(c) 2010 Shobha Vanchiswar

In the garden with Shobha Vanchiswar

December 3, 2010

Our December To-Do List

Top of the list is: Go enjoy the holiday train exhibit at the New York Botanical Gardens.

I visited there the Friday before Thanksgiving. This year the plantings in the exhibit are particularly inspired. The various buildings constructed of only natural materials are always magnificent. They get my creative juices flowing, and every year this exhibit is my cue to get into the spirit of the season. What struck me even more this visit was the stunning, autumnal beauty of the perennial gardens that I like wandering through on my way to the conservatory. Enjoy the photos. Do note the complementing and contrasting colors, shapes and textures.

Back to the rest of the list:

1. Finish mulching all garden beds. Compost and/or wood nuggets are good choices.
2. Trim and secure climbing roses.
3. Complete tidying-up chores.
4. Protect roses, boxwoods and other vulnerable plants with burlap. The burlap acts as a fence or windbreak thus preventing the plants from succumbing to extreme cold and wind. I usually do this after it gets really cold and the ground has frozen.
5. Similarly, provide protection for plants that can be damaged by ice or snow falling from roof overhangs.
6. Get all the leaf raking done. Leaves left on lawns can suffocate the grass. Besides, cleaning up in spring is much harder when new growth is emerging. And there is already so much else to do at that time.
7. Don’t forget to stir the compost heap.
8. Make sure all frost-sensitive pots, furniture and statuary are covered properly. Bubble wrap works well. Conceal the plastic with a cover of burlap.
9. Take down all Thanksgiving decorations.
10. Set up the bird feeders. Keep them filled throughout the cold months.
11. Keep safe, natural de-icing materials like sand or grit at the ready. When required, spread it on walkways, steps and driveways. Don’t use any products with salts or chemicals that can harm plants or

(c) 2010 Shobha Vanchiswar

pets. Likewise, keep snow shovels handy.
12. Water indoor plants. Turn pots weekly so plants get light uniformly. Fertilize lightly every four weeks.
13. Start dreaming of next year's garden. Collect catalogs, cut out articles and pictures that you find appealing. Prepare yourself!

(c) 2010 Shobha Vanchiswar

(c) 2010 Shobha Vanchiswar

(c) 2010 Shobha Vanchiswar