



January 2022

Luck Favors Go-getters in 2022!

Regula Pepi

Hi JCMGA members, this is your message for January from your President Elect.

I was told an article for the Beet was due by December 17 and during this transition period from one president to another, I am trying to do as I am told. Hopefully there was no miscommunication, and you won't get two presidential messages. If so, enjoy!

Lynn Kunstman was "reelin' in the year" in her December article, so I am going to stick with the fishing metaphor and am "casting out the bait," attempting to catch some lucky breaks for us in 2022. We all know that luck favors the busy go-getters and since we all fall into that category, we can be hopeful and look forward to great things in 2022.

To get the ball rolling: Please don't neglect to renew your membership.

Message from the Coordinator

Happy New Year, Gardeners! I hope that the slower days of winter have been relaxing and cozy, and that plenty of time was spent with family and loved ones over the holidays.

With my family, I have recently enjoyed the first outings into the snowy winter wonderlands of southwestern Oregon, and with the solstice, got to thinking about which plants have been historically significant around the time of solstice. Some of this information was featured in my column for the January 2019 Beet column.

The spruce and fir forests are some of my favorite places in southwestern Oregon. Sacred trees of the winter solstice to cultures in the northern hemisphere include oak, yew, silver fir, birch, and pines.

Yew represents death of the old year, while silver fir represents the new year and rebirth. Birch also symbolizes new beginnings. Pines are for peace, healing, and joy; conifers in general were a symbol of the continuity of life and prosperity. Oak symbolizes eternal life, protection, and strength, and was the traditional type of tree used as a yule log. Yule logs were burned for 12 days, and their ashes were scattered afterwards over fields for health and a bountiful harvest. Perhaps the most interesting botanical story around the winter solstice (in my opinion) and Christmas is that of the fly agaric (*Amanita muscaria*) mushroom. This Old-World mushroom is thought to be the foundation of the story of Santa Claus and his flying reindeer.

In northern Europe and Asia, this fungus typically appears underneath firs and spruce in the days leading up to the winter solstice. Shamans from these regions would dress in special red garments trimmed with white fur and black boots (sound familiar?) to collect these mushrooms. Upon returning to the village, they would enter their yurts through the smoke hole, as this was the portal to the spirit world. When the mushrooms were ingested, one's face would flush (think rosy cheeks and noses) and gave a sense of well-being, visions, and even the feeling of flying, as the Sami (Laplander) people would say when riding on their sleighs with reindeer. The reindeer from these northern regions even have a documented taste for fungi. In addition to being shared as gifts, dried fly agaric mushrooms were historically strung with popcorn and cranberries as mid-winter decorations.

With the winter solstice past, enjoy the coming longer days and continued beauty of winter!

Written by Erika

JCMGA Renewal!

Patrice Kaska

Remember that if you would like to be included in the 2022 JCMGA Chapter Directory, you need to have completed your member renewal by January 31, 2022.

You may renew in the Member section of the website and specific renewal directions and links are being sent to potential members every two weeks.

If you have already renewed for 2022—THANK YOU!

A New Year's Resolution
Gardening Gourmet
Sydney Jordan Brown MG 2000

This year why not resolve to try and bear your cross by sowing seed for *Raphanus sativus*. Even if you fall short, the Long Scarlet radish will bear one for you.

Belonging to the family, *Brassicaceae*, (more commonly known as crucifers, the mustard or cabbage family), their older name, *Cruciferae*, means "cross-bearing".

This "cross bearing" results from the eventual flowers of maturing plants in the cabbage family. All members have flowers composed of four petals that are reminiscent, well, of a lovely white cross when bloomed.

Radishes have been doing their part, whether flowering or providing sustenance, for thousands of years originating in China.

Gradually spreading westward, they became important foodstuff for the Greeks and Romans. However, their most extensive cultivation was in Egypt during the Pharaohs' reigns. Evidence shows their consumption even before the pyramids were constructed.

Radishes didn't spread to the West until they're documented to have been found in Germany in the 13th century. Thereafter, they were cultivated in England by 1548, Mexico in 1565, and finally made their way to the US sprouting up in Massachusetts in 1629.

Today radishes are readily propagated just about anywhere and in nearly every state in the US. Their family (including cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, kale and mustard) is of great economic importance, providing much of the world's winter vegetables.

Along with that, radishes contain rich sources of ascorbic and folic acids, potassium, vitamin B6, riboflavin, magnesium copper and calcium. Who needs a vitamin pill with all that? Just pop a fresh radish instead!

Their compact-pungent leaves can also be consumed (but you hadn't thought of that) by adding them to soups, sautéing them with olive oil and garlic, steaming them as a side dish or snipping some directly into your salad. Delicious! Move over arugula!

As for our star, the Long Scarlet radish, it grows to an elongated-thin root around 5-7" long. Its tapered shape is like a carrot with its curved shoulder and distinct pointy tip.

The root's skin is very thin and a vibrant scarlet pink. The interior flesh of these beauties is brilliant white, crisp and lightly sweet with a milder peppery bite than most other radishes.

It's unfortunate that for a long while, heirloom radishes were nearly replaced by the more familiar common round-red radish.

Although nearly disappearing, seed for the Long Scarlet can again be found in select-specialty seed catalogs. We are so fortunate someone reintroduced these seeds so we might sow them in our own backyard gardens.

When those early birds get their worms, you'll soon have your first Long Scarlet radishes when sown in early spring. When well fertilized and provided with plenty of moisture, you could have your first taste in as little as three weeks!

Sowing directly in a fully sunny spot that's loamy (add sand if compact) and well-composted is the key for exceptional radish roots. They'll be sweeter and more tender the more rapidly they grow.

So, plan for that New Year's cross-bearing with a Long Scarlet radish resolution!

Seed sources:

Pine Tree Garden Seeds

<http://www.superseeds.com>

Urban Farmer

<http://www.ufseeds.com>

Recipe:

Long Scarlet Radish Slaw

Slaw:

2 cups coarsely shredded radishes
3 cups shredded cabbage
1 cup tart apple cut in fine julienne strips
½ cup chopped toasted almonds or walnuts

Vinaigrette:

3 tablespoons organic honey or agave nectar
¼ cup organic apple cider vinegar
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
sea salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Mix the slaw ingredients in a large bowl or 2 gallon zip type bag. Combine vinaigrette ingredients in small bowl and whisk together until mixed. Pour over the slaw and gently toss or if using bag, close zipper and gently flip bag over several times with hands until all is incorporated.

Serve immediately. About 6-8 servings