



Gnome News

A Publication Of The International Gnome Club

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Greetings to all of my Gnome friends!

I am very thankful for all the help my Gnomes give me! They help me in the garden, they help me with my animals, they help me in the home and they help me in my life! They are always there for me! When you need that bit of advice on where to plant something, how to care for an animal, where to look for a lost item in the house, or help solve a personal problem, remember to call on them. They are here to assist us, show us the way and shed light where there is darkness. They help the earth, the creatures of the earth and guide us on the path of light. Gnomes, childlike with their size and happy faces, but as old and wise as the hills with their wrinkles and beards.

Thank you to our contributors this issue! I value the time and enthusiasm they put in to their articles, and enjoy the pictures, stories, and viewpoints they have to share. I invite all members to send in something that expresses their interest in Gnomes.

The Gift Chalet has ornaments and new mugs with Gnomes.

The Gift Chalet no longer has a shop -- strictly on-line or mail order call-in.

In Plano, TX, The Wooden Spoon has a large house/shop and also sells on line.

www.giftchaletauburn.com

www.woodenspoon.ws

The Chelsea Flower Show has lifted its ban on gnomes for the first time. To celebrate the occasion, TV gardener David Domoney is exhibiting gnome versions of the Duke and (very pregnant-looking) Duchess of Cambridge at the show. He said: "Gnomes are often associated with bringing good luck, I could not think of a more popular couple that the nation is wishing good luck to." Gardeners get into the spirit of things by dressing as gnomes during preparations for the show. The RHS has even invited celebrities to paint and decorate gnomes to feature at the show, before auctioning the gnomes online to raise funds for the RHS Campaign for School Gardening.

Check out this site for some good pictures of the event:

www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/chelseafloowershow

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Checks payable to: Liz Spera, 3901 Ayres Holmes Ln., Auburn, Ca. 95602 U.S.A.

E-mail: gnomegnet@aol.com Website: www.gnomereserve.co.uk/club

Please be sure to send your e-mail address!



Four Paul Kenenan Gnomes from The Gnome Reserve Museum of antique Gnomes. Photo by Joe Atkin.



The Courtier and Conductor. Photographed by Joe Atkin at The Gnome Reserve Museum of antique Gnomes.



Crawler looking at primroses, also housed at The Gnome Reserve Museum of antique Gnomes in North Devon, England.

A Visit to the World's Largest Concrete Gnome - Ames, Iowa

By Alyssa L. Ochs

His name was Elwood and he lived in Ames, Iowa. I had dreamed about the day that he and I would someday meet.

No, I'm not cheating on my boyfriend. Elwood is the world's largest concrete gnome, and I was obsessed with him. It took six hours to reach Ames, Iowa from our home base in Chicago. The minutes felt like hours and the hours like days. There was snow on the ground, but the sun was shining brightly.

Elwood lives in the Reiman Gardens on the campus of Iowa State University. He's fifteen feet tall and weighs a whopping 3,500 pounds of pure gnome awesomeness. We have Wausau, Wisconsin residents, Andy and Connie Kautza, to thank for this record-breaking gnome. Prior to their magnificent creation, a gnome named Chomsky (Gnome Chomsky, that



is) held the record. Chomsky, who resides in an upstate New York miniature golf course, measures thirteen feet and six inches tall.



I couldn't help but jump for pure joy in the presence of Elwood. Since it was winter, there were very few living plants in the garden and even fewer human species. I felt the immediate impulse to climb Elwood. Even as a moderately-experienced rock climber, I found Elwood very difficult to summit. It seems that even the largest of gnomes aren't built with intuitive hand holds and foot ledges.

Props to Reiman Gardens, which spent about \$8,000 of private-raised funds to have Elwood built at National Rock & Sculpture in Wausau and transported to his current location in 2010. Elwood is composed of two layers of concrete, which includes an iron-welded cage and metal lath. Underneath Elwood's nine colors of custom-mixed paint, he is painted black to add texture to the creases of the sculpture.

Once you spend a few hours with Elwood and stroll the outdoor trails around the gardens, check out the small botanical gardens near the entrance. You'll find a pleasant array of native plants and a 2,500-square-foot indoor butterfly habitat. It's warm inside and the friendly staff loves to tell you about the collection.

As you regretfully make your way back to the parking lot, take a quick peek into the gift shop to see if any smaller gnomes are available to accompany you back to your own garden. If you have a few hundred dollars to spare, pick up one of the university-themed concrete gnome replicas, which stand nearly three feet tall.



So if you find yourself anywhere in the near vicinity of the state of Iowa, make sure to pay Elwood a visit and tell him I say hello, and that I miss him. And even if you're nowhere near Iowa, Elwood is well worth the detour.

Alyssa is a gnome enthusiast, freelance writer, and outdoor adventurer based in Chicago. Keep up with her travels at www.alyssavnature.com and her gnomes' shenanigans at www.thedrunkgnome.com.

Best Places to Shop for Gnomes

By Alyssa L. Ochs

It's that time of year again! The sun is brighter, the temperature is warmer, and the gardens are flourishing. If you're lucky enough to have a garden of your own, I assume that you have a few gnome friends peeking out from behind the flora and fauna. And if you live in an apartment like I do, I hope you've managed to squeeze at least a few gnomes next to the plants on your windowsill.



Springtime brings out the gnome collector in all of us. Gnome aisles are popping up in stores, and collections are getting more unique than ever before. So if you're looking to boost your gnome collection this year, check the great places that I've recently found with gnome collections for sale.

- 1.) **Hobby Lobby** – I was completely overwhelmed by the selection in the Ames, Iowa store. My logical (and somehow understanding) boyfriend had to help me narrow down my favorites and only buy three.
- 2.) **Garden Ridge** – An old friend who lives in Plano, Texas tipped me off about this amazing store. Fortunately, it's a national chain! They have some of the most interesting gnomes I've ever seen, including a roller-skating diner waitress gnome and a policeman gnome.
- 3.) **Mail Catalogs** – Lots of paper print catalog companies sell unique gnomes at reasonable prices. One of my favorites is Terry's Village, which is a home décor catalog that my mom shared with me. Make sure to check out their gnome nativity set!
- 4.) **EBay** – Some of the best vintage and collector's edition gnomes can only be found on EBay. Although buying from strangers over the Internet can be nerve-racking, you can find rare, antique treasures if you do your research. My best EBay finds include a 1970 Goebel "Fips the Fisherman" gnome and a 1986 Tom Clark "Pumpkin" girl gnome.
- 5.) **Flea Markets** – If you're willing to peck through some garbage, you might be able to find some unique gnomes on the cheap at your local flea market. I recall picking up a cute gnome pushing a wheelbarrow at "The World's Most Awesome Flea Market" in Shepherdsville, Kentucky for \$2.
- 6.) **Wall Drug** – If you find yourself traveling through South Dakota, you'll inevitably see signs for this famous tourist attraction. As you browse through the inter-connected kitschy shops with your 5-cent coffee, you'll find a few gnome figurines and t-shirts.



While there are clearly some great places to shop for gnomes these days, a few stores have disappointed me. Wal-Mart usually has a small group of gnomes for sale, but their selection is tragically dwindling. Target only has a couple small solid-colored gnomes tucked away in the garden section. However, Walgreens Pharmacy started selling "gangster gnomes," which hold skateboards and wear gold chains. These little guys are really fun! I was also pleasantly surprised to see a couple solar garden gnomes for sale at discount grocery store, Aldi, recently as well.

So enough about my shopping... where's *your* favorite place to shop for gnomes this season? I'd love to hear what gnome gold mines you've been lucky enough to stumble upon, and I'm sure the rest of the club would be as well!

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CENTERING ... Gnome style

Gnomes tend to always be busy folk, but we humans urgently need to follow their lifestyle examples more often. Humans tend to be much too overly 'piped in' to radios, phones, TV, computer sites ('background' noise in general) to be able to hear any deep spiritual wisdom trying to get through to us with worthwhile insights to life.



When was the last time you sat to quietly eat a meal with no background entertainment? -- or fell asleep prayerfully in total quietness?

I have neighbors who walk dogs and talk on cell phones at the same time – or ride bicycles and golf carts the same way – never observing the pretty areas they pass – because, God forbid, they be reduced to only doing one thing at a time (maybe walking the dog and enjoying nature).



Long ago, I had a young house guest who I found sitting at my kitchen table very early in the morning with the TV on ...wearing a headset for hard rock music, reading a paperback novel, shaking her feet to the loud music, and snapping a big wad of gum with her mouth open. All at the same time!

We humans need to try being more peacefully centered like our Gnome friends. We could learn more and probably get a lot more done.

Gnome Devotee



Check out the Lotus Pose Gnome!
Perfect for a Zen Garden or any other place you would like to bring some peace to—inside or out. This Gnome is \$34.00 at:
www.simplefamilyliving.com

Has anyone visited Gnome Countryside in Southern Lancaster County, Pennsylvania? Check out the website! www.gnomecountryside.com

If anyone has visited there, please write an article to share with our club members. It sounds like a magical place to learn about nature and to help protect our environment!

BELIEVING IN GNOMES

I just enjoyed sorting through a closet and re-reading saved articles on Gnomes and Christmas. To us Gnome lovers, Gnomes are never, ever out of season -- especially the current one when stores may be selling some for spring.

I realized that so many aspects of our belief in Gnomes line up closely next to children's beliefs in Santa Claus!

We Gnomers are well aware of the fact that many non-believers think we're silly, wasteful, or just plain daft for collecting Gnomes (especially for actually believing in them).

The idea for this article popped into my head as I read an 1897 New York City newspaper publisher's letter responding to Virginia O'Hanlon. She was only 8 and had friends who said there was no Santa Claus. "The Sun" publisher's response started with "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus." So many of the points made to Virginia about Santa are the same as those that apply to our precious Gnomes!

For example, many of our acquaintances might also be rather negative because they've very likely been affected by skepticism and only believe in what they can see ... and they think nothing can exist that isn't comprehensible. Gnomes (and Santa) exist just as certainly as love, generosity and devotion. (If you can't believe in precious Gnomes, you might just as well not believe in Santa either.)

Gnomes can give our life such charm, beauty and intense joy. How dreary our world (my world!) would be without them! I'd miss out on lots of child-like joy and happy, almost eternal light.

The most real things in our world are too often those that the majority of humans never personally see or feel, yet those things are still part of our world. That's where Gnomes come in! Just because you've maybe never seen them working in your yard or sitting quietly in your home, that doesn't mean they don't exist!

No Gnomes? Bah humbug! Of course our precious little ones exist – as they have for hundreds and hundreds of years.

Don't let acquaintances negatively influence you in your search for Gnomes!

What a joyous ride I have coming home with a new Gnome, or having one arrive by mail. Those tender times make me feel like a little kid again. New Gnomes are placed on my kitchen counter, and I have a fresh cup of coffee as the Gnome and I bond. Then I settle on a particular spot for the Gnome and affix a name label somewhere out of sight. (I keep a list of names handy.) The new Gnome gets to spend a day or two in various rooms (which all have numerous Gnomes). They are then placed in what will be their rather permanent spot. Of

course, size has a lot to do with placement -- but I sometimes move several Gnomes around so they get a change of scene (at Christmas, etc.).

No matter what anyone says, hang onto the magic of Gnomes in your life and thoughts!

**** Gnome Devotee ****



HEART PLEASERS ...

... come in all different shapes and sizes – and this guy is an extra special one!

Funny thing about Gnomes and the unique relationship we Gnomers have with them. When your feelings about them are strong, they often kind of let you know where they are! (Have you noticed that, too?)

Those of us who love them and collect them usually have those feelings about true Gnomes. There are often times when they themselves convey hints of their whereabouts, just in case you want to add another to a growing collection.



It can be through an acquaintance or computer website, and Pow !! There you are: Face to face with a Gnome whom you instantly know needs to be part of your home!

Haven't decided on a name for this fellow yet, but I'll have it written on a little label ready to stick under a shoe as soon as I open the box he's going to arrive in.

Forgot to mention – This fellow is coming from Target! (Good for Target!)

Gnome Devotee

GARDENING WITH GNOMES
Part XXX
Gnomes are Very Playful

By Jean Fenstermaker



Playing Leapfrog with Frogs



Turtle Races work best having gnomes as jockeys.

Gnomes love to play games with each other as well as with other animal life. Every gnome garden should display a wide variety of these fun activities, as it truly depicts what a joyful bunch they are. They do not need a lot of expensive material objects to enjoy these carefree and relaxing pastimes.



Checkers with carrot tops & mushroom caps as game pieces

