Welcome 2016!

The year is off to a chilly start here with temps not above freezing for several weeks now and the snow keeps piling up. On the plus side, days are already noticeably longer and all those seed and plant catalogs are arriving, waiting for us to make our choices. Classes began for spring semester January 25 so plant propagation, look out! Fifteen are registered which is a perfect number; enough to make teaching it worthwhile but not so many that gathering up plant materials is problematic. We always seem to go through boatloads of seeds, cuttings, plants, petri dishes, grafting wax, plug trays, and on and on.

Plans are underway for the University of Wyoming’s 2016 All-America Display Garden. Started in 2012, we’ve gradually made changes, which this season will result in splitting the plant materials between two locations. We’ve historically used a bed near Old Main (which houses UW administration). This year we’ll use four raised beds near our greenhouse complex as well. The Old Main location gets far more traffic since it is near one of the entrances to campus. The greenhouse is the location each August for our Laramie R&E Center Field Day, so we will be able to discuss the plant material in detail during that event. This summer we’ll also be growing some high tunnel/low tunnel vegetables plus greenhouse and high tunnel fresh cut sunflowers. As always, students assist in the process all the way from seeding to weeding!

This spring we will initiate many new Pi Alpha Xi members across the country. My own chapter, Alpha Sigma, has tentatively set the date of April 6 for ours. I always look forward to reading all the names of new initiates in our newsletters. So many promising horticulturists out there!

In this edition of our Lotus Leaflet you will read about our 2016 Photography Contest as well as our fall 2015 initiates. There will be changes in the way photos are entered this year; we are hoping to increase the number of entries substantially. And don’t forget your 2016 Chapter dues.

Have a great spring!

Karen Panter

Pi Alpha Xi National President

Chi 66