

Christmas Presents

11-27-2020

It is already time to begin selecting the gifts for the gardeners on your Holiday Gift list.

Try something different this year and establish ambitious goals to accomplish with the presents.

With the Presidential election we had some examples of older individuals staying active and involved in important civic activities. You may have someone on your Christmas present list that is having a bit of trouble getting involved in important activities after retiring. Consider paying their dues and training fees for the Bexar Master Gardeners. There are also opportunities for important environmental, educational, and fun gardening projects with the Gardening Volunteers of South Texas, the San Antonio Men's Gardening Club and other volunteer groups that might meet the needs of the person on your present list. Pay the dues and attend a few meetings and /or project work sessions with them. That could turn out to be a wonderful gift for them! Visit the Groups' websites to see if one of them meets your Gardener's needs for worthy activity.

Do you ever want to give a Christmas gift that links two individuals or families? For instance, what if you have a newly retired grandfather looking for ways to become involved in worthwhile activities and a granddaughter that has interest in the environment? How about getting them both a bird feeding gift? To make it especially interesting have it be the same components and address the issue of squirrels as well as birds. Most individuals on Holiday Present lists do not realize that by selecting the right components of the "bird feeding" present you can enjoy the birds and reduce the involvement of pesky squirrels. Include a steel Absolute Brand Feeder with weight sensitive perches to distribute sunflower seed. The squirrels are denied access to the sunflower seeds when they move onto the weight sensitive perch. Also include a wire mesh suet feeder to distribute suet flavored with hot pepper. The insect eating birds such as wrens and woodpeckers relish the pepper flavored suet, and the squirrels pass it up. The similar presents draw the two recipients together in what could become a longer term more involved relationship as they feed the birds. They may end up joining the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center together and become busy in the good cause of environmental education and birdwatching pursued by the Center.

A gift of a plant or tool at a good retail nursery in San Antonio might be appreciated by the gardener on your Holiday Gift list but what about a Christmas gift that allows the gardener to select which plant he/she wants when he/she has the most time to plant it? That is what happens when you give a gift certificate for the gift and let the recipient decide when they want to select and pick it up. Another advantage of a gift certificate as a present to a well filled nursery is that the gardener gets to spend some time viewing and selecting the final gift. Most of the fun can be enjoyed during the visits to the nursery to make the decision about what gift to finally select!

How about if you expanded the concept of the gift certificate to have the present include all the compost, milkweed, thyrallis, mist flower, porter weed, passion vine, frog fruit, horse herb, zinnias and other plants necessary to plant a 20 ft. by 10ft. butterfly garden? The total cost could be \$300. \$500 or \$1000 based on the size of the garden and or the size and number of the plants. Several of the nurseries in the area have certified butterfly gardens on site so plans and models are available. You could even

make the project more interesting by including Geyata Ajilvsgi's book "Butterfly Gardening For The South" as part of the gift and letting the recipient use her gift certificate value for purchase of plants from one the plans included in the book!

Selecting the right Holiday Gift for your Gardener is worth the effort.