



Remember that show, A Gardener's Journal, on television? It was by far my favorite TV program on gardening; naturally HGTV took it off the air. Except for a few good PBS programs run by individual states that are only aired in the home states there is a dearth of good televised information for gardeners.

I was reminded of the Gardener's Journal recently, and as January is a time for resolutions, a good one for me would be to keep up my own garden records with accurate notes, successes and failures, unusual weather occurrences, purchases and shared plants and the dear friends that shared them and of course, photos.

I had started writing this article a few weeks ago; it was going to be on my New Year's resolution to write in my journal. As I re-read the first paragraph I had to laugh. The recent snow certainly counts as an 'unusual weather occurrence' but didn't it look lovely? For a few hours weedy garden beds looked pristine and our trees looked like those on Christmas cards. Seeing icicles on Spanish moss was a first for me. I'll be adding photos of that serene snow scene to my journal along with the less than pleasant obvious plant obituaries as a result of the cold. I say 'obvious' because not everything that looks bad is dead, a good many plants may well come back from the roots. We just have to wait this one out.

Do cut back any unsightly foliage but don't be too quick to prune hard or pull any plants out. I have noticed the bark on my large perennial Salvia, 'Ember's Wish,' is split right to the ground. I'll cut that off now; there is no way that will sprout new leaves. However, I dug lightly around the roots and saw they are fresh and healthy. I have high hopes this plant will emerge

from the ground as the weather warms. The stems on the lovely yellow *Senna bicapsularis* are probably dead but it is best to wait on plants like that, they may yet surprise us in the spring. A Clematis vine had already sprouted new leaves before the storm and this young, tender growth could not handle the cold and was damaged.

The foliage on amaryllis and crinums looked mushy and it was not easy to clean up. I dug up and examined a few bulbs and they seem firm and fine. As long as they were healthy to begin with they should bloom right on schedule.

Bananas, Cannas and gingers are also a mess of slimy foliage, but their rhizomes live on. Some gingers, like the variegated *Alpinia zerumbet*, only bloom on old stems, so we'll not see any flowers from the new leaves that emerge this coming spring. Just clean up the foliage as best you can, add a bit of compost and mulch the beds. One good thing about the recent freeze is that as you clean up the garden you will be able to more clearly see the bones or basic structure of your garden. With a clean slate you'll be able to determine what work needs to be done. After so many years, some of the shrubbery at my home is overgrown and needs major surgery.

It always amazes me when a visitor sees something in my garden that I had not noticed myself. Another good resolution would be to stop more often to see and appreciate what is growing, and to think about and remember the good people who have shared plants with me. Shared plants are always the best.

I'd much prefer to be digging rather than recording what is going on in the garden, but I am going to try and keep up my journal. That's my resolution but, well, we'll see . . .