

Birchwood Garden Club



Gazette

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Richard Haard to Speak at Meeting

The Birchwood Garden Club will hold its ninth meeting of the 2009-2010 season on Wednesday, May 5th, at 7:00 PM in the Whatcom Museum of History & Art. The speaker will be Richard Haard, Propagation Manager at Fourth Corner Nursery, who will talk about Environmental Restoration with Native Plants. Richard has Ph.Ds in Agriculture, Botany, Ecology, Microbiology, and Plant Pathology. He is also the author of several books and is active in Biochar or Terra Preta.



Membership Survey Results Talled

By Ira Penn

In January we included a membership survey questionnaire with the Gazette. The results have finally been tallied. My apologies for the delay.

We received 30 questionnaires back which equates to 26% of the BGC membership. At first glance that might look like a somewhat pathetic response, but the fact is that the normal response to a survey is 10-20% so we didn't do badly at all.

First the good news—which is that there isn't any bad news. The responses were all upbeat. This, after asking for complete candor and assuring anonymity, is most encouraging.

We started off by asking why people belonged to a garden club. 56% said social, 56% said to obtain knowledge, and 10% liked the community service the Club provides. (The percentages often do not add up to 100 because many people provided several answers to a question or didn't answer a question at all.)

We asked people to categorize their gardening skill level. 23% considered themselves experienced, 56% said they were somewhat knowledgeable, and fewer than 1% considered themselves to be novices. Regardless of categorization, most people considered the monthly programs to be appropriate for their skill level.

37% of the respondents belong to more than one garden club. Of those, 54% thought BGC was better and 27% rated it the same. Nobody thought BGC was an inferior organization.

As to what our members like best about BGC, 40% liked the programs, 6% liked the tours, 10% chose the Gazette, and 50% thought the best thing about the Club is the people!

The things people liked least are: the commute downtown (less than 1%), the business meeting (6%), the raffle (6%), and the fact that the meeting takes place in the evening (fewer than 1%).

The vast majority of the respondents are “active” members. 80% routinely stay for the business portion of the meeting, and 70% have participated in Club events other than meetings.

We also asked about the medium for the newsletter. 56% want to continue receiving hard copy, 27% would favor e-mail (although some of those indicated that the choice was strictly for economic reasons), and 17% had no preference.

The Board will consider the responses and the program suggestions that were made. Thanks to all those who took part.





There are rocks in the soil in my front yard. There are rocks in the soil in my back yard. There are so many rocks in my yard that were I to undertake a project to remove them all I would be busy doing so 24 hours a day. That would be rock around the clock! (For those of you too young to even get that terrible joke see the footnote at the end of the column.*)

The thing is you don't have to remove all the rocks on a piece of property to have a successful garden; you just have to remove the rocks from the area where the plant needs to go. If a particular rock proves too big to move, you simply put the plant in a different spot. Problem solved!

Most garden problems are not crises. People might think they are, but they're not. For example, last summer an exasperated friend asked me, "Ira, what do you do to get rid of clover in your lawn?" And I replied, "Why would I want to get rid of it? It's green." Crisis averted.

I know, there are those of you throwing up your hands and saying, "This guy is simply nuts." Could be. On the other hand, it might just be that I'm practical.

One of the ways I'm most practical in the garden is that I grow what grows. Notice that I didn't say I plant what grows, I said I grow what grows. I plant lots of stuff. And sometimes something dies. And if it does I don't lose sleep over it, I simply plant something else that might do better. Occasionally, I might try to replace a specific variety I really wanted with the identical plant. But if the replacement doesn't grow... *pffff!* On to something else.

Of course I try to be knowledgeable about what I'm planting. I don't rely on the information printed on plant labels and I don't ask the kid watering the plants in the nursery for advice. I'm also not one to be dragging Zone 10 plants in and out of the garage so I can "overwinter" them in our Zone 8. In fact, I mostly try to plant things that will survive in Zone 7 (or even in Zone 6) to give myself an extra margin of security. And if they're to go in a pot I want them hardy down to Zone 4 or 5!

Overkill? I don't think so. Because our cool, paradisiacal summer temperatures can actually affect some plants negatively. The lack of heat inhibits the production of sugars that are needed for hardiness. A plant that might only be hardy to 20° F in Bellingham, might be hardy to 0° F in Nashville.

But occasionally even all my paranoia isn't sufficient, and if something doesn't work... well, then it doesn't work. One of the true joys of gardening is that we have so many choices. There's always something else to grow.

* "Rock Around The Clock"—a 1954 recording by Bill Haley and the Comets—is the song generally credited with putting rock and roll on the map!



Thoughts to Ponder



If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the precipitate.

Ask The Garden Guru



Dear Garden Guru:

I would like to stop and smell the roses but it seems the roses don't have much fragrance these days—at least many of the ones from the florist. Where is a great place to smell roses, and which ones have notable fragrance?

Sincerely, Rosie

This month's Garden Guru is Zapote Gregory

Dear Rosie:

One of the best places in Bellingham to get to know rose fragrance is at the Cornwall Rose Garden. At the end of June every year, you can indulge in the wonderful array of scents at the garden and take incredible photos too! Some of the loveliest for scent and beauty are:

- Memorial Day:** Hybrid Tea. Strong, damask scent, one bloom fills a room!
- Elle:** Hybrid Tea. Nice spicy and citrus scent.
- Honey Perfume:** Floribunda. Strong spicy scent.
- Julia Child:** Floribunda. Sweet licorice and spice scent.
- Fourth of July:** Climber. Clean apple scent.
- Heirloom:** Hybrid Tea. Strong sweet rose scent.
- Medallion:** Hybrid Tea. Nice anise scent.
- About Face:** Grandiflora. Fresh apple scent.

For a free brochure of the garden with a plant key and map, stop by the Bellingham Parks and Recreation Department at 3424 Meridian Street.

Meeting Minutes

Submitted by Kaye Dykas



President Loretta Hogg opened the April 7 meeting with a greeting to visitors and to new members and a reminder that copies of the club roster are available in hard copy or e-mail. Forty-four persons were in attendance.

Sign-up sheets were circulated:

(1) To receive the newsletter by e-mail. (Hard copies will still be mailed to those who would prefer.) Our long-term goal is to decrease the printing and postal expenses.

(2) To share your garden for our tours on Wednesday evening, July 7, or August 4.

We also need a home and garden for our June 2 potluck.

Our Plant Sale is Saturday, May 1 at the Bellingham Public Library. Gail Haines has reserved three unloading spots for us to use on Friday for the set up.

The Library Garden Cleanup was accomplished by a hard-working crew on a recent Saturday. We worked three hours and spread two yards of mulch to protect and feed the plants through the next gardening seasons.

The Museum Garden Cleanup will be Saturday, April 10, at 8:30AM.

SPEAKER—Tamara Hall, introduced William Sorgen of Tremendous Plantworks. William, an ISA Certified Arborist, used drawings and photographs to review the preferred ways of making cuts and shaping trees—especially fruit trees—over time.

SNACKS—Tasty treats were provided for us by Jane Johnson and Kathleen Whitlock.

OLD BUSINESS—The minutes of the last meeting were read and accepted.

TREASURER'S REPORT

—Treasurer Sandy Gurosko reported our Mid-March Balance was \$1,150.50. Thanks to Dick McClure, we now have a checking account for the next 6 to 12 months when our new treasurer, Lynn Marek, will go through the procedures to set up a business account for us at Whatcom Educational Credit Union.

PLANT SALE—Please continue potting up plants. Save boxes to bring so that customers have a way to carry home their treasures. We will use a “Stash the Plants” area again in order to encourage our customers to continue shopping once their hands are full. Laura Chandler has a wide cart that someone with a truck could pick up from her and return to her house after the sale. Bring plant books to help us to give customers advice about the planting and maintenance of plants we are less familiar with. Make notes about the positives and the negatives of our system this year so we can work to further perfect our system for the next year.



Whatcom Co. Master Gardeners' Plant Sale and Fair May 8

By Harriet Arkley

The Whatcom Co. Master Gardeners' Plant Sale and Fair is scheduled for Saturday, May 8, from 9 AM to 2 PM at Hovander Homestead Park, 5299 Neilsen Rd., Ferndale, WA. Carefully tended and well-identified annuals, perennials, herbs, and trees will be available for purchase along with a selection of tomato starts suitable for growing in the Pacific Northwest.

Master Gardeners will be on hand to offer cultivation tips and answer gardening questions, and attendees may bring diseased plants or a captured insect or pest for diagnosis and suggestions for help.

The Family Activity Table will invite children to decorate a pot, fill it with soil, and add a plant. In addition gardeners will enjoy food sales, vendors, and displays. *There will be no pot recycling this year.*

The event is sponsored by the WSU Whatcom Master Gardener Foundation and Whatcom Co. Parks and Recreation. For more information please contact 360-676-6736.

Thanks Go To...

Thanks to all the folks who Participated in the Library and Museum Garden Cleanups: Laura Chandler, Kaye Dykas, Lillian Nelson, Zapote Gregory, Jane Johnson, Susan Wright, Lynn Marek, Kathleen Whitlock, Sheri Lambert, Carol McBride, Dick McClure, Gail Haines, Loretta Hogg, and Jeanette Dunham.



Snacks



This month's meeting snacks will be provided by Magie Bell and, Dick McClure.

Thank you!

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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*Don't forget the BGC Plant Sale May 1
10:00 AM at the Bellingham Library!*

Try Something New

By Ira Penn

When is the last time you tried growing a newly-introduced plant? Sure it can be a risk because despite the glowing descriptions in the catalog, you really don't know what the thing is going to be like in your yard.

But heck... that's part of the fun of gardening, and when the new addition proves to be wonderful you can congratulate yourself for being so brave and daring.

I'm not going to recommend any new plants here. Rather I'm going to point you to some websites that feature new introductions for 2010. Have fun surfing.

http://www.heronswood.com/featured_whats-new/

<http://www.birdsandblooms.com/Gardening/Top-10/Garden-Favorites/New-Plants-for-2010>

<http://www.terranovanurseries.com/w/pages/plant-categories/new-plants.php>

<http://www.bhg.com/gardening/flowers/perennials/new-perennials>

<http://www.highcountrygardens.com/catalog/group/new-spring/>

<http://www2.tbo.com/content/2009/sep/03/041048/these-seeds-make-more-just-pretty-faces/life-home-gardening/>

<http://www.plantsnouveau.com>

<http://www.greatgardenplants.com/index.php?pageId=1021>



2009-2010 OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

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Secretary—Kaye Dykas

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