

## Welcome to Hamlen's Helping Hand!

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This is our Winter newsletter  
of 2005. We look forward to seeing  
you at the garden center.

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## Hamlen's Open House

Happy Holidays from Dave and Anne Hamlen and their staff ~ Kevin, Carol, Jeff, Katrina, Erika, Ray, Rachel, Joann, Judy, Debbie, Kyla, Jim and Bill!

Mark your calendars! Hamlen's annual holiday open house is December 3rd. We have unique gift ideas for the gardeners on your Christmas list. Our quality Christmas trees, wreaths and greens will all be available. All of our wreaths are hand made and decorated by our talented staff here at Hamlen's. Some wreaths are left undecorated to help you create your own special wreath. All of the decorations you need are sold separately here at the garden center including bows, pinecones, etc.

Our beautiful poinsettias will be ready to be taken home. Poinsettias come in many different colors and sizes. Refreshments will be served during the open house.

### **AMARYLLIS~**

Amaryllis are a wonderful large flowering bulb that come in shades of red, orange, and pink. Amaryllis can keep year - to - year with a little care. Choose large bulbs and plant one per pot. Choose a 6-8" pot with good drainage. Fill the pot one third full with potting soil, place bulb and fill leaving the top third of the bulb out of the soil. Water thoroughly and place in a sunny location. The bulb will produce six to eight blossoms in a six to eight week period.

After flowering, cut off the spent flower stalk, water and fertilize regularly. Stop watering in August and September and put the bulb in a cold dark place. Leave it for eight to twelve weeks, then bring it back to the light. If you don't let the plant go dormant it will grow but not flower. Water it and begin the cycle to flowering.



# Hamlen's Helping Hand



Hamlen's Garden Center  
157 St. Albans Road  
Swanton, Vermont

## HOUSEPLANTS~

The practice of bringing in plants to relieve the blackness of a long winter was originated in Scandinavia. Houseplants add color and beauty to our homes and workspace. They also clean the air by removing carbon dioxide and giving off oxygen. Some examples for the most efficient houseplants for air purification include palms, rubber plants and dracaena. Having houseplants has been shown to cheer us up in the same way our pets do.

Think of your home as a garden, implementing similar design theories that you might use in your backyard garden. The most successful gardens combine different leaf shapes, sizes, textures and colors. Houseplants offer a limitless variety of all of the needed qualities for your interesting indoor garden. The most important factor in successful indoor gardening is light. Select the plant that is right for the location you want to fill. In midwinter houseplants require less water, instead of watering on a fixed schedule, monitor your plants for signs of thirst. Over watering is a common problem in winter. With houseplants, it is possible to garden no matter where you live, no matter what the season.

## How the Tradition of the Christmas Tree Started



The tradition of decorating an evergreen tree goes back to the 7th century. At this time a monk from Cediton, Devonshire wanted to teach the word of God in Germany. He spent a lot of his time doing many good works in Thuringia. This area has now become the center of the Christmas decoration industry. As legend has it, he wanted to symbolize the Holy Trinity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, so he used the triangular shape of the fir tree. The fir tree became thought of as God's tree. In the 12th century, people at Christmastime in central Europe would hang trees upside down from their ceilings.

The Christmas tree arrived in America in several areas. German Hessian soldiers brought their customs to the states in the 18th century.. British cattle barons brought their Christmas tree traditions to Texas. Other settlers from Europe brought their Christmas traditions to America in the 19th century.

As the tradition of the Christmas tree spread through the states people had to be creative. They did not have all of the decorations and lights like we have created over the past years. They used tin with pierced holes and a candle inside for a lighting decoration. The settlers would also use cutouts and decorations that they would sew. They did have simple general stores which sold magazines with many pictures in them and cotton batting for creating the illusion of snow. The general stores also sold tinsel which was either sent in from Germany or from Eastern United States.

The tinsel that we use today originated from a German idea in the early 1600's. Originally real silver was used to make tinsel, but the silver would tarnish quickly if the families used it on a tree lighted with candles. After the use of silver, a mixture of tin and lead was used. It was such a heavy combination it would break under its own weight. Silver was used up until the mid 20th century. Now nearly all tinsel is made out of plastic.

So as you pick out your Christmas Tree and decorate it, remember how the tradition was started dating back to the 7th century.

Have a Merry Christmas and Enjoy The Tradition of the Christmas tree!

## Hamming It Up

Last October my wife bought a magnolia tree from the local nursery, but after only a few weeks the leaves shriveled. It appeared to be on its last legs. My wife took some leaf samples and marched into the nursery to demand an explanation.

"I know exactly what is wrong with your magnolia," said the manager.

"Good," said my wife. "What's it suffering from?"

"Autumn," he replied.

## Hamlines

***"The love of gardening is a seed that once sown never dies."***

~Gertrude Jekyll

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