



Barrie Garden Club Newsletter

# Cuttings

November & December 2023

Look for us at: [www.barriegardenclub.ca](http://www.barriegardenclub.ca)



*Written by Kimberly Sturge*

## November Meeting BGC Awards Night and Potluck



**November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
@ 6:30pm**

At the ANAF Club  
52 Morrow Rd

**Join us for a night of acknowledgement  
to our members, fun prizes and a tasty  
potluck!**

Please bring a yummy dish to share (sorry no  
plugs available to plug in) and your own plate  
and cutlery and mug! We will provide  
beverages and napkins!

**\*\*\* If you buy your 2024 Barrie Garden Club  
Membership at this Meeting, you will be  
automatically entered into a draw!\*\*\***



Just a Reminder...  
No meeting is  
scheduled for January!  
And our February &  
March Meetings will be  
on Zoom!



# DECEMBER WREATH MAKE & TAKE

December 5<sup>th</sup> will be a Make & Take meeting  
(you must sign-up ahead if you want to make a  
wreath)

Decorate a 14-inch fresh evergreen wreath!  
Bring your own decorations & lights, or choose  
from our selection

Ribbon, glue and wires provided!

**ONLY \$25.00 each**

Limited space so sign-up at the November Meeting  
or email [carjim174@bell.net](mailto:carjim174@bell.net)



**We are on**



The Barrie Garden Club has rejoined Instagram with a new handle: thebarriegardenclub. Instagram is just one of the ways we inform the community about our club and the local initiatives we take part in. As most of you likely know, Instagram is a photo and video sharing platform, and lends itself well to the Barrie Garden Club because, well, gardens! We all love photos of gardens and why not share those

photos, as well as those of our projects and speakers? Instagram joins Facebook, our website, our newsletter and local media as another channel to reach the gardening community, let people know the good work we do and to encourage new members to the Barrie Garden Club.

**Check us out, give us a follow and maybe even like  
us from time to time!**



**Congratulations to the City of Barrie for winning gold and a special mention for Plants and Floral Displays during the 2023 National/International Symposium and Awards Ceremonies in Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo, Alberta!**

To see the full article go to

[https://www.barrietoday.com/local-news/barrie-blossoms-at-communities-in-bloom-7625170?utm\\_source=BarrieToday.com&utm\\_campaign=7364d97317-DailyBAR&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_c8859d4fc8-7364d97317-319876565](https://www.barrietoday.com/local-news/barrie-blossoms-at-communities-in-bloom-7625170?utm_source=BarrieToday.com&utm_campaign=7364d97317-DailyBAR&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c8859d4fc8-7364d97317-319876565)



# Our Barrie Garden Club A Year at a Glance! 2023

Our BGC Volunteers were very busy in our community again this year! Here is what our year looked like!

The June Plant Sale was held at the Canadian Legion.



Volunteers Sharon Doran and Marion Breedon decorated four Seasonal Urns Gilda's Club & The Simcoe Hospice!



Shear Park Community Garden - BGC volunteers prepared, planted, tended and harvested vegetables and donated the harvests to the Elizabeth Fry Society

Jennifer Niven planted seeds for in a BGC demo at the Urban Pantry Lampman Lane Garden Party

BGC volunteers planted and maintained the gardens at the Downtown Library Rooftop Garden











Barrie Hill Farm Tour - our club toured their relatively new apple orchards, picked apples and then had dinner and an informative chat with Farmer Morris about the importance of buying locally and the intricacies of farming in Canada today!



MTO Adopt-a-Highway Clean-up - the BGC cleaned up a section of Highway 26 in May and October





We attended the OHA D16 Spring and Fall Seminars!



A huge Thank-you  
to the 2023 Barrie  
Garden Club  
Executive for  
organizing and  
volunteering in our  
2023 year!



# 5 Things You Need to Check Before Buying a Christmas Cactus

Information from: <https://www.ruralsprout.com/buying-christmas-cactus/>



"Christmas cactuses" are everywhere this time of year but before you grab the first plant you walk by, learn what to look for when choosing a plant so that it will last for decades.

Christmas cactuses are a part of the Schlumbergera family. These long-lived succulents are epiphytes that grow in the oddest places in their natural habitat. They cling to rock faces, grow in the crooks of tree branches or wherever they can find a little collected dirt and organic debris. And in the winter, after a period of dormancy, they let loose with gorgeous tropical-coloured blooms. It's no wonder they've been popular houseplants for decades.

Any Schlumbergera is a welcome addition to your houseplant collection, and the truncata blooms in many different colors. The way their segments grow, the plant looks like a green waterfall when it's not blooming. And when the holidays roll around, their blooms are truly spectacular, whether at

Thanksgiving, Christmas or somewhere in between.

## 1. Christmas Cactus at the Door

If you find holiday cactus sitting just inside the drafty door of a store, don't be tempted; keep on walking. Schlumbergera is a tropical plant that doesn't do well with chilly temperatures. If exposed to drafts and cold air, they will drop all their buds for the year. They may even have entire segments fall off.

While you can still buy one of these plants, it's unlikely the buds on it will survive long enough to bloom.

Additionally, although rarer, avoid purchasing holiday cacti exposed to extremely warm temperatures.

## 2. Check the Segments & Crown

Holiday cactuses don't have normal 'leaves.' Instead, they have segments called cladodes. An easy way to see if the plant is in good shape is to get a little handsy.

Pick up the plant you've been eyeballing and gently squeeze one of the cladodes; the segment should feel firm and thick. If it feels thin, papery, or appears wrinkled, you'll want to skip this one. It's been underwatered or may have root rot and will most likely drop its blooms.

Also, look at the crown, where the segments grow out of the soil. Check for yellowing at the base or segments rotting at the crown. The crown should be firmly rooted and deep emerald green.

## 3. Look at the Soil

Apparently, retail workers assume that all plants need lots of water. This spells disaster for Schlumbergera, which is prone to root and crown rot. In the wild, these epiphytes grow in loose, quickly draining organic material. They hate having wet "feet."

Skip soil that's waterlogged or has mold or fungus growing on the surface.

## 4. Pull the Plant Out of the Nursery Pot

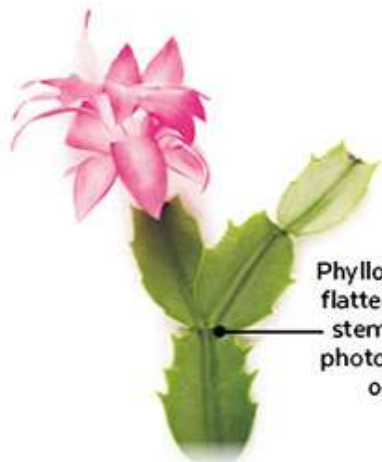
Finally, if you can, gently squeeze the sides of the nursery pot to loosen the plant. Slowly ease the plant out of the pot and look at the roots. They should be white to slightly cream-colored. Brown roots indicate root rot, and it's best to pick a different plant.

The roots and soil should smell pleasantly earthy, not dank or moldy.

**5. Protect Your Purchase for the Ride Home** Once you've selected the perfect holiday cactus, double bag it and close the top to protect it from cold air. Don't leave these tender plants in a cold car for long. Try to make getting your holiday cactus the last stop on the way home.



# IDENTIFYING HOLIDAY CACTI



**Thanksgiving cactus**  
*Schlumbergera truncata*



**Christmas cactus**  
*Schlumbergera bridgesii*

Christmas cactus have tubular-shaped flowers.



Easter cactus flowers are more star-shaped than tubular like the others.

**Easter cactus**  
*Rhipsalidopsis gaertneri*

## Jingle Juice

From: <https://www.taste.com.au>

Make a toast with this Christmas-inspired cranberry and pomegranate cocktail.

15-minute prep \* 5-minute cook \* 8 servings

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups cranberry and pomegranate juice
- 1 tbsp castor sugar
- 1/3 cup orange liqueur
- 750ml bottle sparkling white wine, chilled
- 8 cups ice cubes
- 1 small orange, cut into 8 thin slices
- 2/3 cup frozen pomegranate seeds
- Fresh mint leaves, to serve

### Directions:

1. Place juice and sugar in a small saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring, for 2 to 3 minutes or until sugar has dissolved. Set aside to cool completely.
2. Combine juice mixture, liqueur and sparkling wine in a large jug. Pour juice mixture into glasses over ice and orange slices.
3. Top with pomegranate seeds and mint.





# Holiday Crostini – 8 DELICIOUS ways!

BY:Nagi from: <https://www.recipetineats.com/>

"Crostini" means "little crusts" (little toasts) in Italian and that's exactly what they are... thin, small slices of bread, toasted until crisp and then piled with toppings. **Easy to make and easy to eat!**

As for what toppings, you're only limited by your imagination! From vegetables to cured meats, seafood to cheese, there's really no rules for what to pile on and no need to rigidly stick to Italian flavours.

The key here is to find a small, thinnish baguette / French stick.

Small enough so that once sliced, the bread is a "two-bite" size.

Crostini are meant to be canapés!

The garlic is used to lightly rub the bread for a hint of garlic flavour.

This subtle garlic background note gives the Crostini a special edge!

## CROSTINI BREAD:

- 30 slices artisan type baguette or French stick, cut 0.5cm / 1/4-inch thick on the diagonal
  - 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
  - salt
  - 1 garlic clove, cut in half
1. Preheat oven to 160°C / 320°F (all oven types).
  2. Brush bread with oil, sprinkle with salt, flip and repeat. Bake 5 minutes.
  3. Remove, then rub the surface lightly with garlic. Bake for a further 5 minutes until completely crispy, then remove and leave to cool fully before adding toppings.

## CAPRESE (MAKES 30):

- 350g/ 12 oz baby bocconcini (small ones), cut into 8
  - 400g/ 14 oz cherry tomatoes, cut into 8
  - 1/2 cup (packed) basil leaves, finely sliced
  - 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
  - 3/4 tsp of each salt and pepper
  - 4 tbsp balsamic glaze, store bought or homemade
1. Place all ingredients except balsamic glaze in a bowl and gently toss.
  2. Taste and add more salt & pepper if desired.
  3. Spoon onto crostini, then drizzle with balsamic glaze.

## MEDITERRANEAN (MAKES 30):

- 250g/ 8 oz ricotta, or similar (smooth easiest to spread)
  - 500g/ 1 lb jar antipasto mix - olives (pitted), peppers, sun dried tomato, artichokes
1. Finely chop antipasto mix.
  2. Smear crostini with ricotta & pile on antipasto.





### SMOKED SALMON WITH DILL CREAM CHEESE (MAKES 30):

- 250g/ 8oz spreadable cream cheese (or creme fraiche, Note 4)
  - 2 tsp lemon zest
  - 2 tbsp lemon juice
  - 1 tsp salt and pepper, each
  - 1/3 cup dill, finely chopped
  - 500g/ 1 lb smoked salmon, cut into 2cm / 4/5" x 7.5cm / 3" strips
  - 75g/ 2.5oz baby capers
  - 30 dill sprigs, for garnish
1. Mix cream cheese, lemon zest, lemon juice, dill, salt and pepper.
  2. Spread on crostini, then fold salmon pieces on top.
  3. Top with 3 capers and sprig of dill each.



### GARLIC PRAWNS/SHRIMP AND AVOCADO (MAKES 30):

- 500g/1 lb prawns/shrimp, peeled and deveined
  - 2 garlic cloves, minced
  - 1/2 tsp each salt and pepper
  - 3 tbsp olive oil, separated
  - 2 shallots or green onions, finely chopped
  - 1/4 cup cilantro leaves, finely chopped
  - 2 tbsp lime juice
  - 2 avocados, halved and seed removed
1. Toss prawns with 1 tbsp oil, garlic, salt and pepper.
  2. Preheat large skillet over high heat with 1 tbsp olive oil. Add half the prawns and sauté until just cooked. Remove, then repeat with remaining prawns.
  3. Cool, then chop into 0.75cm / 1/3" pieces and transfer to bowl.
  4. Add 1 tbsp olive oil, shallots, coriander and lime.
  5. Toss, then add more salt and pepper to taste.
  6. Smear crostini with avocado, then spoon on shrimp.

### STRAWBERRY WITH GOATS CHEESE AND HONEY (MAKES 16)

- 160g / 5.5 oz goat cheese, softened (or cream cheese, Danish feta or a good smooth ricotta)
  - 14 - 16 ripe strawberries, sliced 3mm / 1/8" thick
  - 2 tbsp honey
  - 2 tsp fresh thyme leaves
1. Spread crostini with goat cheese.
  2. Layer strawberry slices.
  3. Drizzle with honey just before serving and sprinkle with thyme leaves.

### RARE ROAST BEEF WITH HOT ENGLISH MUSTARD (MAKES 16)

2 tsp Hot English Mustard (or horseradish)

160g / 5.5 oz goat cheese, softened (or cream cheese, Danish feta or a good smooth ricotta)

180g / 6oz rare roast beef, shaved or finely sliced

16 baby rocket/arugula leaf, for garnish

1. Spread crostini with cream cheese then as much English Mustard or horseradish as you dare!
2. Drape with a slice of beef & top with sprig of rocket.



## HOLIDAY TAPENADE (MAKES 16)

- 1/2 cup parsley, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries, separated (they tend to stick together)
- 1/4 cup pitted black olives, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup pitted green olives, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup almonds (preferably blanched), finely chopped
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

1. Mix chopped tapenade ingredients in a small bowl.
2. Set aside for at least 30 minutes to let the flavours meld, then taste and add salt if required.
3. Spread crostini with goat cheese & pile on tapenade.

## CHILI AND MINT PRAWNS ON PARMESAN PEA PUREE (MAKES 16)

- 150g / 5oz frozen peas
  - 1/2 small garlic clove, minced
  - 2 tbsp parmesan, finely grated
  - 1/4 tsp each salt and pepper
  - 250g / 8oz cooked peeled prawns/shrimp (500g/1lb cooked whole, Note 5)
  - 2 tbsp mint leaves, finely chopped
  - 2 tsp lemon juice
  - extra virgin olive oil, for drizzling
  - 1 tbsp parsley, finely chopped
  - 1 tbsp large red chilli (cayenne peppers), deseeded and finely chopped
1. **Pea puree:** Boil peas per packet directions until soft, then drain well. Transfer to small bowl with high sides. Add garlic, parmesan, olive oil, salt and pepper. Blitz with handheld blender stick until smooth. Stir through mint and lemon juice. Set aside to fully cool.
  2. **Prawns:** Peel then chop meat into 0.75 - 1 cm pieces.
  3. **Assemble:** Smear crostini with pea puree. Pile on prawn, drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with parsley and chili.

### Recipe Notes:

**Baby bocconcini** - they are just small bocconcini, about the size of cherry tomatoes (they're also called "cherry bocconcini")

**Caprese** - cut the bocconcini and cherry tomatoes into roughly the same size.

**Spreadable Cream Cheese** is just softer cream cheese than what you get in blocks. It comes in tubs. If you can't find it, softened normal cream cheese is fine too, or creme fraiche.

**Making ahead** - crostini can be made 5 days ahead, stored in an airtight container. Toppings should be made fresh, though you can chop and do things to prepare ahead. Just make sure they're 100% crisp out of the oven. Once assembled, they stay pretty crispy for 30 minutes+ if made using artisan bread. Even after an hour they're still acceptably crispy!

Happy Holidays!

