

In The Country Garden & Gifts



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Sleigh bells are ringing and ol' St. Nick is checking his list to see who's been naughty and nice. That can only mean one thing!

'Tis the season for a little...

Christmas in the Country

Saturday, November 12, 9 am - 4 pm

Sunday, November 13, 10 am - 4 pm

We want to make sure your Holiday Season is merry and bright, so this is your personal invitation to join us for our annual *Christmas in the Country Open House!* The festivities begin **Saturday, November 12th** and continue through **Sunday, November 13th**.

We've got snowmen by the bucket full, angels and stars to watch over you, and we can't forget the jolly old elf himself...Santa! You do believe, don't you??

JoAnn's quilted wall hangings will add a cozy touch to your holiday décor.

Rita's scented candles are always popular gifts and Deb will be here Saturday morning to personalize her hand painted glass Christmas ornaments.

Run out of ideas for that special someone who already has everything??

An In The Country Gift Certificate is just what you need!



What better way to start your holiday shopping than with the rustic, homespun touch you've come to expect at *In The Country*?

The more, the merrier...bring your friends and make a day of it!

Located between Quasqueton and Independence on W35 (Quasq. Diag. Blvd). Take W35 to Nelson, right on 240th ST.

GOODBYE 2005...

The morning air is crisp, the trees are littering the ground with leaves, and the garden is turning shades of brown and orange...as much as I hate to admit it, summer is over and fall is upon us once more.

As usual, Mother Nature threw us a few curve balls to keep things interesting this year. April started off more like May with two weeks of warm weather. As we all know, it is not unusual to still have snow in early April in Iowa! The warm spell woke many plants from their winter slumber and most froze when normal April weather returned. Mother Nature has it all figured out, though, and by late May the garden had recovered nicely.

We switched things up a little and moved our annual *Spring in the Country* Open House from late April to the middle of May...hoping for better weather than we've had in past years. I'm beginning to think we should have our spring open house in July! Needless to say, the day was cold and windy, yet we had a small group of dedicated gardeners stick out the crummy weather for our demonstrations and presentations. We'll try again next spring!

Other than a problem with some wildlife, which you can read about elsewhere in this newsletter, most of the summer was fairly uneventful... The weeds are always a constant nuisance and moving sprinklers and watering was a daily task during the hot, dry stretches in July and August.

If you stopped out this fall, you probably heard about (or actually saw) our latest expansion project. Pat Fencil is a well known Master Gardener and nursery owner in the Independence area. She retired after this past season and we purchased her business. Part of the purchase is a 28' x 44' double poly inflated hoop house. We spent many hours this fall dismantling and moving the hoop house. This will allow us to over winter and propagate from our remaining tropical water plants. This means we will be able to offer you larger water plants in the spring!

The increased greenhouse space also means we will be able to expand our selection. I've already got a whole raft of new hostas and perennials lined up for spring. Jim is planning to offer a great assortment of coleus and tomato varieties, and who knows what other fun things we will come up with! Always gotta keep life and the garden interesting!

As always, we can't thank you enough for your support. Our business hours often get interrupted by life and farm work and more often than not, we are further behind by the end of the day than when we woke up. We can't say enough how we appreciate your business!

See you in the spring!



ON THE NET

Don't forget you can visit us anytime you like on the World Wide Web by logging on to:

www.inthecountrygardenandgifts.com

We update the *Garden Journal* periodically with news and happenings going on at In The Country. Browse through the 2005 entries for lots of pictures. Those you see here are just a tiny sample!

Be sure to drop by the gardening forum for a little chat and sign up for our "E-News" to receive online updates.





WHAT A CATCH!

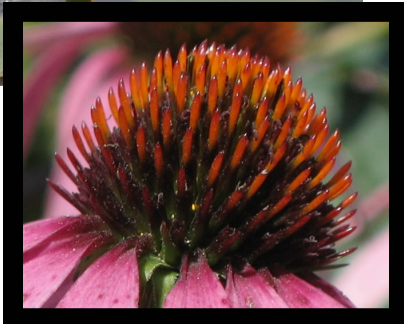
I've heard many horror stories from customers and online friends about how some critter had trashed their pond. Herons, raccoons, and even deer have been known to cause problems in water gardens. In all the years we've had ponds, we've been very lucky to have had almost no problems with any wildlife. Well...that is until last fall when our luck began to run short.

Last fall we began to wake up every morning to a few up turned water lilies in our growing tanks. We knew there were raccoons living down by the barn, so it didn't take long to realize they had finally discovered the "water park" in the garden. Among everything else that has to be done in the fall to prepare for winter, nothing was done about this problem. Maybe by spring they would forget about the ponds or better yet, move on to a new home. Wishful thinking, that was.

As spring arrived, we knew the raccoons were still around, but they appeared to be behaving themselves. Of course, that didn't last. At first, it was just one or two pots along the edge of the pond. Then they discovered how much fun it was to play in the marginals tank. When they found the tropical water lily tank and dumped most of the lilies in one night, that was the final straw!

That night we set the live trap behind the tropical lily tank and baited it with an egg. The next morning...nothing. The second night we moved the trap near the marginals tank and baited it with a raccoon's favorite midnight snack, marshmallows. The next morning...well, just see for yourself...

Hosta collectors, are you making a list...and checking it twice??
Coming to *In The Country* in 2006...
Beckoning ~ Lakeside Love Affair
Princess Anastacia ~ Cookie Crumbs
Holy Mole ~ Key Lime Pie ~ Snowy Lake
Fountain of Youth ~ Fire Opal ~ X-Rated
Queen of the Seas
...and that is just the beginning!!



Yes, there are three young coons in the trap!! We continued to bait the trap all summer, but never caught another raccoon. Mama and at least two other young ones are still around and began getting into mischief again this fall.

The war is not over...