

NATURE NOW

by Lydia King Frehe
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

Plants Are Evident
Christmas Symbols

Many of our Christmas symbols are linked with plants which are much in evidence at the holiday season.

Most of you will find a place for holly in a door wreath, as a mantle decoration or as a centerpiece for the table. There are some 300 species in this plant family (Aquifoliaceae) with practically all of them in the genus *Ilex*. The common American holly, abundant in our markets, grows from New England to Florida and west to Texas. The beautiful white-edged variety comes to us from the northwest.

The small greenish-white flowers are short-lived, soon giving way to the bright red berry which is centered with a stem.

OUR MICHIGAN holly is a common shrub in swamps. It is a true *Ilex* species but is called winter-berry or black alder for common names which in the latter case is somewhat misleading. Its fruit adds brightness to our winter landscape. However, it lacks the beauty of leaf seen in the American holly. Since it is a deciduous shrub, the leaves are shed by the time the berries are ripened.

THE POINSETTIA named after an American diplomat and minister to Mexico, J. R. Poinsett, is our choicest Christmas flower. It is native to Mexico where it is called "flame leaf." That which we usually mistake for petals is a circle of colored leaves moved up to make a background for the inconspicuous central flowers. If you examine these with a hand lens, you will find a naked

stipitate flower surrounded by auxiliary bracts which resemble flowers in a neat tiny cup. The "leaf petals" may be white, pink or red. Many beautiful double varieties have been developed in the tropics.

MISTLETOE (*Phoradendron flavescens*) is another Christmas plant sent to us from the south. Its ancient legends center around a European species closely related to our own. The Britons attached considerable sentimental and religious meaning to its use. The Druids gathered this plant amidst great ceremony following the chief priest to the sacred oak tree which bore it.

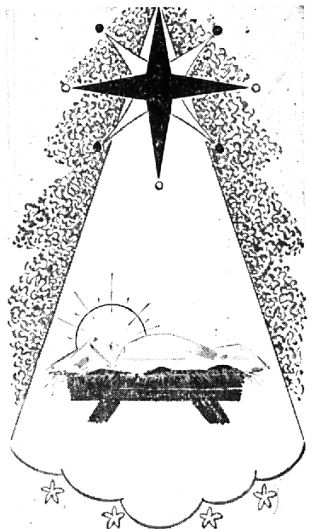
MICHIGAN has several varieties of native mistletoe dwarfed and unattractive and so small that they are frequently overlooked by all except the botanist. Many of their branches are less than an inch long. Usually found on coniferous trees in the Northern Peninsula, they are called "witches brooms" from their bun-like habit of growth. The mistletoe is a destructive parasite. The term is derived from two Greek words: "chief" and "sprawled" as it appears by birds which relish the berries.

KISSING UNDER the mistletoe is a Christmas privilege. It was said of the Druids that if enemies met under the tree which bore this plant they declared a truce and embraced. These are but a few of the Christmas symbols provided by nature's bountiful hand.

ONCE AGAIN, warmest Holiday Greetings to all who follow these lines from week to week.



Mrs. Frehe



JOY TO EVERYONE

May the message of Peace and Good Will shine brightly in your hearts this Christmas, with a holiday rich in the joy of blessings received and bright with happiness, is the wish of all of us at The Birmingham Eccentric.

Happenings of Long Ago

Bits of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric

50 YEARS AGO
Dec. 21, 1909
"Last Tuesday evening someone smelt real genuine beer in Royal Oak, and police went through the Transfer hotel and found a bottle there. There find 4½ cases of beer which they promptly confiscated."

"Every time veggs get hard up they blow the Milford postoffice safe. They don't even wait for that."

30 YEARS AGO
Dec. 23, 1929
"Residents in Bloomfield Hills Village will pay the lowest tax in the state, only three mills per \$100."

"About seventeen seniors will graduate in the January class of 1930."

DOWN TO EARTH
"The Birmingham Eccentric takes ex-Gov. Chase Osborn altogether seriously. He is a scholar, a wit and a good speaker, but is not absolutely dependable in some of his public declarations. Therefore, let the chaff go, the wind will take care of that."

15 YEARS AGO
Dec. 23, 1944
"Residents of Birmingham this week received the commendation of the city fire department for their careful handling of home decorations and Christmas tree lighting."

"The George G. Booth estate in Bloomfield Hills, including Cranbrook house, the family homestead, has been deeded to the Cranbrook foundation by Mr. and Mrs. George G. Booth."

Christmas Season Should be Showing

By ALICE WESSELS BURLINGAME
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

At this date I hope your Christmas spirit "is showing" with some expression of outside night lighting. On Christmas eve did you ever go up to the door of a new neighbor or some of the old regulars and just say: "Merry Christmas, just wanted to wish you a happy holiday from our house."

Once we moved to a new town during Christmas week and I know what such a call would have meant to us. Your thoughtfulness can ripple like a grass fire down your block and set a good climate for 1960. This is the time of year to take time to be thoughtful.

Many of our readers are using spotlights to dramatize their exterior decorations. The question has been asked: "What kind of a bulb shall I use?" If you are trying to sell a house in a subdivision you use a floodlight but when you wish to emphasize a detail of trimming always use a spotlight.

IN THE Birmingham Estates subdivision which includes the North side of Maple, York-shire, Dorchester and Buckingham from Adams to the Grand Trunk Railroad, you are seeing lots of exterior decorating activity as Bob Kilmer, Joseph Evangelista, Loren Shobnon, Joseph Evangelista, Theodore Szymke and Lawrence Quim are on a committee to inject some old-fashioned Christmas spirit in the well established area of Birmingham.

THE ARMY working toward having this group of residents have a warm neighborhood comradeship. They have planned a Christmas home decorating contest and the outside of their homes will be judged Dec. 27. There will be many prizes and awards. You will enjoy making a special effort to file next this area during Christmas week.

ONE OF THE best ideas I have ever seen is to have electric wandle in every window facing the street. The house looks like a Christmas card. I know this style of trim is an ornament.

A neighbor had placed about two dozen large silver balls on

their dogwood tree near the front floor. A spotlight picks up glimmering of the balls at night. It is stunning. Rubber car washers can be sprayed with glitter to make a fine outdoor trim.

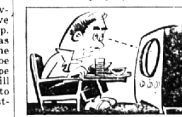
A FAVORITE at our house every year is an old fashioned gum drop tree. We go to the farm and cut the tops from a hawthorn tree (they are the farmer's weeds) and place it on a pin holder in a tray. You place gay colored gum drops on all of the long prickles on the hawthorn bough and then place a generous supply in the tray at the base. These boughs can be sprayed gold or white although it is not necessary.

I am busting all over" to give you lots of new garden ideas but I know that this week is not the time to share this story but you know that I do wish you a Merry Christmas and please let your Christmas show.

STRICTLY FRESH

Digestive blowhards are usually people who have quit inhaling cigarette smoke.

Spring is in the air as soon as you get the withholding tax statements from the boss.



Death knell of family kitchen life will be the clank of the television dish out 47 inches through a slot.

The pessimist also says: "Things are never so good they can't get better."

THE GARDENER'S CORNER
The Answers to Your Gardening Questions by Bob

QUESTION OF THE WEEK:
Should shrubs be grouped together in a garden or planted separately?

BOB'S ANSWER:
Group plantings of flowering trees and shrubs or evergreens in the corners of your garden will give you an easy-to-maintain background for almost any other planting you want to do. If you like the idea you can connect these corner areas with trimmed hedges.

For a brighter Christmas we will have

- Boughs
- Wreaths
- Roping
- Holly
- Christmas Trees
- Mistletoe

LI 9-4122
THEISEN'S
Garden Mart
3826 Woodward
(near 13½ Mile) Royal Oak

Smart Santas shop here for TOYS

THERE IS STILL TIME!
Wide Selection. Make The Thunderbird YOUR HEADQUARTERS FOR A WORLD OF YOUNG DREAMS

The THUNDERBIRD Shop
Bloomfield Plaza
W. Maple at Telegraph MA 6-3947

A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!
The Improvement of Your Home is A lasting Gift

PING PONG TABLE TOPS ONLY

2-Pc. 54" x 60" (1 1/2")	\$10.95
2-Pc. 54" x 60" (3/4")	14.50

Knocked Down PING PONG TABLES

1 1/2" Top, Folding Legs	\$20.95
3/4" Top, Folding Legs	24.50
1 1/2" Top, Stationary Legs	14.95
3/4" Top, Stationary Legs	18.50

DELUXE PING PONG TABLES BUILT-UP & PAINTED

3/4" Top	\$38.95
1 1/2" Top	43.50
3/4" Top	51.50

Armstrong's Cushion Tone ACOUSTICAL CEILING TILE

12 x 12" (1/2") Full Random	18 1/2c
12 x 12" (1/2") Classic	19c
12 x 12" (1/2") Textured	26 1/2c

— PLAN NOW —
That Attic Project or Extra Room. Do-It-Yourself, or We Will Do It For You.

HARDWARE TOOLS

Restrick
425 S. ETON (South of G.T.R.R. Depot), BIRMINGHAM
FREE DELIVERY CALL MI 4-5300
OPEN SATURDAY TILL NOON

From The Eccentric's Point of View...

Buying goods on credit has just been instituted in Russia—another proof that the Soviet has taken another leaf from the capitalistic system's economic book. This is being done to bolster the production and sale of Soviet business. At the high cost of Russian goods, together with its low wage scale, users of the new credit may find it necessary to pledge their grandchildren as security.

For more than a score of years both U.S. Democrat and Republican administrations have endeavored to solve the farm

problem—without much success. As a matter-of-fact, how can anybody perfect a method that takes financial support from people, and expect these people to like it? (Especially when "these people" have many votes.)

Enrollment in U.S. schools has increased from 31 million to 46 million in ten years. Imagine what unlimited possibilities for the advancement of civilization are contained in the educational system—providing not too much of it is emburled in the shrouds of will-o-the-wisp curricula.

The Birmingham Eccentric
Published every Thursday at Birmingham, Mich., in the Eccentric Building, 220-234 North Woodward Avenue Telephone Midwest 4-1100

GEORGE R. AVERILL
Editor and Publisher

PAUL NEAL AVERILL
Business Manager

GEORGE W. AVERILL
Managing Editor

DAVID F. GIBB
Advertising Manager

ONE THING OR ANOTHER By George Wm. Averill

More often than not, municipalities find their projects running beyond the originally estimated costs.

It is easy to see why, in many of these instances: Too much time elapses between the time that estimates are made out, and the time that construction bids are received.

IF THE COMMUNITY cannot afford the higher amount, lack must go plans for refiguring, and alterations and substitutions in facilities and materials.

Meanwhile, the public again wonders why the architects or engineers can't design projects within the municipality's available financing.

Were I an architect or an engineer, I believe I would meet this problem in this manner:

AS DO THE ARCHITECTS and engineers, I, too, would do my utmost to predict future costs in "Plan A". I would incorporate in my plan the best features and materials I believe will total just under the cost ceiling I am committed to. Then I would prepare an alternative

set of specifications, which I'd call "Plan B". This plan would be a certain percentage—say 10 per cent for illustrative purposes—below that ceiling I was working under.

SUPPOSE THE TIME LAPSED was considerable between my estimates and the taking of bids. Suppose I undershot the actual bids by 10 per cent. My Plan B would be ready instantly for re-advertising of bids.

This method also could work in the municipality's favor. Suppose the board members liked my Plan B the best, and decided their construction standards were met by it.

THEY COULD ASK BIDS on Plan B. If my estimates were right on the nose, the community would be saving 10 per cent. If my Plan B estimates were too low, the bids would much more closely approximate the municipality's financing ability. (Plan A, remember, would be 10 percent higher than Plan B.)

I don't believe I'd lack for clients were I to operate under this procedure. But it sounds so practical I wonder if it's ethical?



Mr. Burlingame

Continuing its Traditional Supremacy

Kingsley Inn
Woodward, South of Long Lake Rd.

Make your reservations now!!

for
Gala NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION

GOURMET DINNER served from 8:30 P.M.

SPECIAL ENTERTAINMENT

Regular Dinner served from 5 through 7:30 P.M.

MARY ROY, TV personality
JOE ALEXANDER at the piano
ZIGGY BELA and his gypsy violins
KINGSLEY INN COACHEMEN for your dancing pleasure

Early reservations appreciated MI 4-1100