Seed Sowing**

**In case you didn't have the chance to attend the January meeting, we talked about winter sowing, a way of starting seeds outside in February and March for the upcoming growing season. Our speaker, Master Gardener Kim Billings, has spoken about this process for her local cable station in Anoka County for the past few years.**

**The process starts with cutting up an old 1-gallon milk jug or oversized vinegar bottle (like the ones Kim showed that she gets from Costco). You add holes to the bottom for drainage and cut 75% around the top (or enough that you can bend the top part completely back and expose the inside). Add moist potting soil and seeds and set the jugs outside. As soon as the temperature is right, the seeds germinate.**

**As they are growing, you can pop the top back down to protect plants from cold nights, acting as a kind of greenhouse or cloche. With the top open, the seedlings get the right amount of air and wind exposure to develop strong, healthy stems. And, as an added bonus, because they are outside, they aren't in your basement! That's huge in my book.**

**She said you can start almost any kinds of seeds this way. The trick was picking the right time. Perennial seeds go out in late February; annual seeds go out in late March.**

**If you try it out, send us pictures and let us know how it works for you.**

# "Just Add Water"

*Articles and Photos by Soni Forsman*

## **Bold and Tropical Taros**

What to write about in mid-January? All is right with our water garden - aerator is working, the light box is lit and afloat and there are no unwelcome wildlife tracks in the area – so nothing to report.

Thinking back to last summer, there are more marginal plants that arrived with my annual order of water hyacinth and water lettuce I can profile. I wrote about Canna ‘Chiquita Punch’ in the Nov/Dec 2017 Waterlog. This article will highlight the two Colocasia cultivars – ‘Elena’ and ‘Black Coral.’

Colocasias (taros) are plants with large heart-shaped leaves, sometimes referred to as elephant ears. They are tropical, hardy only to zone eight. Taros grow in full and part sun and like a moist/wet growing medium. They are perfect for the wet areas around the water garden or sitting in its shallow water. They bring a bold and tropical look to any garden.

‘Elena’ has chartreuse yellow leaves with some purple veining. The stems are also purple. This variety grows to three feet, shorter than other varieties I have grown. I received two plants. I grew one in full sun and the other in less. Based on one summer’s experience, the foliage and stem colors were stronger in part sun.

‘Black Coral’ is taller, attaining a height of four feet. It has glossy black leaves and jet-black petioles. The foliage is puckered, giving a ruffled-look to the leaf edges. This cultivar is from the Royal Hawaiian Series, a formal breeding program of Dr. John Cho at the University of Hawaii, Kula. Again, there were two plants. The one grown in full sun had deeper color and was the better plant.

Technically, taros grow from starchy tubers not bulbs. Most taros spread by above ground runners, called stolons, that grow out from the tuber. ‘Elena’ produces runners. ‘Black Coral’ is a clumper, growing few if any.

Colocasias are native to southeast Asia and have naturalized throughout all of the region and the tropical islands. Taros are grown as a food crop in many tropical countries and the state of Hawaii. The rootstock is cooked and eaten as a starchy staple. Poi, the Hawaiian word for this staple, is part of the 50<sup>th</sup> state’s native cuisine.



**Colocasia esculenta 'Elena' - Leaf shows some purple veining. A leaf stem is in the background**



**Stolons (runners) growing out from the tuber of 'Elena' A root is forming at the base of the new plant. Once there are more, the young plant can be cut from the host and potted.**



***Colocasia esculenta* 'Black Coral'**

# "Brianna's Kitchen Garden"



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## **In the Kitchen – Stewed Chicken Thighs with Dried Fruits**

*Yields: 2 servings*

It's hard to think of recipes that use fresh produce in this cold time of the year. That isn't to say that there aren't options. During these last few months of winter, you can find winter squash (acorn, butternut, spaghetti, delicata, etc), Brussels sprouts, cabbage, parsnips, oranges, grapefruit, and sometimes pears. These are the hold-overs from last fall and the first of the new season, imported from a ways off. (Odd as it might seem, sometime in February there will be a sale on strawberries and they will be some of the best you can find in the stores all year round.)

But while there isn't much for fresh produce, there are always dried foods. This is a

wonderfully sweet, stew-like that I came across last year at this time. The recipe calls for chicken *thighs* instead of breasts and I recommend doing so but you can use other cuts of meat if you like. This might even taste good with pork chops if you have them. Serve it with a side salad, rice, potatoes, whatever sounds good. You can't lose!

## Ingredients

- 2 tsp olive oil
- 2x bone-in chicken thighs, skin removed
- 1x small onion, sliced
- 2x cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1x 14-ounce can reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 12 dried apricots, quartered
- 12 pitted prunes, quartered
- 2 tbsp sherry vinegar, or red-wine vinegar
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 1/8 tsp salt
- Freshly ground pepper

## Instructions

- Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat.
- Add chicken thighs and cook until golden, about 2 minutes per side.
- Add onion and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, 2 to 3 minutes.
- Add broth, apricots, prunes and vinegar.
- Bring to a boil; reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer until the chicken is no longer pink in the middle, about 6 minutes.
- Transfer chicken to a plate and cover with foil to keep warm.
- Increase heat to high and bring to a boil. Boil until slightly thickened, about 5 minutes.
- Season with salt and pepper to taste.
- Serve the chicken topped with the sauce and garnished with parsley. Use rice, potatoes, or pasta as a side. [SEP]

**Source:** <http://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/249441/stewed-chicken-thighs-with-dried-fruits/>

## In the Garden – Reflections

At the end of the January meeting, we talked about Gardening Resolution for the new year. Many people are planning to rearrange their garden beds or take the time to simply enjoy them more. Some are looking to increase the number of perennial plants and some are looking for more resistant plants (to blight, bugs, or bigger critters).

For myself, I want a more efficient garden. I have only a few small beds and I use them to grow food that my family eats. I love to try new things but it's important to recognize what works and what doesn't. Here's a list of what I learned from my garden this year and what I plan to do about it.

### Portion Control

- Green beans – Once picked, these don't store that well in the refrigerator. To preserve them, I need to blanch and freeze them as they come in, instead of waiting until I have a lot. Or I can call Jim Roste and he'll take them all. ;)<sup>[L][SEP]</sup>
- Hungarian Blue Breadseed Poppy – These were delicate pink flowers that bloomed early in July and then spent much of the next month making seed pods for coffee cakes. I interplanted them with pepper plants, which don't start getting big until late July. It was a good pairing and I think I can step-up the number of poppies I grow.<sup>[L][SEP]</sup>

### Cut List

- Kale – I grew 3 Prizm kale plants. They were cute and did well but I never ate them. Turns out, I don't really use kale. Guess those will go.<sup>[L][SEP]</sup>
- Leeks – I grew some King Richard leeks and, just like with the kale, I didn't really use them. They have a really long growing season too so this probably isn't a good fit.<sup>[L][SEP]</sup>

### Replacements Needed

1. Egyptian Walking Onions – These neat-looking plants are incredible. The neat shapes and ability to survive an MN winter make them great additions to the garden, but not MY garden. The resulting plants can be eaten but aren't that tasty compared to other onions. I'll skip those next year and try round or green onions instead.<sup>[L][SEP]</sup>
2. Bell Pepper – I planted Sweet Golden Giant bell peppers this year and last. In 2016, it gave me 3 massive yellow bell peppers in October. This year, I got about a half-dozen small green bell peppers in early November. I don't think our short growing season is a good fit for this pepper and will try changing to King of the North or a similar short-

season variety. [SEP]

### Seasonal Winners

- Broccoli – My Bay Meadows broccoli did really well. Four plants were plenty to put away for the winter and I had so many side stalks that I eventually let them go to flower, providing much-needed food for the bees in October. [SEP]
  - Beets – Another top-performer, I'll definitely grow my Red Ace beets again. [SEP]
- Parsnips – Finding decent-sized parsnips, especially ones without a wax coating is hard. I'll always reserve a space for my Javelin parsnips in my gardens





# *Plant "Imagination"*



## **Astrantia 'Moulin Rouge'**

Floral designers delight for the unique umbels of starry flowers, and not weedy in habit. This compact selection has very dark red flowers surrounded by nearly black bracts. Plant in a moist area in sun or part shade. Also, nice in mixed containers or tubs. Flowers may be cut fresh, or dried for winter arrangements.

Plant may be easily divided in early spring. Remove faded flowers to encourage more buds, also to prevent plants from self seeding all over.

Red colored flowers with deep green foliage blooms in early, mid and late summer. Plant height is about 16-18 inches with a spread of bout 18-23 inches.

# Taste That!

## Slow Cooker **Pineapple** Chicken:

### Ingredients:

1 cup pineapple juice

- 1/2 cup chicken broth
  - 1/4 cup brown sugar, packed
  - 3 tablespoons reduced sodium soy sauce
  - 3 cloves garlic, minced
  - 12 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs
  - 1 (20-ounce) can pineapple chunks, juices reserved\*
  - 2 tablespoons cornstarch
  - 1/2 teaspoon sesame seeds
- 
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley leaves

### Directions:

1. In a large bowl, combine pineapple juice, chicken broth, brown sugar, soy sauce and garlic.
2. Place chicken thighs into a 6-qt slow cooker. Stir in pineapple juice mixture. Top with pineapple chunks and reserved juices.
3. Cover and cook on low heat for 5-6 hours or high for 2-3 hours, basting every few hours.
4. In a small bowl, whisk together 1/4 cup water and cornstarch. Stir in mixture into the slow cooker. Cover and cook on high heat for an additional 30 minutes, or until sauce is thickened.
5. **OPTIONAL:** Preheat oven to broil. Place chicken thighs onto a baking sheet, skin side up, and broil until crisp, about 3-4 minutes.
6. Serve chicken immediately, garnished with sesame seeds and parsley, if desired.

## 2018 Officers

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## About LOGC

Monthly Lectures/Meetings (September-May)

### Where:

Presbyterian Church of the Way  
3382 Lexington Ave North, Shoreview MN 55126

### Website

<http://www.lakeowassogc.weebly.com> There you can link to crosspollination for more clubs and calendar of events.

### Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/Lake-Owasso-Garden-Club-174124202623663/>

### Membership

\$25<sup>00</sup> per year

### Newsletter Submissions

Deadline is by the 25th of each month.  
The newsletter is released on the first of the month.

We welcome pictures (*provide a title and description, including Latin names of plants*), news items, and commentary. Send content via email to [raflipp@comcast.net](mailto:raflipp@comcast.net).



**What's going on in the Minnesota gardening world?**

Go to: <http://www.crosspollination.weebly.com>

***Once There:*** You will find a calendar of events and ***links to many garden clubs and their Websites, Facebook, Twitter etc.***