

the GAZETTE

BIRCHWOOD GARDEN CLUB www.birchwoodgardenclub.org CHARTERED 1931

Healing Herbs is Topic for September

The Birchwood Garden Club will hold its first meeting of the 2011-2012 season on Wednesday, September 7th, at 7:00 PM in the Whatcom Museum of History & Art. Suzanne Jordan, Director of the Cedar Mountain Herb School, will speak on "Healing Herbs."

Herbs are a cornerstone of our lives and a natural component to our health and gardens. They heal our troubles, enrich our culinary experiences, and bring an independent character to our gardens. The common herbs are known to most gardeners but few people have explored the vast array of herbal possibilities.

Suzanne Jordan is a naturalist, herbalist, and wildcrafter by training. She is uniquely qualified to guide us on an herbal exploration. Cultivated and wild harvested herbs are her speciality. Better health through medicinal plants is her mission.

Join us and take a walk on the wild side of herbal living.



New! Book Review Inside

Starting with this issue the BGC Gazette will feature a Book Review in each issue. The books will be reviewed by Club member Ann Holland and all will be available in the Bellingham Library.



Another Spectacular Summer!

By Carol McBride & Sheri Lambert

June 1 – Potluck: Good food, conversation, and a beautiful landscape made for a perfect evening at the home of Russ and Sheri Lambert. The mature Rhodies all in bloom intermixed with numerous varieties of perennials, native plants and veggies were all enjoyed by 30 or so Club members. Many thanks to the Lamberts for opening up their home to us.

July 6 – Garden Tour: Our tour began at the Kale House Bed and Breakfast in Everson. Owners Bonnie and Cori Litorja opened their B&B garden for us to enjoy. The mature trees and old fashioned perennials make up the various garden rooms in this one-acre property complete with brightly painted chairs and benches, and charming garden art. Beautiful were the showy Astilbes in full bloom flanking the side of the house. For more information on the B&B go to:

www.kalehouse.weby.net/

We next visited local artist Russell Hansen, an avid gardener and metal sculptor. His 6-year old garden, dotted with his works of art, was impressive. "Gigantic" perennials amid beautiful trees and specimen plants were a delight. Russ can be found most Saturdays at the Bellingham Farmers Market with his sculptures.

Next stop was the garden of Betsy and Darryl VanWeerdhuizen. WOW! The very spacious garden was divided into rooms each one different and complimentary to the others. Peonies, Roses, Clematis, and perennials all were in their prime. The darling garden shed, moved from an adjacent property sat prominently center stage adding to the cottage charm. This garden was truly lovely and inspiring.

We concluded our evening at the garden of Club members Tina and Harold Swanson. Tina, a self-proclaimed "thrifty gardener," did not disappoint. The enormous Geraniums that she winters over year after year were displayed beautifully. The veggie garden was in full swing and the David Austin Roses were absolutely magnificent. The tour was perfectly timed to enjoy the fragrance of the various Roses and marvel at their beauty. Also, thanks for the Leek starts, Tina.

August 3 – Garden Tour: The garden of Cheri and Ray Mead was the first of the night. Tucked into a small yard behind their house is this amazing little "taste of Eden." After removing all of the grass

Continued on page 4, column 1



Back again—and nobody is more surprised about it than I am. I thought that two years as Editor was long enough. Jane Johnson, our new President, thought otherwise. She's very persuasive!

It's not that I don't enjoy editing the Gazette, it's just that I believe positions in volunteer organizations ought to be passed around among the members. All positions, not just the elected Board!

But that's pretty much a pipe dream. People are not lining up to volunteer to do things. Of course I have a solution for that: Make active participation a condition of membership!

What? Was that a collective scream of hysteria I just heard? Probably. Required participation is not a popular concept. It smacks of forced labor. With one little difference of course: Nobody is forcing anyone to join a volunteer organization!

There's only one reason people are in volunteer organizations: They *want* to be there! They are (theoretically) interested in whatever the focus of the group is. Since it stands to reason that the more people you have helping out, the better the organization is going to be, my question is: If you're truly interested in what the group is doing, why wouldn't you want to help them do it?

Okay, you can relax now. Compulsory participation isn't about to become Club policy. In fact, in all my years of being involved with volunteer groups of various kinds, I've never heard the idea mentioned seriously in any of them. Well, except by me. And yes, I do know I'm talking to myself.

On a lighter note, spring, which was officially to begin on March 21st (according to both the calendar and the Groundhog), finally showed up here in the middle of May. At that point the plants in my yard looked up in the sky and said, "What the heck is that yellow thing?" To avoid their being totally disoriented, Mother Nature provided additional rain and gloom.

It would be easy to complain but erroneous as well. A knowledgeable gardener can often use inclement weather to his advantage. Although the Rhododendrons might have been much prettier and the Lilacs more fragrant if we'd had some dry, warm days, the fact is that cool, overcast days are perfect for digging and transplanting old plants and for getting new ones established.

Summer did show up of course and once again I was reminded why we live here. On July 22nd a friend in Syracuse, New York, sent me a photo of her garden thermometer reading 115. Mine read 70!

Yard art continues to reach new heights (or depths depending on your point of view). Disgusted by one of their neighbors leaving an old oven sitting in the driveway for months, a group of local gardeners decided to strike back. They placed a hideous looking, dwarfish creature on top of the stove, gathered around it at midnight, and sang "Gnome on the Range."

You don't have to put up with these awful jokes you know. You could volunteer to be newsletter editor!



Tried Echinaceas Yet?

By Ira Penn

Have you heard about Echinacea? Yes, it's the same plant that is completely useless for curing colds and it won't cure snakebite or anthrax either (despite what the snake-oil salesmen may tell you) but don't let that stop you from growing it.

Popularly called "Purple Coneflowers," that name is quickly on its way out—at least the purple part. In the last few years specialized hybridizing has produced a bonanza of garden colors—and new shapes and sizes as well.

You've probably seen the purple ones in various gardens over the years. The "coneflower" name comes from the prominent cone in the center of the flower. In fact, the cone is the flower! The things that look like petals surrounding the cone are really bracts, like you see on Daisies. Maybe that's because Echinaceas are a part of the Daisy family!

So what colors are available these days? Well, how about orange, or red

Continued on page 4, column 2

2011-2012 OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

President—Jane Johnson
Vice-President—Karen Teper
Treasurer—Dianne Gerhard
Secretary—Lillian Nelson

Garden Tours—Sheri Lambert
Historian—Robin Holbert
Hospitality—Tina Swanson
Library/Museum Gardens—
Loretta Hogg

Membership—Judy Lewis
Plant Sale—Kathy Sparks
Programs—Tamara Hall
Publicity—Susan Metcalfe
Sunshine—Norine Morrison
Website Content Mgr—Karen Teper
Webmaster—Tom Sparks

Meeting Minutes

Submitted by Lillian Nelson



MAY MEETING

A total of thirty-six people including four guests attended the May 4th meeting. Loretta Hogg chaired the meeting in the absence of President Gail Haines and Vice-President, Jane Johnson.

MINUTES: April's meeting minutes were approved without additions or corrections.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Lynn Marek reported that our budget year runs from September to August and that we have spent \$2,000 to date with \$2,583 in income. She detailed our various expenses and estimated that we will have a \$2,000 reserve by year's end.

OLD BUSINESS:

Plant Sale: Kathy Sparks thanked all the Sale volunteers and also thanked Susan Metcalfe for advertising the event. We took in \$1,200 and had \$100 in expenses. She said there were not as many customers as last year. Greeting customers at the door was important and for next year signs for holding area and tree sales will be needed. Another cash box would also be helpful.

Election: New Officers for the coming year were voted in. They are: President—Jane Johnson, Vice-President—Karen Teper, Secretary—Lillian Nelson, and Treasurer—Dianne Gerhard.

Library/Museum Gardens: Loretta Hogg mentioned ten volunteers worked a morning in the gardens. Thank you! She asked members to sign up for summer watering duty and told us that heather and lavender needs replacing at the museum because of winter cold weather death.

June Potluck: June's meeting will be a Potluck at the home of Sheri Lambert. We will have a speaker from Healing Gardens speaking on Herbs. Postcards with driving directions will be sent to members.

Summer Garden Tours: Sheri Lambert has been arranging Club garden tours for July and August. These will be announced when finalized.

Our club gavel dating from 1950, long lost, was found by museum staff and will now be used at our meetings.

NEW BUSINESS:

Lynn Marek told us that Whatcom in Bloom had requested a donation for publicity for their yearly garden competition. We voted to donate \$150 (the same amount as last year).

HOSPITALITY: Refreshments were provided by Carole Jacobson and Ann Katherine Walton, with Lone Jack coffee donated by Sheri and Russ Lambert.

SPEAKER: Mary Cragin, owner of the Gardens at Padden Creek, showed slides and spoke about Companion Planting.



Thoughts to Ponder



*No matter how much
you push the envelope
it will still be
stationery.*

Read and Plant

Book Reviews
by Ann Holland



Book: *Taylor's Guides – Perennials* by Barbara W. Ellis. Copyright 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company. This book can be found at our Bellingham Public Library: 635.932.

There are many different Taylor's Guides pertaining to various categories of plants. This book is an excellent perennial reference book suitable for beginning and intermediate gardeners.

The book has a "Gallery of Plants"; a section of excellent pictures alphabetized by plant family and also giving the well-known common names. Each plant family has brightly colored pictures of several cultivars. This section of pictures gives the page number reference to the "Encyclopedia of Plants".

The encyclopedic section of the book gives the Latin name for each family, how to pronounce the Latin name, and growing tips.

The Introduction Section of the book contains several paragraphs on how to get started when building a perennial garden: deciding what to grow, buying plants, preparing the soil, planting techniques, care throughout the seasons, foiling insects and other pests, and propagation. There is also an index in the back of the book that is quite comprehensive.

Overall, I would like to own this book because it is relatively small, easily carried, and could be used to identify many plants. It includes several wild flowers that would be suitable for our Pacific Northwest gardens. I plan to peruse the other Taylor's Guides as they will be a quick and easy way to gain much information.

Happy Reading!

Spectacular Summer

Continued from page 1, column 2

these two gardeners have managed to develop an oasis of berries, ornamentals, perennials, and trees. The white phlox filled the air with a sweet fragrance and plants of all kinds were tucked in here and there to add to its charm. Ray's crab cooking station was ready and waiting for their next party.

We then visited the garden of Elizabeth Jennings and Tim Schaebethal. This .15 acre farm, known as "Sunnyland Downs," has been transformed from a treeless sea of lawn into what is now filled with native plants, ornamentals and veggies. The spiral garden which by design increases the yield by providing more growing space in a smaller area was very clever. This design also makes accessing the plants much easier as well. After harvesting their "large" garlic crop from this space they planted more vegetables. Seeing hens living in luxury was just the best. Their well designed coop, the "Taj Mafoul," was built with all recycled materials. Several people asked about sources for recycled materials. Two of Liz and Tim's favorite recycle sites are: www.skagitbuildingsalvage.com/ and www.re-store.org/index.php.

Next stop was the garden of Club member Ken Eberhart. He has only lived in his home for 3 years yet has done some amazing things with it, completely renovating the cute house and transforming the yard with wonderful plantings. Included was a seasonal rain garden that has a bridge across it with yellow iris and Gunnera. The Evening Primrose was at its peak in the front yard providing the deer wandering through a little treat on their nightly forage. Sadly, Ken will be leaving the Club as he is being transferred. We were happy to have had the opportunity to enjoy his efforts. Good luck, Ken!

We ended our tour at the home of Karen and Bruce Teper, also Club

members. This is the second summer they have spent in their new home and the gardens are beginning to take shape. Perennial beds surround the house and a large island bed is beginning to fill out with trees, shrubs, and grasses. A large vegetable and cutting garden has reduced the pasture that was once there. Bruce has started to dig a new pond and install a flagstone patio. It was impressive to see the transformation of this property from the beginning as seen from a video they had made. With Karen and Bruce's extensive horticulture background, and as former owners of Wind Poppy Nursery, their influence in this garden is sure to be amazing.



Echinaceas

Continued from page 2, column 3
or white, or yellow, or pink, or green, or a combination of pink and green? Really! Look at this...



Echinacea 'Green Envy'

Echinacea's only requirements are to have lots of sun and well-drained soil. They start blooming in late June (weather permitting) and will bloom into autumn. Bees love the flowers and birds love the seeds.



Sign-up Now For Fall Workshops

Two Birchwood Garden Club members have agreed to conduct a total of three workshops this fall. Class size is limited, so register early if you would like to attend.

Karen Gilliam will teach two workshops at her home. The first is making a **Cast Cement Hosta Leaf** on Friday, September 9, at 10:00 AM. Plan on two hours.

This is a two day project, so you will need to return Monday, September 12th at 10:00 AM to finish or paint your creation to take home. Please make sure you have both days available.

Karen's second workshop will be Wednesday, September 21st at 10:00 AM to make a **Hypertufa Pot**.

The cost to cover all supplies for either of Karen's workshops is \$15. Make sure you bring your own rubber gloves and apron though as both cement and hypertufa can get very messy.

Each session is limited to ten participants on a first come, first served basis. Register for either of Karen's classes by calling Jane Johnson at 393-4709.

Sheri Lambert will conduct our third workshop, a **U-Dig-It Succulent Creation**, on Monday, October 3rd at 6:30 PM. Bring your own basket or container and plan on two hours. All other supplies are provided. The cost is \$30 and half of all the proceeds will be donated to Blue Skies for Children, a local organization that provides low income, foster and homeless school age children with enrichment programs and supplies. Register for this workshop by calling Sheri at 398-2064 or 393-9022 (cell).



IMPORTANT!

See page 6. If mailing label says 2011 your dues are due!

If your name, address, phone number, or e-mail address has changed, please supply the correct information below. Otherwise, simply return this form with your dues payment (\$10 single or \$15 family) to: Birchwood Garden Club, P.O. Box 362, Bellingham, WA 98227-0362 or bring the form and payment to the September meeting.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Please ensure that we have your "current" E-mail address!

..... Cut here, but don't run with scissors to accomplish the task.

Bylaw Revisions Discussed By Board

By Jane Johnson

BGC's officers and program chairpersons met on July 11th to review the past year and plan for the coming one. We reviewed the Club's bylaws in their entirety at this time and pooled our ideas for bringing them in line with current practices.

Several minor changes were proposed. One is the addition of a motto (or to delete the reference that we have one). At the September meeting members will be able to vote on a motto for the Club from the following choices that were submitted:

- "Life-long learning and community beautification"
- "Planting seeds of friendship throughout our community"

- "Where friendship grows as big as flowers"
- The Club does not need a motto.

Since we have offered programs on a range of current gardening practices, including raising chickens, we suggest broadening the educational program delivery wording to anything "related to gardening." In the description of honorary members, we clarify that annual dues are waived for the "first year." We need to correct the monthly meeting day from Tuesday to "Wednesday." And since we haven't had written ballots to elect new club officers for some time now, we suggest that "nominees shall be voted into office at the May meeting" according to Robert's Rules of Order. Looking to the future, we suggest not stating a dollar amount for member dues in the

bylaws, with the ability to review them in September for adequacy without needing another revision. We would insert under member reimbursement that "receipts shall be provided for expenditures."

The following recommendations refer to Standing Committees:

- To add Publicity Chairman and Web Content Coordinator descriptions
- Replace the term Refreshments with "Hospitality"
- Add Silent Auction to the Raffle function, allowing for future flexibility
- Delete "In the event of death of a member, the Chair shall facilitate the determination and acquisition of a memorial"

Finally, since each page states the date of adoption of the bylaws, we would replace the description of

Continued on Page 6, column 3

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. **Deadline is always the 12th of the month prior to publication.**

Author's statements, either of fact or opinion, are their own and do not necessarily express the official policy of the BGC. While the advice and information in this newsletter is believed to be true and accurate at the time of publication, neither the authors nor the editor can accept any legal responsibility for errors or omissions. The BGC makes no warranty expressed or implied with respect to the material contained herein.

Dues are due! Check the date on the label and see page 5.....



Time to Enter The Electronic Age

By Ira Penn

Last year we asked all members to try out the electronic version of the Gazette. The response was fairly decent and many of you opted to receive the newsletter via e-mail. But by the end of the season we were still printing and mailing over 60 hard copies. With at least 75% of our membership having e-mail addresses, it's probably time for most of those hard copies to end.

The fact is, BGC dues barely cover the cost of the newsletter. All other revenue comes from our Annual Plant Sale. Eliminating extraneous printing and mailing costs would be the equivalent of selling an additional 70-100 plants and the savings could be used for other things to benefit both the Club and the community.

The proposal for going totally electronic will be brought up for a vote at the September meeting. The final decision will be up to the membership of course. We understand that not everyone has a computer and there is certainly no thought of simply cutting off those members who are without

one. We will continue to print and mail hard copy newsletters for those persons as required.



Heirloom Gavel Returned to BGC

By Loretta Hogg

What does every president need to grab the attention of his/her audience? A gavel of course! It seems that BGC members must be very attentive as we have had a gavel for 61 years but few of us have heard it! The last person who remembers using the gavel is Barbara Svedin when she served as president from 2000-2003.

Well, our gavel is back! A Whatcom Museum of History & Art staff member found it recently and returned it to its home.

Our lovely gavel, made of apple wood, was carved and donated to the Club in 1950 by Martin Ehlers. During Barbara's presidency, Gene Montague had a brass plaque placed on the gavel, acknowledging Martin's gift.

Now our new President, Jane Johnson, can "officially" maintain order.



Bylaw Revisions

Continued from Page 5, column 3

implementation and adoption with "Revisions and Amendments." In recent practice, new members have not received a copy of this six-page document. Since it is posted on our website, as voted by members at the February 2011 meeting, all members can read the bylaws on line and save trees, or print a copy as preferred. A physical copy will be mailed to members upon request. We suggest changing the word "receive" to each member shall "have access to" a copy of these bylaws.

We will have a handout showing these suggested changes, in the bylaw paragraph in which they occur, at the September meeting.



Snacks



This month's meeting snacks will be provided by Lillian Nelson, Tina Swanson, and Dianne Gerhard.

Coffee will be generously donated by Russ & Sheri Lambert of Lone Jack Coffee.

www.lonejackcoffee.com

Thank you!