



**2012 Lunar New Year**

**WILDLIFE BEFORE WINTER**

Click [here](#) to view how a bioswale garden can attract fleeting tourists. This underused outdoor low spot used to be a soggy and muddy eyesore in front of a residence. Seasonally, it hosts a colorful patch of song, movement and life. Partial plant list: *Echinacea, Eupatorium, Aster, Asclepias, Monarda, Baptisia, and Carex.*

**Principal's corner**

About half the globe's population embraces 2012 as the propitious *Year of the Water Dragon*: signifying prosperity, auspicious power, happiness, and promising transformation.



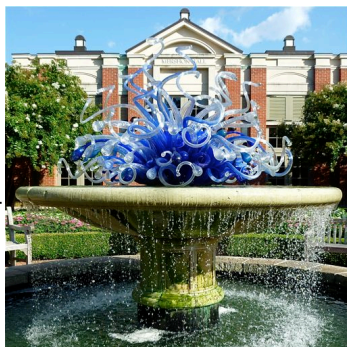
Customary massive festivities of this Chinese calendar holiday commemorate the charisma of this aquatic mystical dragon. Other traditional natural elements are perceived to be lucky: the sensible use of water and its associated environments, perennial blooming plants (most especially the sweet pea), the color black and adorning bold colors.

Thus, it would be fitting to dedicate the theme of this e-newsletter to natural aquatic-related topics and the associated wildlife that brazen it out during these cold months.

(Top photo) An American Robin silhouettes atop a fully iced glazed crabapple, Gate of Heaven Cemetery.



A recent pleasurable visit to the **Atlanta Botanical Garden** last fall ensued in a collection of memorable photographs. Every vivid outdoor venue was teeming with life. One can't ignore the enticing calls of the elusive American Bullfrogs at the Aquatic Plant Pond (top). Their loud low-pitched two-part bellows warrant close-up investigation. Dale Chihuly's striking contemporary sculpture tops the focal point of the Levy Parterre (right). A befitting environmental sculpture to link the colorful sky and falling water.



**Advantages of pre-Spring design and planning**

1. Consideration to screen off outdoor areas can be best evaluated through bare deciduous vegetation.
2. Existing swales, mounds, crevices and other natural ground-level features can be more accessible.
3. Got drainage problems? Plan now. Verify, resolve, and recheck conditions before and after spring.
4. Finding the quality contractors, most suited for the scope of your project, can take considerable time.
5. A completed master plan can help you visualize the "whole picture" while allowing you to track plants and materials in advance and secure them for each construction phase.



Bold is bewitching! The Lenten rose (*Helleborus Royal Heritage*), barely 12 inches tall in this photo, emerged with durable, closed petals since mid December! Watch out for *Helleborus niger* in our native woods, as they produce magnificent contrasting beauty against the natural woodland groundcover.

**Connect kids with Nature**

Support our children and take them outdoors! Encourage them to run, feel, touch, smell, and taste the freedom of nature's own

wonders. Click [here](#) and watch how a newly constructed waterscape stimulates kids as intrepid outdoor explorers. The video only represents a small exciting section of the 1.6 acre Marge and Charles Schott Nature PlayScape.

