

Tomorrow is January 1st, time for new beginnings. Not only is it the beginning of a New Year, it's also the beginning of a new gardening season. I love this time of year. Although I've always been passionate about working in my garden and landscape, I truly enjoy the break. Rather than physically toiling, I'm appreciative of the time to relax, dream and plan. Let's face it, on a cold winter's day there's not a gardener around who wouldn't relish the opportunity to sit next to a warm fireplace, sip on a hot beverage and leaf through all the latest seed catalogs and garden magazines, garnering ideas for the new gardening season.

If one has been gardening for any length of time, these types of publications seem to be arriving in the mail daily. However, for those who are considering gardening for the first time or even for those seasoned gardeners, one might be curious to know where else one can find great gardening ideas? I suggest going on line. Obviously, one could google gardening and come up with oodles of gardening websites. The problem with that approach is many sites offer false promises. There is one particular site, I know for certain, that provides only factual and research-based information. That site is The *Nebraska Statewide Arboretum (NSA)*. I've referenced this organization many times in my past columns. Why? It's all about their mission.

The NSA mission: *Our purpose is to operate exclusively for educational purposes to promote knowledge, appreciation and use of indigenous and introduced flora of Nebraska for the benefit of the citizens and governmental entities in Nebraska. We constantly strive to educate on the importance of sustainable landscapes throughout Nebraska, especially as they relate to native plants.*

One can easily reach this website by typing in the search task bar, arboretum.unl.edu. Once there, one can discover an array of plant events that will be happening throughout Nebraska in 2017 as well as assorted plants for sale and access to a plethora of valuable plant publications. In addition, one might be interested in becoming a member of this great organization.

One might recall, a few weeks ago in my column before Christmas, I suggested Christmas gifts that one could give to the gardener in his or her family. A membership to NSA is a gift that I asked from my wife Rita. She promised she

would enroll me as a new basic member of this awesome organization for 2017. I now look forward to the following member benefits.

New for 2017, NSA members will receive a FREE one-year subscription to either *Better Homes and Gardens* or the *Martha Stewart Living* magazine! Subscription is voluntary and sign-up information will be mailed with one's membership card.

In addition, membership will provide a free subscription to NSA's monthly e-newsletter. The e-newsletter includes NSA news and the most up-to-date information one will need to keep one's landscape healthy. Other benefits include the following:

- Opportunity to take part in Arboretum efforts and events.
- Invitations to member-only events.
- Important NSA initiatives are sustained by its members. One initiative will be joining a team of people impacting the health of Nebraska's landscapes.
- Free Admission to more than 200 botanical gardens and arboreta across North America.
- Free NSA horticultural publications, written by NSA experts solely for members.
- Opportunity to buy plants exclusively sold through NSA, at a discount.
- Discounts on NSA events, programs and workshops.

It's true; January is a time for new beginnings. Why not make NSA a new beginning for the gardener in your family? One can join online or give Tonya at NSA a call at 402-472-2971. I'm quite certain you will be glad you did.