

# Fresh from the Garden

DECEMBER 2015

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## Observations MERRY CHRISTMAS!

by John Darin, President



A "thank you for shopping with us" goes a long way toward creating a positive shopping experience with our customers. During the holiday season, I encourage everyone to also wish customers "Merry Christmas."

It's an especially nice greeting after you've helped them with products to decorate their homes for the holidays, or offered ideas to make their gift giving less stressful.

Remember, our customers are looking to us as the experts for everything they need for their projects. Recommend timers and extension cords when you're selling light sets. Offer a Christmas tree removal bag or Prolong when selling a fresh-cut tree. Show the benefits of a storage bag or Light Keeper when selling a life-like Christmas tree.

Our Sell for Success training cards are good resources for learning more about products and services. They're useful tools that will equip you to be an expert in your job, and helpful to customers.

As important as our customers are to our business, it's our associates who are THE most important part of our business. All of you make the difference for our customers.

Thank you all for your efforts throughout the year and during the holiday season!

I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

*John Darin*

## DECEMBER Events

**Make It & Take It Workshop:  
Candle Centerpiece**

Thursday, December 10  
at 7 p.m.

FEE: \$24.99, Value: \$39.99

**Make It & Take It Workshop:  
Terrarium Snow Scene**

Saturday, December 12  
at 1 p.m.

FEE: \$24.99, Value: \$54.99

**Open Enrollment Forms Due**  
Monday, December 14

**Employee Appreciation Days**

December 14 to 16, 2015

Employees are entitled  
to a discount of 30% OFF

**Stores & Offices Closed**

Christmas Day

Friday, December 25



# Landscape News

Professionals Doing Extraordinary Work

December is still a busy month for the Landscape Company, as we finish installing many holiday decorating projects. There are always those customers who wait until the last minute before Christmas, but we can still get their homes looking beautiful for the holidays.

Please continue to send us those leads, as we act very promptly to contact and service those customers.

December provides us the opportunity to reflect on 2015, which was a very successful year for the Landscape Company. We exceeded our sales targets and continued to design and install award-winning projects all over Metro Detroit.

In fact, we will be attending the Michigan Green Industry Association's banquet dinner on December 3 to accept nine awards from the past year! Here's a list of our awards:

**Stephanie VanHaverbeck & Tim Adams**  
*Gardner Residence- Gold Award*

**Stephanie VanHaverbeck**  
*Ensroth Residence- Gold Award*

**Valerie Tarquini**  
*Condino Residence- Gold Award*

**Sterling Weber**  
*Ferndale Residence- Gold Award*

**Jim Morris**  
*Zosel Residence- Gold Award*

**Tim Adams**  
*Perkoski Residence- Silver Award*

**Valerie Tarquini**  
*Kulczycki Residence- Silver Award*

**Sterling Weber**  
*Royal Oak Residence- Silver Award*

**Jamey Gutierrez**  
*Beverly Hills Residence- Silver Award*

We really do appreciate all the leads sent to us throughout the year. They are the fuel that feeds our success, and we thank every associate who has helped to promote the Landscape Company this year.

Have a wonderful holiday season!

## 2015 \$ELL FOR SUCCESS

### ENGAGE CUSTOMERS IN CONVERSATION

Our business is based on our relationships with our customers. People buy from people they like! Some customers want to chat and will tell you all about their project, their life story, etc. However, some customers want to get right down to business.

#### **When to Initiation Conversation**

After the customer is greeted, give them time to "get there" by looking around the store. If a customer approaches you, give them the information they request and learn about their project to see what you can suggest. Take them to the appropriate areas. If you can't take them, gesture in the direction with a flat palm.

#### **#1- The Project Conversation**

Our store is a destination for customers who are on a mission. If their cart or basket is full, know you can save them time and effort by learning about their project.

- "What kind of project are you working on? I'll see if I can make it easier for you."

Encourage them to describe it in detail. The more you learn, the more accurate your suggestions will be.

#### **#2- The Merchandise Conversation**

Talk about what is in their cart or what they are admiring. Communicate about weekly specials or offer product knowledge.

- "Those great ornaments just arrived so you'll get the first pick. How tall is your tree?"

#### **#3- The Friendly Conversation**

Browsing customers are typically in a good mood. Have fun with them by asking questions.

- "How is your holiday decorating coming along?"

Read their nonverbal signals. Give them only the attention they want. Keep conversation focused on their timing and interests.

## DECEMBER *Anniversaries* ASSOCIATES

- 4 Cynthia Luke-Kidd, WB
- 1 Danielle Roffe, CT
- 1 Ian Ackerman, CT
- 1 Ciera Smith, EP
- 1 Jessica Zonder, ACO
- 1 Steve Hartley, LC



## Give yourself the best gift ever

The season of giving is in full swing. This is a time of year when we look for ways to show the people we love and respect just what they mean to us. We shop for special gifts, volunteer our time and service, donate to various charities, and look for ways to spend quality time with friends and family. All of these things are important. But this year, wouldn't it be great if we could find at least one way to give something special to ourselves? If you had to pick one way to bring happiness, better health and more energy into your life, what would you do? For me, the answer is easy. One of the best gifts I've given myself is better health, happiness and self-respect.

## Safety

### Tips to Keep Your Pet Safe During the Hectic Holiday Season

1. Secure your Christmas tree by screwing a hook into the wall or ceiling and running string or fishing line around the tree trunk and fastened to the hook.  
This will anchor your tree and prevent it from being tipped or pulled over by a curious cat or a rambunctious dog.
2. Especially if you are owned by a cat, skip the tinsel. It's a real temptation for kitties because it's sparkly and fun to bat around. But ingestion of tinsel can obstruct your pet's GI tract; if the situation is dire, surgery could be required to remove the tangle of tinsel inside your pet and repair any damage.  
Also forego breakable tree ornaments. Glass shards can injure pet paws, mouths, and can be very dangerous if swallowed.
3. Candles are very popular holiday décor, but make sure to never leave lighted candles unattended. Use appropriate holders that prevent candles from being knocked over

All of that happened the day I joined Weight Watchers, which allowed me to lose 50 pounds and keep it off for over 40 years.

I always say what I really sell isn't a diet program, it's self-respect. When a person gains more self-respect, they feel like they can do anything! And it's true. You can do anything you want to do, IF you want to do it bad enough.

I believe the best gifts we can give ourselves include losing weight, maintaining a healthy weight, healthy eating and regular exercise. At Weight Watchers, we have some exciting, NEW things going on to help you become the person you want to be.

So, as you enjoy this wonderful holiday season be sure to keep 'YOU' in mind. Give yourself a gift that never stops giving—better health, more energy and increased self-esteem.

— By Florine Mark,  
President and CEO of  
The Weight Watchers Group, Inc.

by curious pets. Take care when using scented candles, especially the food-scented variety, that the smell doesn't encourage your dog or cat to sample the goods. Candle wax isn't species-appropriate nutrition for your pet!

4. Pets and sweets don't mix, so make sure your dog or cat has zero access to holiday goodies like candy, cookies, chocolate and other sugary foods, including any food that is artificially sweetened.
5. Did you know many holiday plants and flowers are highly toxic for dogs and cats? Holly is one. So are many varieties of the lily. Mistletoe is a no-no, as are poinsettias. Make sure to keep these plants out of your pet's reach, or forego them all together.

In addition to these tips, it's also very important for your pet's health and stress level to maintain her normal daily routine during the holidays.

Happy holidays to you and your pet!  
Source: [www.healthypets.mercola.com](http://www.healthypets.mercola.com)

# DECEMBER Recipe

## ROOT BEER FLOAT COOKIES

### Ingredients

- ¾ C. Butter, softened
- ¾ C. Light Brown Sugar
- ¼ C. Sugar
- 1 Box Dry Instant Vanilla Pudding Mix
- 2 Eggs
- 1 tsp. Root Beer Concentrate
- 2¼ C. Flour
- 1 tsp. Baking Soda
- 1 to 2 C. White Chocolate Chips

### Directions

1. Cream the butter and sugars together.
2. Add instant vanilla pudding to butter and sugar mixture and mix well.
3. Add eggs and the root beer concentrate and beat until well incorporated.
4. Add the flour and baking soda and mix thoroughly.
5. Add the white chocolate chips and mix well.
6. Roll cookie dough into 1 inch balls and place on greased cookie sheet.
7. Bake at 350°F for 8 to 10 minutes.





# Facts on the Affordable Care Act

An overview of what the new ACA information form means for you.

## What is the Affordable Care Act?

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) is a law designed, in part, to extend access to affordable health care coverage to more Americans. It enables consumers—you—to be more in charge of your health care options than ever before.

2016 Marks the first year for required employer annual health care reporting to the government.

Starting in 2016, employers with 50 or more full-time and full-time equivalent employees are required to report information to the IRS about whether or not they offered full-time employees affordable health care coverage and information about that coverage.

Beginning in 2016, large employers are required to submit Forms 1094-C and 1095-C to the IRS. Full-time employees may also receive a copy of the Form 1095-C. In some instances, you may also receive a Form 1095-B from your insurance carrier that will contain information similar to Form 1095-C.

What does this mean for you? Be on the lookout for your Form 1095-C.

The Form 1095-C, unlike a W-2, does not need to be filed with your taxes for 2015, however, you may need information from the Form 1095-C to complete your income tax return and it should be retained for your reference.

For more information about Form 1095-C, contact Nancy Cook, Human Resources Manager at (248) 703-9363 or [NCook@EnglishGardens.com](mailto:NCook@EnglishGardens.com).

# Benefits Corner

## 2016 Benefits Enrollment

GlidePath Access:  
December 2 to 14, 2015

For those of you who will be enrolling in Medical insurance through English Gardens, you will notice some very important changes from last year. First of all, we will no longer be offering Total Health Care; instead, we are offering a range of plans through Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. There are several HMO and PPO plans, as well as HSA plans, to choose from. Most importantly, you must go online or call to enroll in the plan you have chosen!

GlidePath is the online portal that you will need to visit in order to enroll in your plan. There are two simple ways to enroll:

1. Visit [bcbsm.com/glidepath](http://bcbsm.com/glidepath) and complete the 4 simple steps. Here you will be able to compare plans and choose the one that is right for you; you will then enroll right there on the website.
2. You can also call 1-800-675-7168 for one-on-one support from an enrollment professional at BCBS. They can answer all your questions and enroll you over the phone.

The GlidePath portal will be open to English Gardens Associates from December 2 to December 14, 2015. This is our open enrollment period, and you must complete your enrollment during this time frame. Paper enrollment forms must also be turned in to HR no later than December 14, 2015.

If you have any questions, please contact Nancy or Jessica in the HR Department.

# They Told Us!

Thanks to all our Associates for providing top-notch customer service!

## From West Bloomfield...

*Jodi G. is a jewel! Amazing help to us. If it were not for Jodi, we would never have found our palm. Thank you Jodi!*

## From Dearborn Heights...

*Delighted with your Dearborn store! I worked with Ron W. and he was able to answer all questions and gave me a quote for wedding flowers the same day. YAY FOR RON!*

## From Landscape...

*Compliments to Valerie T. for the great design, and to the crew that did all the work. Very hard workers; love the result!*

## From Eastpointe...

*Taryn B. was extremely helpful and had such a wonderful attitude! What a pleasure!*

## From Clinton Township...

*Sharon G. in Clinton Township was very helpful; really friendly and knowledgeable.*

## From Royal Oak...

*Wendy deserves a raise. She makes the Coolidge store turn magical during the holidays and prompts me to spend too much money. You'd better hold on to her!*



Designed by  
Lori Heiden, West Bloomfield

# Be on the look-out for the SECRET SHOPPER!

Keep up the good work, and continue looking for ways to improve!

Here are the results for October 2015:

Ann Arbor	94%	Royal Oak	97%
Clinton Township	97%	West Bloomfield	97%
Dearborn Heights	97%	Landscape	72%
Eastpointe	100%		