

Birchwood Garden Club



Gazette

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April 2010

Arborist to Speak at April Meeting

The Birchwood Garden Club will hold its eighth meeting of the 2009-2010 season on Wednesday, April 7, at 7:00 PM in the Whatcom Museum of History & Art. The speaker will be William Sorgen from Tremendous Plantworks. William is a Certified Arborist and will talk about hazardous tree pruning and fruit tree pruning.

The first topic relates to the identification of hazardous trees. The beauty and familiarity of our favorite trees can blind us to potential risks. A compromised limb, split trunk or unstable tree base can convert a treasured tree into a potential accident. The tree weakness can be caused by wind induced damage, tree growth pattern, bad/disturbed soil, disease damage, or human related modifications. The result is the same—an unstable and hazardous tree in our own yards or adjacent properties.

It is our responsibility to ensure that hazardous tree risks are identified and if possible corrected prior to a compromise in our community's safety. The point of this discussion is to identify the potential dangers in tree structure. Corrective actions pose substantial risks and will only inimically be identified. A professional arborist should be considered for corrective activities involving high risk trees or elevated heights.

The second topic concerns fruit tree pruning. There are always tradeoffs between tree production, tree structure, and "regular" tree shape. One person's ideal of a perfectly shaped fruit tree may diverge from a "traditional" arboreal norm. This section of the discussion will address some of the tradeoffs in the fruit tree pruning techniques. Due to the early spring, many people have already performed their spring pruning activities. Fortunately, tree pruning is not completely limited to the dormant time.

Don't miss this informative presentation.



Get Ready for the BGC Plant Sale May 1

Mark it on your calendar. Put a note on your refrigerator door. Write it on your hand. Just don't forget that the BGC Plant Sale is Saturday, May 1!

Set-up is Friday, April 30 and volunteers are needed for both days. Equally important: PLANTS are needed!

Just because your *Crocosmia*, *Nacella tenuissima*, and *Tradescantia* have re-seeded themselves like crazy doesn't mean that everyone has the problem. Some folks don't have those plants at all and they're buying them at the nursery. Better to buy them from the BGC!

You've got a month to pot-up stuff and bring it to the sale. Anything—seedlings, divisions, even large plants!

Yes, large plants! You know that shrub you've been meaning to dig up for the last two years because it just "doesn't go." Now's the time. Don't destroy it. Dig it with a nice rootball, wrap it, and bring it in. Someone else has the perfect spot in their yard.

Except for dues (which barely pay for publishing the newsletter) the plant sale is practically the BGC's only source of revenue! It is critically important that each year's event be successful. It's up to you. Volunteer! Contribute! After all, it's your club!



Sprouting Off

Editorial Opinion/Observation

By Ira Penn



A while back the *Bellingham Herald* ran an article about making Arugula and Fennel Salad. (Hey, they have to print something to fill up those six pages, right?) I was puzzled because I wondered how putting two totally revolting vegetables together could possibly make them taste better. To me the only thing I can imagine that might be worse than Arugula and Fennel Salad would be Arugula and Fennel Salad with Cilantro dressing!

Just for the heck of it I looked up the nutrition factors for the above-mentioned vegetables. All three are rated excellent for weight loss. For weight loss! Of course they're great for weight loss. They're so awful you don't want to eat them. If chocolate cake tasted that terrible it would be good for weight loss too!

I actually grew some Bronze Fennel once. Not to eat, just as an ornamental. It's quite beautiful and butterflies and bees love it. Arugula and Cilantro, on the other hand just look like clumps of weeds.

It's not that I dislike all vegetables. In fact, I like some that other people hate. For example, I love Okra, Brussels Sprouts, Lima Beans, and Beets and I know folks who won't let any of those near their plates.

Oh well, different strokes—or something. The important question is not what vegetables you might eat, but rather what vegetables might eat you. After all, Tomatoes and Potatoes have been found to be carnivorous!

Nope, I'm not making it up. Last year researchers at the Royal Botanical Gardens in England de-

termined that several varieties of vegetables, including the ever-popular Tomato and Potato, have sticky hairs on their leaves which trap aphids and other small invertebrates. The dead bodies decay slowly and the nutrients fall to the ground where they are taken up by the plants' roots.

Admittedly, this is a far cry from Venus Fly Traps and Pitcher Plants that lure their prey and then devour them, but evolution is still with us and who knows... maybe they'll develop those skills.

I doubt that we really have to worry though. The chances of your backyard Tomato plant turning into Audrey II are somewhat remote. It would be a boon to homeowners everywhere if they did though. Next door neighbor's kid having a temper tantrum? Invite him to examine the Tomato. Dog barking constantly? Throw the tennis ball into the Potato patch. After all, what could they charge you with—feeding your plants?



Editor's Note: I want to thank the wonderful members of the Birchwood Garden Club and the Master Gardeners for supporting me and my wife, Dee Dee, during my recent near-death experience. Your cards, phone calls, visits, flowers, etc. brightened the seemingly interminable days in the hospital and rehab. They were all greatly appreciated.

And a special thank you to Robin Holbert for coming out of retirement after just six months and taking over the Gazette. She didn't lose her touch; the Feb and March issues were great!

Ask The Garden Guru



Dear Garden Guru:

I recently built a house on a semi wooded lot. Please recommend some plants that are hardy, evergreen, deer resistant, sun to part shade only, and require little care. I prefer the smaller varieties—not taller than 10-feet. I also have steep slopes to cover.

Sincerely,
Hope

**This month's Garden Guru is
Kathy Whitlock**

Dear Hope:

Here are some plants that meet your requirements. All of these plants did perfectly fine at 10 degrees last year. They are not rare specimens and should be fairly easy to find.

Japanese Holly: *Ilex crenata* 'Helleri' 2-3ft. high and 'Beehive' 3' high. Both are dwarf, slow growing and extremely hardy. 'Green Island' will grow to 5' with horizontal habit.

Boxwood: *Buxus* 'Green Mountain' to 5' has a pyramidal habit, 'Green Gem' slow growing to 2' and American Boxwood 'Variegata' light green, variegated foliage. All are hardy, take well to pruning and deer hate them.

Pine: *Pinus mugo* 'Pumillo' a very slow growing, dwarf, globe shaped evergreen. 'Gnom' a full grown dwarf mugo that has been pruned to a standard.. A small evergreen tree. *Pinus nigra* 'Hornibrookiana' a beautiful Austrian pine, and a real star in the garden.

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Meeting Minutes

Submitted by Kaye Dykas



President Loretta Hogg called the Wednesday, March 3, 2010, meeting to order and greeted new members. Thirty-nine persons were in attendance.

News and Newsletter: Vice President Gail Haines is in Hawaii. She arrived there just in time for the tsunami warnings. Ira Penn was able to leave rehab at the hospital earlier than expected. He is eager to resume editorship of the newsletter. Robin Holbert is eager, also. She is eager to retire once again from editorship of the newsletter. Thank you, Robin, for rescuing us these past two months.

Nominations: It is the time of year to call for nominations for next year's officers. We still need volunteer/nominees for the positions of vice president and club historian.

Sunshine Coordinator: Remember to notify Norine Morrison of any club member who might need some "sunshine" added to his/her life. Call her (714-0470) or Loretta (756-8449) if you know of someone who has been ill, injured, or hospitalized as well as anyone who may have lost a loved one.

Seed Exchange: Members were able to select seed packets from the many donated by Portal Way Farm and Garden owners, Marsha and Bill Horat, and by Chris Hurst.

Plant Sale: Labels for plants and posters for the plant sale were available. Members signed up for Friday and Saturday shifts. If you have yet to sign up, contact Loretta Hogg (Friday's coordina-

tor) or Valerie Davenport (Saturday's coordinator). Everyone's help is needed. Remember to divide, start cuttings, and dig up plants and pot them for the sale soon so they will be over the shock of being rehoused by Saturday, May 1, the date of our sale.

Speaker: Tamara Hall introduced Jerry Rock of Rock's Rhodies. Jerry shared an information sheet called "Planting Rhododendrons in the Northwest" emphasizing that how you plant a rhodie or azalea is crucial to its best health and growth. If you were unable to attend the meeting, you might want to ask a friend who attended for a copy of this very useful set of instructions.

Refreshments: Ann Holland and Kathy Hanson fed us a nearly complete meal. There were many delicious choices. Thank you Kathy for subbing for Tina Swanson at the last minute.

Old Business: The minutes of the last meeting were read and accepted unanimously.

Reports:

1. Treasurer's report: a) Treasurer Sandy Gurosko reported that our mid-February balance was-

Snacks



This month's meeting snacks will be provided by Jane Johnson and Kathleen Whitlock.

Thank you!

\$1,354.76. b) When changing our bank account from Washington Federal Savings to Whatcom Educational Credit Union, we learned that the club does not have a tax identification number nor is it listed as a nonprofit. For the latter we must also obtain the IRS 501(c) designation letter. Both are needed to set up a bank account as a nonprofit. To do so we will probably have to go through the process of incorporation. The IRS has become stricter about these requirements in recent years. We are looking into ways to do this as inexpensively as possible. The new account will list Loretta Hogg as president and Sandra Gurosko as treasurer. Name changes will take place in September when Gail Haines takes over as president and Lynn Marek is the new treasurer.

2. Garden Tours: Chairman, Sheri Lambert, will be asking for names of members who would be willing to share their gardens in July or August.

Library and Museum Gardens: We plan to clean up both gardens on Saturday, March 27. Loretta Hogg will contact volunteers with the time.

Auction: We learned that Jerry Rock is also an excellent auctioneer. He and his wife, Shirley Rock, not only donated two Rhododendrons, but they also donated the money (\$51) from the brief but competitive auction to Birchwood Garden Club. One of the two plants was hybridized by Jerry.



DEADLINE



...for all articles, announcements, reports, etc. to be published in the May issue of the BGC Gazette...

APRIL 20

IRA PENN, NEWSLETTER EDITOR
PO BOX 362
BELLINGHAM, WA 98227

Notice

The Birchwood Garden Club (BGC) is open to everyone in Whatcom and Skagit Counties who supports the objectives of the organization. BGC meets the first Wednesday of each month from September thru May. Annual membership is \$10 for an individual, \$15 for a family, due in September. Membership applications are available from the website: www.birchwoodgardenclub.org.

The Birchwood Garden Club Gazette is published monthly, September thru May, by the BGC. Articles, inquiries, letters to the editor, or other comments should be directed to the Editor, Ira Penn, at the above address or via e-mail to: rmqeditor@yahoo.com.

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Garden Guru

Continued from page 2, Column 3

Spruce: *Picea* 'Little Gem' a miniature that likes a cooler spot and good drainage. *Picea omorika* 'Nana' (Dwarf Serbian Spruce) very slow growing, with blue green foliage 7-9'. *Picea abies* 'Nidiformis' (Birdnest spruce) 1-2ft. high by 2-5ft. wide. Slow growth. *Picea glauca* 'Conica' (Dwarf Alberta spruce) has vertical habit.

Fir: *Abies balsamea* 'Nana' a dwarf, compact fir that needs good drainage and acid soil.

Cypress: *Chamaecyparis obtusa*. Hinoki Cypress. 'Nana' Very dwarf to 2' high. Bright green foliage. Prefers cool moist soil and tolerates some shade.

Juniper: *Juniperus horizontalis* 'Broadmoor' Low spreading, very dense, bright green foliage. 'Blue Pacific Shore' Bluish green foliage with irregular habit. Both are perfect for sunny slopes. Others varieties include: 'Blue Chip' and 'Wiltonii'.

Native Plants: *Gaultheria* (Salal) will tolerate poor soil but prefers a cooler spot. *Mahonia aquifolium* (Oregon Grape Holly) likes a little afternoon shade. *Arctostaphylos uva ursi* (Kinnikinnick) a great NW ground cover, full sun.



Thoughts to Ponder



Can vegetarians eat animal crackers?

2009-2010 OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

President—Loretta Hogg
Vice-President—Gail Haines
Treasurer—Sandy Gurosko
Secretary—Kaye Dykas

Circulation—Ira Penn
Garden Tours—Sheri Lambert
Historian—Dick Harris
Hospitality—Kathy Jacobson
Library Garden—Loretta Hogg
Membership—Judy Lewis
Museum Garden—Kathy Jacobson
Newsletter—Ira Penn
Plant Sale—Gail Haines
Programs—Tamara Hall
Publicity—Susan Metcalfe
Raffle—Laura Chandler
Sunshine—Norine Morrison
Webmaster—Tom Sparks