

THE PERENNIAL POST

NORTHWEST PERENNIAL ALLIANCE



SPRING 2015 | VOLUME 25 | ISSUE 2

NPA Spring Plant Sale Is April 19

Craig Wagner

*“Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And ‘tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.”*

Wordsworth, from “Lines Written in Early Spring”

MOST OF US HAVE OUR OWN sweet visions of spring and the nuanced gifts it unwraps for us in our gardens. The eager anticipation of these images should be all the motivation one needs to come join us at the NPA Spring Plant Sale on Sunday, April 19, at North Seattle College. This is our biggest plant sale of the year, which is sure to include unique, unmatched collections of perennials, evergreens,

shrubs, succulents and more. There will be plants for the beginning gardener as well as the connoisseur, offered by knowledgeable, friendly and helpful growers who do not typically open their businesses to the public. What’s more, at this sale you shop tax free, a way to stretch your gardening dollars by almost 10%! Please join us for this exciting, once a year event. Proceeds help fund our education programs, including the NPA Border at Bellevue Botanical Garden.

SPECIAL PLANTS FROM SOME OF OUR SPECIAL GROWERS

Lee Farm has several exciting plants to offer at this year’s sale. The *Cunninghamia*

lanceolata ‘China Fir’ is a hardy, slow growing, drought tolerant evergreen that works well in small gardens or containers, providing great texture and visual interest. Check out *Edgeworthia papyrifera* ‘Paper Bush’, a native to China. As its name suggests, the bark is used to make special papers in Japan. It loves full sun and produces enchanting, exotic looking pale yellow blossoms on bare wood. They will also be showing *Solanum crispum* ‘Glasnevin’, a Chilean potato vine with fragrant, lavender-blue blossoms. It will do well on a south facing wall or can be trained as a shrub.

Continued on page 3



Dysosma versipelle, Bouquet Banque

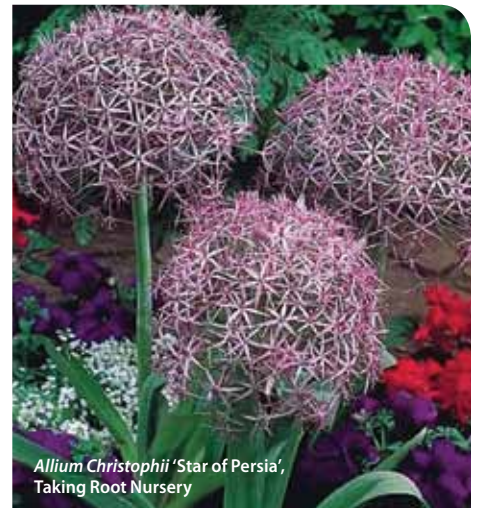


Dichroa febrifuga ‘UBC Clone’ fruit, Bouquet Banque

NPA SPRING PLANT SALE
SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 9 AM – 3 PM
North Seattle College
9600 College Way North, Seattle
Plenty of free parking



Saxifraga fortunei ‘Rubrifolia’, Growing Girls



Allium Christophii ‘Star of Persia’,
Taking Root Nursery



Solanum crispum ‘Glasnevin’, Lee Farm

- APRIL 19 | **NPA Spring Plant Sale**, Sunday, 9 am – 3 pm, North Seattle College, 9600 College Way North, Seattle.
(details, pages 1 & 3)
- APRIL 21 | **“Planting Decisions”** class with Walt Bubelis, Tuesday, 10 am – noon. (details, page 5)
- MAY 1 | **Open Gardens season begins**. Free! Tour private gardens almost every weekend. See your Open Gardens directory for details.
- JUNE 26-28 | **Hardy Plant Study Weekend**, Friday-Sunday, Portland State University, Portland, Oregon, with the Hardy Plant Society of Oregon. Register at www.hardyplantsociety.org/studyweekend.
- AUGUST 1 | **“Make A Concrete Garden Leaf”** class with Connie Reagan, Saturday, August 1, 10 am - noon. (details, page 5)
- AUGUST 15 | **“Making Memorable Plant Combinations”** class with Linda McDonald, Saturday, 10 am – noon. (details, page 5)

A warm welcome to our new members

Alice Dionne
Alinda Page
Alta Hofstetter
Angela & James Clarke
Arlene West
Barbara & Robert Conta
Barbara Bosse
Barbara Starr
Becky & John Lewis
Beth & Bruce Weir
Beverly & Andy Brown
Brian Jacob
Caleb Chaundy
Carol Barany
Carol Murray
Caroline R. Mass
Carolyn Burningham
Cathy Haynes
Cheryl Burner
Cheryl Durham
Christa & David VanderSluis
Colby Collier
Colette Swan
Connie Adams
Danielle de Clercq
Dannie & Craig McLaughlin
Daria Frank
David & Lori Gibson
David Husch
Debby Winskill
Dianne Riter
Dyann Provenzano
Eleanor Ferris
Elise Haavik
Ellen Cressey
Erica Knowles
Eve Dilores

Fran Mackert
Gayla Morrison
Gerry Sue Pallas
Gordon Hogenson
Ingrid Mager
Jan & Mike Fitzgerald
Jane Strom
Janice Tallman
Jean Pawluk
Jeanne & Robin Cronce
Jeannie & Warren Moskowitz
Jillian Glaser
Jo Sullivan
Joan Helbacka
Joan Wilder
Johnnie & Byron Ingalls
Jouce Butler
Joy Blake
Judith & Robert Scott
Julie Douglas
Justin Galicic
Karen Miller
Karin Youngberg
Kathleen Warren
Kathy Dart
Kathy Engell
Kathy Hawkins
Katie Keller
Kelly & Jeff Hall
Kim Desilet
Kristi Andersen
Kristie Fritz
Laura Emnolt
Lee Ann Roddy
Linda Lightfeldt
Liz Axford
Lorene Edwards Forkner

Lori Dougan
Louise Shultz
Lucie Hamner
Margaret Brooks
Marie Panesko
Marilyn & Lance Kilgove
Marilyn Sandau
Mary Craft
Mary Ruhmann
Matt Freed
Michael Preble
Michelle Wyles
Molly Malecki
Myrl Venter
Nancy Dawson
Nancy Fehrman
Pamela Meyer
Patty Hieb
Pauline O'Rourke
Penelope Douglas
Penny Beane
Rebecca L. Person
Rick & Judy Davis
Rick Main & Kim Brewer
Robin Thome
Roylynn Ware
Sally Kinsey
Sandie Jones
Sandy Arildson
Sandy Marcus
Satish Thatte
Shannon Thompson
Sherre Pruden
Sherri Woods
Stanley Giant
Susan Cook
Terry Rickey

Tinku Basu
Victoria Czaplewski
Willemijn de Clercq
Wolfgang Mueller

Business Members

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Bassetti Crooked Arbor Gardens
Bayernmoor Farms
Botanica by Heather McGilvray
Christianson's Nursery
City People's Garden Store
Garden Design Magazine
Lake Wilderness Arboretum Foundation
Lee Farm and Nursery
Magnolia Garden Center
Meerkerk Gardens
Molbak's garden + home
Northwest Landscape Supply
Seattle Container Gardens
Swansons Nursery
The Daily Plant-It
Valley Nursery, Inc.
Westport Winery
Wights Home & Garden
Woodbrook Native Plant Nursery
Zenith Holland Gardens

PLANT SALE *Continued*

A consistent favorite in the Growing Girls palette is the *Saxifraga fortunei* 'Rubrifolia', an easy shade lover with shiny bronzy leaves that reveal a bright rose red underside, and create a late summer eruption of clouds of white flowers. And look for a great garden mate to the *S. fortunei*, *Actaea pachypoda* 'Dolls Eyes', where the red and white of each plant seems to naturally compliment the other.

Among the perennials and shrubs Bloomquist Nursery will be bringing are two stars: East Coast mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*) and *Poncirus* 'Flying Dragon'. They'll also have *Trachystemon orientalis*, a great ground cover for dense shade, with striking blue flowers and large leaves.



Allium sphaerocephalum 'Drumsticks', Taking Root Nursery

The focus for Taking Root Nursery will be Alliums, which always provide incredible summer interest with their large showy flowers that catch the eye and attract butterflies to the garden. Fresh cut or dried, they make excellent indoor arrangements. Look for *Allium christophii* 'Star of Persia' which will produce enormous, 12-inch blooms with hundreds of metallic blue-purple star shaped florets. Or as a contrast you might like *Allium karataviense* 'Ivory Queen' with its three-inch globular pinkish-white to cream blooms. Also check out *Allium sphaerocephalum* 'Drumsticks', "team players" that happily bring a splash of rich wine and a graceful oval form that grows to 30-36 inches.

Bouquet Banque has some shade garden favorites ready for this year, including their wide variety of Chinese podophyllums like *Dysosma versipelle* with its enormous leaves and "secret" blooms

under its umbrella. The native *Iris tenax* is an absolute charmer for the garden edge, especially when naturalized into clumps. For an exotic yet hardy plant, look for *Lycoris radiata* with its spidery, coral-

red, late summer blooms. Finally, don't miss the *Dichroa febrifuga* 'UBC clone', a perfect introduction to the deep shade garden, with metallic blue berries.

NPA Spring Plant Sale Vendors

BLOOMQUIST NURSERY

Philip Bloomquist
Unusual perennials and shrubs
pbplantguy@gmail.com

BLUE FROG NURSERY

Russ & Miriam Smith
A tempting assortment of perennials,
ground covers, shrubs, trees and azaleas
www.bluefrognursery.net

BOUQUET BANQUE

Judy Zugish & Bill Roeder
Fat, juicy, healthy, 2-gallon perennials
www.twigtwisters.com/nursery.html

CELESTIAL DREAM GARDENS

Celeste Erickson
Healthy, well-grown plants, both tried and
true or rare and few
celestialdreamgardens@hotmail.com

EDMONDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE (HORTICULTURE PROGRAM)

Linda Toccoli
Perennials, shrubs, broadleaf evergreens
and cactus
Linda.toccoli@edcc.edu, 425-275-1763

ELEMENTAL PLANTS

Susan McDougall & David Biek
Wonderful PNW native plants, specializing
in shrubs and trees
http://treeslivehere.com/elemental-plants.
html

FANCY FRONDS

Judith Jones
Planted up miniature gardens, plus many
plants for miniature, trough or rock
gardens, unique *Abutilon* hybrids and a
choice variety of ferns
www.fancyfronds-nursery.com

GROWING GIRLS

Beth Burman
A North Bend nursery offering unusual
shade-loving perennials
425-888-0960

LEE FARM

Carrie & Dean Lee
Outstanding trees, shrubs, perennials,
grasses and hardy fuchsias
www.leefarmandnursery.com

NPA PLANTS

Wonderful plants from the NPA Border at
BBG and our members' gardens
www.n-p-a.org

QUEEN'S CUP NURSERY

Pat Parks
Puget Sound easy care native perennials,
including rare and hard to find plants
pat@queenscupnursery.com

RIZ REYES

A selection from Riz's former Landwave
Gardens, including rare woodland trea-
sures, perennials/bulbs, clumping bamboo
and the tried and true classics
riz@rhrhorticulture.com

TAKING ROOT

Kathy Norsworthy
Unusual perennials, hostas, ornamental
grasses and ferns
www.takingrootnursery.com

WHITE PICKET GARDENS

Kristi Fina
Unusual perennials, drought tolerant
plants, salvias and hebes
plant@snohomish.net

WIND POPPY FARM

Sara & John Burns
Grasses, sedges, rushes, water plants and
perennials
www.windpoppy.com

Thank you to our donors

Sincere thanks to our generous donors for supporting the many educational programs of NPA, including Open Gardens, the NPA Border, lectures, workshops and student scholarships. Membership dues alone do not cover the cost of providing these benefits; your gift supports our tradition of offering a broad range of activities that can be enjoyed by both new and seasoned gardeners alike.

\$500 AND UP

Gayle Richardson

\$250-\$499

Delia Zeutschel

\$100-\$249

Elizabeth Axford
Nancy Daar
Sylvia Duryee
Donna Johnson
Charles Price & Glenn Withey
Marcia Zech
Woodinville Garden Club

\$51-\$75

Michele & Paul Cournoyer
Michelle & Christopher Epping
Wendy Wells & Lisa Freed
Marjorie & Thurman Gillespy
Jan Goetz
Jeff Graham & John Longres
Carol Glass and Jeff Haley
Margaret Hayes-Thombre
Daniel & Darlene Huntington
Janet & Mel McIntyre
Katie & Gordon Padwick
Linda S. Park
Rod Parke & Dale Burke
Chitra & Zak Parpia
Gayle Peach
Judith & Kirk Prindle
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Nils Sundquist
Ellen Wanless
Joanne White
Betty Willis

\$26-\$50

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Suzanne Britsch
Brenda Bulen
Candy Charlwood
Cynthia Creasey
Kathryn Crosby
Luann Cunningham
Sandy Earnest
Dorothea Feek
Michael & Leslie Gillespie
Carol A. Hart
Denise Lane
Terri Lausten

Linda & Roger McDonald

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Ilse Heidi Nethercutt
Peggy Ostrander
Laurel Parshall
Stephanie Rodden
Marilou Rush
Millie Russell
Patricia Stensel
Amy Truex
Amanda Uhry
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\$5-\$25

Louise Abbott
Christine Anderson
Jo Anne Wyatt
Karen Baer
Sue Betts
Darla & David Bodily
Donna Bogumill
Jean Bowman
Heather Brandt
Rebecca Brennehan
Alice Brewer
Virginia Brewer
Robin Bruins
Walt & Dona Bubelis
Ellen Carnwath
Kayler Clarke-Willson
Kathleen Cook
Janis & Bob Cunningham
Gail Cunningham & Sara Wood
Meg Curnutt
Suzanne & Robert Davis
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Arlene Kazala
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Ann Aahl & Jim Kemmish
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Marilyn & Lance Kilgove
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Janet Lewinsohn
Linda Lightfeldt
Linda Hall & Mike Lubrecht
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Nancy & Matti Mero
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Peggy Milburn
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Virginia Olsen
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Elizabeth Post
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Linda & Thomas Reeder
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Elizabeth Ringwald
Barbara Saario
Jean Savory
Tia Scarce
Jeanne Schollmeyer
Gale & Marcel Schwarb
Elaine Sherbrooke
Sue Shilley
Laura Siebens
Judith Silk
Deborah & Robert Smith
Eric Smith
Steve & Pauline Smith
Sylvia Soholt
Frances D. Spicer
Nancy Stifel
Florence Stiles
Sarah Thomas
Catherine Thompson
Sharon Tighe
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Myrna Torrie
Mary LeClair Turcotte
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Ralene Walls
Mary Walsh
Jean Weaver
Marie D Webster
Linda Wells
Karen Wetmore
Cynthia Wheaton
MaryAnne & Bob Wilkie
Patricia & Bob Wilshusen
Michael VanHorn & Patty Wittmann
Jenny Wyatt
Polly Zehm
Jean Zook

NPA CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

Spring

TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 10 AM - NOON
PLANTING DECISIONS—WHAT GOES WHERE AND WHY IN A GARDEN?
with Walt Bubelis
Fee: Members \$25, nonmembers \$40
Class limit: 15



As gardeners, some of our toughest decisions are where to put plants to ensure we are happy and they are happy, but all too often plant placement is mere experimentation and the results leave us wanting. Let Walt take you on a tour of his own botanical treasure collector's garden in North Seattle, developed and grown over 40 years. Learn from his insights about the interplay of house, hardscape, environmental conditions and plants.

Walt Bubelis is the founder of Edmonds Community College's Horticulture program and taught classes on plant identification, soils, insects, diseases, pruning and propagation. He also had a landscape company for 26 years (mainly in the summer!). Currently, he is on the NPA Board of Directors, the Editorial Board of the Arboretum Bulletin, the

UW Botanic Garden Advisory Committee and the Garden Committee of the Kruckeberg Garden. He continues to teach short classes, write articles, travel and give garden walks for his grads.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 1, 10 AM - NOON
MAKE A CONCRETE GARDEN LEAF
with Connie Reagan
Fee: \$35, includes materials. Class limit: 8



Learn how to make a concrete rhubarb leaf. Connie will teach you her technique at her home in North Bend, using platter-sized rhubarb leaves from her plant. She will show you the different ways she adds color and character to her leaves. The concrete will have to set and cure, thus will be ready to take home about a week after class. You will also be able to tour Connie's dahlia collection of over 200 varieties.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15, 10 AM - NOON
MAKING MEMORABLE PLANT COMBINATIONS
with Linda McDonald
Fee: Members \$25, nonmembers \$40
Class limit: 8



You are invited to Linda McDonald's Valhalla Garden in Bothell for an on-site discussion on how she puts together her plant combinations. From the visual presentation you will see and hear an analysis of the uniting and stimulating elements involved. While Linda pays attention to plant color and form, she emphasizes texture. Layering, repetition, massing, the power of big leaf plants and verticality are considered in forming her groupings. Come and hear the thinking of a senior garden maker who was initiated into gardening in the early days of the NPA.

Valhalla Garden was recently pictured in the Garden Gate's special interest book "Great Gardens Made Easy" in an article titled "Wow with a stunning front yard!"

REGISTER FOR CLASSES NOW AT: www.n-p-a.org or email classes@northwestperennialalliance.org

NPA Booth Wins Award at Flower and Garden Show

NPA received the Outstanding Educational Display award at February's Northwest Flower and Garden Show. The display featured a three-dimensional panorama of the NPA Border, made with cutouts of beautiful plant and animal photos. Kudos to Linda Gray and Craig Wagner for the design and construction. And thanks to Diana Davidson, Gayle Richardson and George Lasch for carefully transporting the pieces and installing the display.

Many thanks also go to the 37 volunteers who worked three-hour shifts in the booth, netting 68 new members and renewals for NPA. It was a great team effort by all.



Gayle Richardson holds NPA's award with volunteer Carol Atkinson.

Volunteers: NPA's Lifeblood

Diana Davidson

FEATURED HERE are a few of the many volunteers who keep our organization vital. Some work behind the scenes, others are easy to recognize by their cheerful green aprons, working at plant sales or at the NPA booth at the Northwest Flower & Garden Show. Regardless of whether a member participates in just one plant sale a year, or seems to live NPA 24/7, every contribution is highly appreciated. This widespread involvement makes the NPA what it is today. If you're not already one of our esteemed volunteers, the next opportunity to help is the Spring Plant Sale on Sunday, April 19, at North Seattle College. Volunteer at volunteers@northwestperennialalliance.org.

Linda Gray



Our NPA plant stand at BBG, located just beyond the Trillium Gift Shop, reflects the hard work of Linda Gray, project chair for the stand and the on-site nursery that supports it. Behind the scenes, Linda, Carol Scheuffele, and other volunteers work with plant divisions from the NPA Border and plant donations from members' gardens. They nurture the plants' growth in the nursery, repotting, weeding, watering and fertilizing. Linda maintains a log of plants sold and endeavors to provide visitors with a variety of interesting choices.

We often find Linda in the NPA Border, installing labels near plants during their time of peak interest. She and her

husband, Jan, created a spreadsheet to track when to place and remove the labels. Armed with her camera, Linda also snaps stunning Border plant photos, many of which are on our NPA Facebook page.

Linda's interest in plants goes back to her childhood, when her family visited botanical gardens on holiday trips. While completing her Bachelor of Science with an emphasis on plant studies, she worked in an herbarium, mounting dried plant specimens on archival paper for research and preservation. Later, she worked with a botanist on foraging trips, seeking wild violets, and making scientific drawings of the plants.

Linda has also served on the NPA Board, helped with plant sales, and during the NPA Hardy Plant Study Weekend last June, was responsible for arranging the Phyto sanitary inspection, allowing Canadians to take plants north across the border.

Jeff Graham & John Longres



Many of us have visited Jeff and John's Green Lake area home garden and marveled at the magic it brings to their part of the city. Eight years ago, they moved into the "haunted house of the neighborhood," with its overgrown plantings, blackberries, and ivy. Everything was removed, including trees and shrubs, providing a blank

slate for them to work on. A landscape designer helped them with the hardscape and initial plant selection and planting. Since then, Jeff and John have enhanced the property with their own ideas, such as changing the front entrance and reworking the back porch and stairs. There is no lawn and even the 12 foot wide parking strips are planted. They are on a corner lot, so their handiwork can be enjoyed from multiple directions.

Jeff and John enjoy being part of our Open Gardens program, as it's an incentive to get the garden into shape, and add to or change some of it. They certainly appreciate the positive comments of the garden visitors and the help some provide with identifying plants whose tags have disappeared.

NPA events have been a great venue for meeting with their gardening friends. They have taken advantage of the plant sales, where they have also volunteered. Like many of us, they appreciate the excellent lectures, taking home ideas to try.

Sara Drogin



Sara is a relatively new gardener, with lots of questions, and she likes that she gets answers from fellow NPA members with different backgrounds and viewpoints. She enjoys the variety of classes and lectures, where she is constantly learning something new. She finds NPA members to be very approachable, so she never feels out

of place or alone at our events. It's been a great place to make new friends.

Sara's garden is "Well...a work in progress." She and her husband started from scratch in late 2010. It's been a big project, and they're doing all the work themselves. The front yard is full sun; their goal is to make it as low maintenance and low water as possible. With a three-year-old and a six-month-old, they certainly don't want to spend time fussing over marginally hardy or overly thirsty plants! The back yard has a mix of sun and shade. It's used for fruits and vegetables, flowers for pollinators, and a grass area for the children.

During Sara's nine years of membership, she has volunteered at plant sales, and is a member of the NPA Board. She has served as Publicity Chair since 2012. Sara has been able to do a lot of work from home, which she greatly appreciates as the mother of two little ones. When you open the NPA Facebook page, you're viewing the results of Sara's skills.

Lynda Raymond



When Lynda moved to Seattle's Maple Leaf neighborhood from Vancouver, BC in 2010, she visited our booth at the Northwest Flower & Garden Show, and joined NPA. Wasting no time, she jumped right in sharing her perennial smile at plant sales, posting street signage and helping in the "hold" area. NPA has helped Lynda increase her knowledge of plants and gardening through her neighborhood group, the NE Seattle Monday Nighters, open gardens, lectures, and the NPA Border. She thoroughly enjoys

meeting and interacting with other NPA members.

We're lucky Lynda finds time for us. Besides being active with NPA, she volunteers as an interpretive guide for the National Park Service Trails and Rails program on Amtrak's Coast Starlight between Seattle and Portland. She audits classes at the UW and takes advantage of other courses for retirees. Before traveling to Cuba last spring, she took Spanish classes for several months.

Joan and Jim Killingbeck



Those of us who have partaken of the delicious treats at our lectures or plant sales have benefitted from the dedication and talents of Joan Killingbeck and her son, Jim. Joan's mouth-watering cookies and Jim's Amish Friendship Bread are always big hits.

Upon joining NPA eight years ago, Joan regretted that she was unable to volunteer at the Border, but when volunteers were solicited to provide goodies for lectures, Joan knew she'd found her niche. She talked Jim into joining her; they make a great team! Joan has encouraged friends to join NPA, and some have contributed by bringing treats and helping set up. That's the spirit of NPA—many hands contributing for the benefit of all.

Both Joan and Jim thoroughly enjoy garden tours; Joan considers them to be part of her summer vacation. Jim, a physicist with the Washington State

Department of Health, is impressed that many of our lecturers are world-class. He was once watching a PBS documentary about the worldwide flower industry, involving flower trading warehouses in the Netherlands, and recognized one of the experts because she had recently spoken at an NPA lecture.

Pat Rytkonen



A member of the Mercerbelles neighborhood group, Pat has been their co-leader twice. She is also a regular at NPA plant sales, usually at the tally station. Being a part of NPA and the Mercerbelles has provided Pat with opportunities to work with great people and benefit from their knowledge of plants. During her more than ten years with us, she has enjoyed the lectures and visiting members' gardens.

Pat describes her personal garden as a 35-year work in progress. It reflects her changing interests as a plant collector—green flowers one year, hybrid Pacific Coast irises the next. This year, her challenge has been contending with deer; she never thought she would see a two-point buck nibbling hostas in her small, suburban Bellevue garden!

Pat is also a Bellevue Botanical Garden volunteer: she helps create Garden d'Lights displays and works as a greeter during its run. She also researches plant information for the BBG plant database.

Spring reading for those who enjoy 'fiddling around on the earth's crust'

Gayle Richardson

THE ROOTS OF MY OBSESSION: THIRTY GREAT GARDENERS REVEAL WHY THEY GARDEN

Edited by Thomas C. Cooper

Avent, Creasy, Dillon, Lancaster...from the famous to the lesser known, but also adept. You might think that these 30 gardeners would cough up about 15 different reasons and that would be that. Not so. I stopped counting at around 60+ without ever having felt there was repetition or lack of freshness. Each writer's approach and style are so varied and imaginative that these little three- or four-page essays go down as easily as Girl Scout Thin Mints. Odd facts pop up: who'd have guessed that Fergus Garrett grew up in Istanbul, or how fitting that the Latin for earth or ground (humus) has given us gardeners the word "humility." We Pacific Northwesterners can take special pride in Tom Hobbs' nabbing the prize for best title and first sentence, and Dan Hinkley's getting the nod for the most wildly imaginative and entertaining tale. Great for yourself and great as a gift for any of your friends who also enjoy "fiddling around on the earth's crust."

MY GARDEN, THE CITY AND ME: ROOFTOP ADVENTURES IN THE WILDS OF LONDON

By Helen Babbs

Here we make the acquaintance of an enthusiastic beginning gardener who is thoughtful, determined, curious, an avid joiner and in her 20s. The kind of person and demographic the NPA would be THRILLED to lure in. Too bad she lives 4800 miles away. Helen is determined to



Legendary librarian Gayle Richardson is past NPA Vice President and an avid NPA volunteer.

transform her 90 square feet of rooftop into an "idyll in chaos," and we cheer her along as she agonizes over just what she can cram into pots, planters, grow bags and a lone hanging basket. During the course of the year she discovers, in addition to a new "room" in her flat, that she's learned a great deal about gardening, wild London and, of course, herself as well. A charming memoir that any one of us could be proud to have produced. In addition to a list of further reading, she gives us lists of her "Most Beautiful Moments" and "A Few Things I Grew and How They Fared." A pleasing bonus is the great quantity of atmospheric black pen and wash illustrations by James Nunn.

SEEING FLOWERS: DISCOVER THE HIDDEN LIFE OF FLOWERS

Written by Teri Dunn Chace, photography by Robert Llewellyn

You could say about this book: a survey of 18 plant families, with two- or three-page descriptions of their characteristics, accompanied by photos of representatives of each family. What you actually do say about this book is WOW! The text is indeed informative and readable,

but oh, those photographs! Llewellyn uses a technique based on software developed for work with microscopes to produce spectacular, gorgeous, ethereal works of art, which despite their apparent simplicity, demand the attention and study one would give to portraits by Ingres or Sargent. You will never forget the blue morning glory or think of a grape hyacinth the same way again. A book to relish over many viewings, and the perfect introduction to the next title...

FAIRIE-ALITY: THE FASHION COLLECTION

From the House of Ellwand

Because I've been beggared for words for more than a dozen years in my feeble attempts to describe this astounding book, I can do no better than quote the blurb: "Enclosed within these covers is the latest collection from the top fairie couturier, the House of Ellwand. Whether you're heading to a cotillion or a picnic, a parade or a comet counting party, Ellwand is the look." The fashion "collection" then presented is a mindboggling combination of paper doll clothes, Project Runway and the flower photographs from the previous book--placed on steroids. The construction of the ensembles for fashionable fairies, out of parts of some 80 plants, is surely the single most imaginative work this reviewer has ever seen in her life. And just when you think there could be nothing more extraordinary than the garments, you come to the teeny tiny fairy SHOES! And your jaw drops even further. A must for every coffee table, with hours of enjoyment for every nature-loving family member aged three to 93.

FASCINATING FASCINATION

Wendy Lagozzino

SOME THINGS you just want flat. The road ahead of your bicycle. The TV in your small living room. The putting green for a possible eagle. Your stomach in that new bikini. Other things you don't want flat. Your feet, your tire, your soda and your plant stems! Or do you?

Some of the most popular new variations of recent plants are mutations that cause the stem and other plant parts to grow wide and flat. Also, shoots can appear to be composed of several fused parts, flattened, elongated or misshapen flower heads with numerous flowers. This is called fasciation.

Last summer I bought a *Celosia argentea* var. *crinata* (Cockscomb.) This *Celosia* had the most unique bridge of a bright magenta, furry flower. I put it in a pot and displayed it in a prominent location. The bloom was long-lasting and I'm sure visitors who saw it secretly thought "alien acquisition." This annual plant carries its fasciation via seed, being a genetically mutated tetraploid plant (having four sets of chromosomes instead of two.) The fasciated growth may be caused by a permanent change in the genome of the celosia, possibly triggered by a phytoplasma infection at some point in the distant past. If so, this is a case of natural genetic engineering. In some cases, seed-borne fasciation can be transmitted in the cell sap from the female parent to the offspring. You also see the fasciated willow *Salix udensis* 'Sekka' that is propagated from cuttings and used in exotic flower arrangements that give the

bouquet a dramatic look with its wide, flat, reddish stems.

Plants commonly affected with fasciation include delphiniums, euphorbias, forsythias, foxgloves, lilies, primulas and veronicastrums. Ferns with fasciated tips often have names such as 'monstrosa' and 'crinata' and always look cool in the garden.

But what causes this? Lots of things can cause the mutation to occur. It could be a random genetic mutation or, in other cases, induced by one or more environmental factors including bacteria, fungi, virus, insects, frost and physical damage to the growing point such as radiation or chemical mutagens. Even hoeing or forking around the plant has been implicated. But in nature it has been attributed to infection with various disease agents or insect infestation.

Of the disease-causing agents, the most commonly associated pathogen is a relatively new group of organisms known as phytoplasmas. It's likely that the association of insects with fasciation is due to their role as a vector for these or other pathogens.

Fasciation can occur in about any kind of plant. Everything from weeds to trees will produce this unusual growth given the right circumstances. Gardeners who love oddball plants have propagated some of these rarities. Grafting or cutting propagation is the usual means horticulturists use to propagate fasciated plants. Fasciation is especially common in cacti and succulents, but willows, cockscomb and foxgloves also frequently show this abnormality.



Fasciated *Veronicastrum virginatum*

I bought a new Stonecrop last spring at the Arboretum sale called *Sedum ochroleucum* 'Crested Centaurus'. It was a beautiful mound of green foliage rimmed in red that looked more like something you'd expect to see on a coral reef. However, the raccoons thoroughly destroyed it during the summer while determining if it was a new tasty meal I had left for them in the garden. That would be the day.

Fasciation itself is not usually contagious, spreading through a planting. And just because a particular plant exhibited fasciation one season does not necessarily mean it will again in the future. In most cases, it is just a random oddity. However, some plants, such as *Forsythia* and *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Fascination' do suffer repeat occurrences, perhaps indicating a genetic tendency to this problem. And you thought *Forsythia* was just a boring old shrub.

So next time you see a fasciation occur in your garden, just be glad it is a flat stem and not you, flat broke after buying another flat of plants.



Fasciated Cockscomb *Celosia* cultivars. Photos by Susan Mahr, University of Wisconsin, Madison

NPA Launches Plant Inventory at the Border

Kit Haesloop and Craig Wagner

EVER WONDER WHAT PLANTS are in the NPA Border at BBG? Well, so do we.

Though in existence since 1992, the current Border really had its new beginning in 2008. At that time almost all of the original plants were removed, hardscaping was added and the beds were redesigned to make the garden more accessible to visitors as well as gardeners. New plants were selected for desirable attributes such as health, low maintenance and year-round beauty. Thousands of perennials, bulbs, shrubs and trees were added to the reconfigured beds, and the newly renovated Border debuted in May 2010. Plants have continued to be added since.

Historically, the Plant Records department of the Bellevue Botanical Garden has striven valiantly to maintain a database of accurate plant names, locations, accession numbers and basic horticultural and botanical characteristics, along with photos of each plant in the Border. This

information, though incomplete, is currently available at www.bellevuebotanical.org under the Collections Search or, as you tour the Border, you can now use your phone to click on the QR codes mounted on small stanchions in the Border to access information about the plants in that particular bed. Unfortunately, time and incremental changes have left gaps in this database. Some plants actually in the garden do not show up in the Plant Records and others that no longer exist may appear on the list.

In 2015, the NPA and BBG decided it was time to conduct a completely new and thorough inventory of the plants in the Border. Starting in mid-February, teams of volunteers, armed with plant lists and maps for all twelve beds, began the long process of identifying, locating and evaluating the existence of every plant in the Border. The teams will also be evaluating bloom times and other noteworthy characteristics. George Lasch, Border Supervisor, will be on hand to provide the

horticultural expertise and knowledge of the Border plants.

This is a huge, detailed and important undertaking, but one that has proved to be fun and educational for our volunteers. Imagine seeing *Grevillea juniperina* 'Lava Cascade' blooming complete with a visiting Anna's hummingbird. This plant normally blooms in April and May, so our warm winter has coaxed it into flowering early. A few more volunteers are needed, so now is your chance to get involved in something worthwhile, enjoy meeting other gardeners and have a real "hands on" horticultural experience. Teams will meet weekly over the course of the year with the bulk of the workload in the spring and summer seasons, when plants are blooming and most recognizable. One team meets on Mondays and the other two teams meet on Wednesdays. If you would like to volunteer for this educational and interesting project, please contact NPA at 425-647-6004 or info@northwestperennialalliance.org.



Volunteers with maps and trowels in hand, working on the project.

Under Milk Wood

Lorree Go, Northern Exposure

I was recently asked to put together a list of our group's favorite activities of 2014, and the trip to Milkwood Art Studio and Garden, on beautiful Guemes Island, is at the top of that list. Milkwood is just a short ferry ride from Anacortes, across the Guemes Channel, and is the home of Leo Osborne, sculptor, painter, poet and gardener extraordinaire.

The name of the studio was inspired by a play written by Dylan Thomas titled "Under Milk Wood." Discovering and reading the play, Leo was inspired by the line "We are not wholly bad or good, who live our lives under Milk Wood." A strong spiritual connection defines his way of life, and this spiritual bond is evident in both his garden and his art.

When Leo first moved to Guemes Island in 2002, the old cottage on the property needed a lot of renovation, and the yard was "landscaped" with grass, weeds and a big, muddy hole in the front yard. After several months of hard work, the cottage transitioned into a warm, beautiful home, and then Leo began the painstaking process of turning the yard into a beautiful, spiritual oasis.

The tour begins by entering the garden under a twenty foot driftwood arch, wrapped with evergreen clematis, and guarded by sentinels of vibrant pink hollyhocks, the seeds a gift from a dear friend in Taos, New Mexico. Immediately

to the left is the transformed "hole in the ground," now a stunning pond framed by fragrant phlox, lavender, crocosmia, dahlias, hydrangeas, poppies, sunflowers and verbasum.

Warm breezes from the channel persuade the towering hollyhocks and verbasum to give us a welcoming wave, and butterflies dance over what Leo calls his "Monet" nasturtiums, the seeds a long ago gift from hanging pots in Ballard,



In the studio with Leo Osborne, artist, poet and gardener.

which fell from the trailing vines, into his eager outstretched hands. The faint hum of bees amidst the native Guemes roses and the soft splash of a bronze fountain compel you to bide awhile.

The tour continues further into the garden and we wander past weathered driftwood sculptures into a shady grove of bamboo, the shade most welcome in the rising heat of the late afternoon. At the end of the day we'll return to our own gardens inspired by all we see, but for now, Adirondack chairs beckon, and we choose to sit and rest awhile, under Milk Wood.

To learn more, visit the artist's website at www.leoosborne.com.



A driftwood arch forms the entrance to Milkwood Art Studio & Garden on Guemes Island.

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The Northwest Perennial Alliance is a community of friends, neighbors and experts who share a passion for gardening in the Pacific Northwest. Everyone is welcome.

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Your 2015 Open Gardens Directory arrives this month

Watch for it in your mailbox. Starting with the season opener on May 1, and going on through September 19, must-see private and public gardens and fabulous nurseries are vying for your attention. With 140 destinations, divided into 33 tours, there is something for everyone! You are invited to see and experience our beautiful state, garden by garden, from our popular tried-and-true destinations to many new or seldom seen areas. Travel from Mount Vernon to Rochester and Aberdeen, from Port Townsend to Yakima, around the Sound, and don't forget the islands. There are just too many fabulous places to choose from to mention them here. Open your Directory, and discover them for yourself!



Shown above: The gardens of Sundquist Nursery, Debbie Sokvitne, and Peggy and Bill Fox