

Seasons Greetings - By Stan Southwick



Once again, as we do this time each year, we are struggling to come up with the perfect Christmas Card. Ever since starting the business, we have sent home-made or office-made cards to everyone in our data base at Christmas. As time has passed, we have gone from using the USPS to delivering our cards to emailing our holiday wishes. This got me thinking about this Christmas tradition, so I went to the “source of all knowledge” ... the internet ... and found how sending cards at this time of year began. It appears that like most things Christmas, the custom of sending holiday wishes was quickly commercialized.

Christmas Cards (<https://www.infoplease.com/christmas-traditions>)

The custom of sending Christmas cards started in Victorian England. Earlier, some adults had written Christmas letters. But letters took time to write; and people wanting to share season's greetings with many others had a daunting task.

In 1843, British businessman Sir Henry Cole asked artist John Calcott Horsley to print some Christmas cards. One thousand cards were printed in black and white and then colored by hand. The cards, which depicted a happy family raising a toast to the recipient, were criticized for promoting drunkenness. In 1851 Richard Pease, a variety store owner, commissioned the first printed Christmas card in the U.S. London printers Charles Goodall & Sons became the first to mass-produce Christmas cards. In 1862 they created cards saying “A Merry Christmas.” Later, they designed cards with various designs, including robins, holly, mangers, snowmen, and even Little Red Riding Hood.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to one and all!

“To appreciate the beauty of a snowflake, it is necessary to stand out in the cold.”
— Aristotle

Favorite Flora: Guzmania lingulata- Vase Plant- By Jon Marenfeld



As the weather cools and you spend more time indoors it's a good time to consider houseplants. Houseplants have many proven benefits and are easy to care for. NASA revealed that certain houseplants can eliminate up to 87% of air toxins in 24 hours. They can also help regulate humidity in your home. In addition to cleaning the air they have also been proven to improve concentration and productivity up to 15%, reduce stress, and boost your mood. One good choice, that also adds a pop of color, is Guzmania lingulata. Commonly known as the Vase Plant or simply a bromeliad it produces a showy flower bract in a wide variety of colors.

Growing and caring for one is simple. Plant it in ordinary indoor potting mix, in a heavy pot (they can be top heavy until the roots take hold) and give the Vase Plant indirect sunlight or moderate shade but never direct sunlight. For best results keep water in the central cup but don't overdo it, use filtered water if you can, allow the soil to dry between waterings, and keep in a warm part of your home. Once the bract dies back cut it off below the cup. Eventually the old stalk will die back and new offspring will begin to emerge. While Guzmania lingulate is a great and showy choice for a houseplant, others you may want to consider are Aloe, Peace Lilies, Snake Plants, Philodendron, Red-Edged Dracaena, and Golden Pothos.

Photo of the Month



Santa Catalina Mountain Snow
Tucson, AZ
Jon Marenfeld