



JEFF MINNICH GARDEN DESIGN, INC.

## HOLIDAY 2006

**D**ear Clients and Friends,  
The leaves are at peak color today in my garden as I write this letter to you. I can't remember a more beautiful leaf-peak...the correspondence of the peak leaf color and crisp, sunny, still days is stunning. What a treat.

As another successful year draws to a close, I'd like to thank you for your business and your loyalty to my company. Please note that I am now booking as far ahead as Spring 2008, so let me know if you are thinking of a future project that will involve some time, reflection and booking. The planning and bidding process is often the most time-consuming part of the project, so you must begin early. Check out my website, [www.minnichgardendesign.com](http://www.minnichgardendesign.com), for ideas and to refresh your memory on my process. E-mail is the best way to reach me these days: [jeff@minnichgardendesign.com](mailto:jeff@minnichgardendesign.com). I would be happy to assist you with any of your gardening needs in the coming years, including landscape design/installation/maintenance; patios/walks/walls; stone work; pots and container gardens; fencing; lighting; garden furniture and ornament; water features; irrigation. Most everything for the garden.

This year has been an exciting one for me professionally. The well-known garden photographer Roger Foley (see my website for his photos) and I have begun our book on Old Town Alexandria gardens. We are estimating this project will take a couple of years. Though we do not have a book contract yet, we have begun the process, both to secure a contract and work on the actual book itself.

I've also started, on a small scale,

to lead some local garden tours for a company called [Excitations.com](http://Excitations.com), co-owned by my client Nancy Lamberton. I led the first tour this fall at Hillwood in Washington, DC, and I will lead three tours in 2007. These are very personal and enjoyable tours for me, and they include a morning tour and lunch. I encourage you to check out the Excitations website—really some

interesting things going on there.



Fall at Woodland Cottage



A rainbow forms in the Val di Chiana near Cortona in Tuscany



Our villa in Tuscany

Another area I've always wanted to explore is interior design work, and I've worked with a couple of clients on their interiors this year, one a loft in Miami. It's been eye-opening and different, and not what I want to do full-time. But the experience has been fun and exciting for me, and the travel is nice.

Speaking of travel, it has been the year of Italy for me. I went twice—once in early May for a short visit to Florence, and then back again in July for a more extended visit. As a huge fan of Frances Mayes' *Under the Tuscan Sun* book series, I've long wanted to get over there and see what it's really like. I wasn't disappointed. Among the places I got to see are Florence, Venice and Rome. My family came over to be with me for a week at a villa in the Chianti region of Tuscany, near Greve in Chianti, and it was great to kick back, relax and reconnect. Though I have to say I have never been happier to feel air

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conditioning in my life when I got back to the U.S.! It was unbelievably hot... and this statement coming from someone who is used to being in the heat and prefers heat to cold. I think all of Europe was roasting while we were there, so at least we were not alone. Next year, I may venture into South America for the first time... I'll see.

I am getting ready to put an addition on the back of my house next year, and the architectural planning is expected to begin in February. So I'll need to be around. I'm already getting the garden ready... moving things, etc. When and if you visit my garden next year, you should find a bit of chaos, though the front and perimeter parts of the garden should still look okay (I'm sincerely hoping).

**Here are the usual reminders of winter chores to keep in mind:**

If we don't get an inch of rain a week, I turn on the water for a good, deep soak. This is important going into the winter because when the ground freezes hard, plants cannot absorb any water into their systems. As the winter winds blow, moisture is whipped out of the plants and there is no way for them to replace it. This is the cause for winter burn and consequently, death, if the freeze goes on long enough and the plants were already dry. Fall watering "plumps them up" and helps to protect them against winter burn. When the ground finally does freeze, though, don't forget to turn off your faucets from the inside and drain them so your pipes don't freeze! In addition, bring in your hoses. Ceramic pots can freeze, swell and crack, too—unless you have the frost-proof kinds—so don't forget to store or cover them.

Be sure to gently knock any snow off your flexible plants, such as boxwoods and waxmyrtles, to prevent breakage. Do not try to knock off ice (or pour hot water on your plants to melt it!). Let it melt naturally and fall on its own. The stems are extremely brittle when covered with ice. If we have heavy snow or ice, you may get

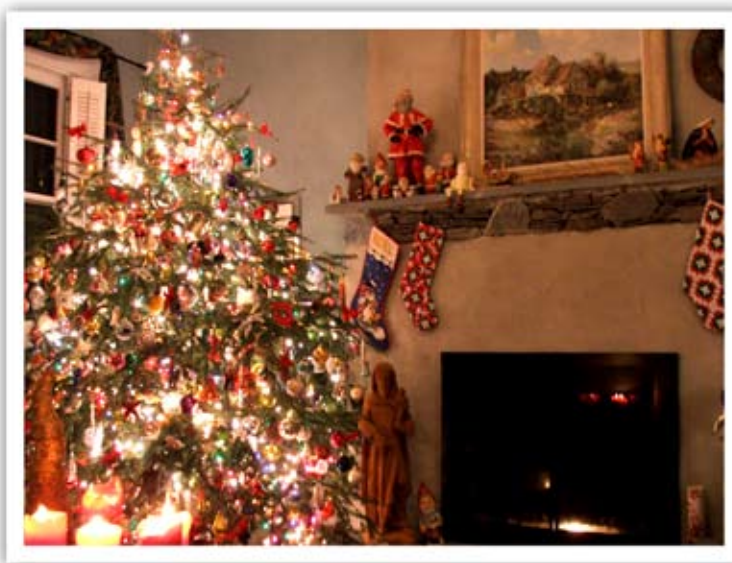
some breakage. There is nothing you can do about it. Hopefully, damaged plants can be pruned and salvaged.

You can also use an anti-desiccant (an anti-drying agent), such as Wilt-Pruf, on your tender broadleaf evergreens if you wish. I put it on my camellias and other plants in areas exposed to winter sun and wind. The sun can burn after a particularly cold night, too. Another way to protect your most tender plants is to wrap them in cotton burlap.

If you decorate the indoors of your home for the holidays, now is a good time to do some pruning on your evergreens. You can use the cuttings for your decorating. Just make sure to step back frequently to make sure your pruning is uniform!

You can add mulch now, too, if you like. Your mulch should measure no more than 2-3 inches deep—this includes the mulch you added earlier this year. Mulch that is too deep stifles plant growth, so go easy. No fertilizing on your shrubbery should take place until late winter-early spring.

Contrary to what you may have heard, planting can go on in your garden as long as you can get a shovel in the ground. It's true that there are exceptions to this statement, but generally, we can plant year 'round in our area if the soil is workable.



Christmas at Woodland Cottage

I appreciate the opportunity to go along with you on this journey of garden creation we take together. It is a privilege to work with each of you and get to know you on a personal level. This is the most fulfilling and pleasurable part of my work. I do passionately love plants, gardens and design, and I passionately love people, too.

Best wishes for a joyous holiday season and a healthy, prosperous New Year filled with many blessings. Have some fun, too.

Best regards,