

Holiday Workshop

For many years the SGC has brought cheer and a bit of holiday to our area nursing homes. At our December Membership Meeting all our members create, out of a simple, washed, cat food cans and oasis, an elegant evergreen floral arrangement. It is finished off with a thin red ribbon attached to a small 2-inch card that says "Happy Holidays ". After they are all created they are whisked off that same day and delivered to our area nursing homes.

The Provisional Class is charged with organizing this entire event for our members. With help from the prior year's class all are dispatched to different gardens to clip, gather and bring back to the Stonington Community Center and the entire membership then creates over 100 arrangements. The arrangements are then delivered immediately to the nursing homes.

It is a wonderful tradition- and a lot is accomplished in 24 hours!

This is the time line:

November:

1. Confirm the date with the COMO – letting them know we need tables, chairs and trash cans and access to the kitchen.
2. Check the attic storage to see how many cat cans we have. Make sure they are all cleaned.
3. Contact local SGC members and non-members who have, over the years, generously allowed us to enter their gardens, to clip evergreens and shrubs. Example of what has been used in the past. Holly, cypress, boxwood, fir, cedars, Ivy, Junipers, mountain laurel, pine, spruce, Arborvitae, Cryptomeria, Hemlock, Gold Mop Cypress, Leyland Cypress.
4. The following people have opened their gardens to us: Candy Sanford, Cayre Michas, Anne Buffum and Ruth Saunders. They should be called by the first week of November asking if we may cut from their garden.
5. Call area nursing homes and ask how many individual arrangements should be dropped off. Let them know the day we will be dropping off. These are the nursing homes we have traditionally delivered to:
 - i. Apple Rehab in Mystic (across from CVS) 26 Broadway Mystic
 - ii. Avalon Health Center (this is the Alzheimer's unit at Stone Ridge- 186 Jerry Brown Road, Mystic
 - iii. Mystic River Residential Care 14 Godfrey Street Mystic
 - iv. Mystic HealthCare475 High Street Mystic
6. Check attic storage for oasis- we use the instant oasis that does not require a long soak. Purchase if needed.
7. Gather cardboard boxes (the ones with smaller sides- the boxes that cans come in at the grocery store. These are used to carry the arrangements to the nursing home.
8. Order red, white and red and white SMALL carnations from Pot of Green Florist in Stonington, you need to order enough stems (they usually have 3 blossoms per stem) for 100 Arrangements. Don't leave the order to last minute or you might not arrive in time.

December:

1. Purchase: Red ribbon (the thin red ribbon- Michael's- use the 40% off coupon) 4-5 rolls
2. Someone needs to print out the tags for each arrangement (Betty Fountain has the word document file)
3. Attach red ribbons to the tag and tie in a knot. (these are then threaded onto the arrangement)
4. Provisionals bring baked goods, snack foods and coffee for the day of the event.

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Day Prior to Workshop:

- Gather greens using tarps, brown bags and clippers
- Coming back from gathering greens lay down large tarps on the left hand side of the auditorium of the COMO
- Separate greens by type as best as possible.
- Set up Tables in a large U Shape- cover with newspaper for a work surface
- Put chairs on both the inside of the U and the outside
- Cut the oasis to fit in the cat cans (this does take some time)
- Two long tables are centered inside the U – this is where the cat cans with oasis are placed- they need to be filled with water the night before)

Supplies:

- Large trash can bags
- Cat Cans- are collected at the Membership Meetings- have several large bags for members to deposit them. Have the editor of the newsletter put a note in the newsletters, emails and mention at the Meetings.
- Clippers for members to use at the homes where clipping takes place
- Tarps for cars to put clipped greens in
- Large brown lawn bags are an alternative to tarps
- Large Tarps on the floor in the auditorium
- Red ribbon- thin to use to attach the holiday tag
- Newspapers (LOTS)
- Trash Cans
- Check in desk for members to sign in
- Members bring their own clippers (we do have extra in a bag in the attic storage space)
- Coffee
- Snacks- a variety
- Tea
- Sugar
- Milk

Day of Workshop:

Provisionals arrive early to get coffee and tea set up on the kitchen counter. Arrange snacks as they come in (Other members also make and bring snacks).

Provisionals can make their arrangements also. Some members make 2 some make 10- mid way check how many cans are left in the center table. Start distributing them to members to encourage them to make more! After the arrangements have all been made- they are placed in the shallow cardboard boxes on the stage and someone attaches the tag with red ribbon.

Provisionals then divide up the boxes, counting to make sure they have the right amount for their nursing home.