

THE PERENNIAL POST

NORTHWEST PERENNIAL ALLIANCE



WINTER 2016 | VOLUME 26 | ISSUE 1



Cyclamen coum, select leaf
Bouquet Banque



Helleborus 'Sunshine Ruffles'
Taking Root Nursery

March Mania is coming Saturday, March 12!

See page 3 for details



Primula poissonii,
Taking Root Nursery



Uvularia grandiflora
Taking Root Nursery



Ipheion uniflorum 'Wisley Blue'
Lael's Moon Garden



Leucojum aestivum 'Gravetye Giant'
Lael's Moon Garden

JANUARY 24	"The Good, the Bad and Why Bother" lecture with George Lasch, Sunday, 1 pm, Bellevue Botanical Garden (details, page 3)
FEBRUARY 27 & JUNE 4	"Baffled About Pruning Clematis?" special two-class series with Laura Watson, Saturdays, 10 am – noon (details page 5)
MARCH 9	"Growing Gorgeous Hydrangeas" class with George Lasch (details, page 5)
MARCH 12	March Mania Plant Sale , Saturday, 9 am – 3 pm, Bellevue Botanical Garden (details, page 3)
MARCH 13	"John Bartram Lives" Nicolay Memorial Lecture with Kirk Brown, Sunday, 1 pm, CUH (details, page 4)
MARCH 23, MAY 25, JULY 2 & SEPTEMBER 28	"Open Your Eyes to Color in the Garden" special four-class series with Daniel Mount, 10 am – noon (details, page 5)

Time to renew your NPA membership

Karen Brighton

NOW'S THE TIME TO RENEW your NPA membership for another year of inspiring garden tours, classes & workshops, lectures and gardening fun with a neighborhood group. Memberships run from January through December. If you've joined or renewed after September 2015, your membership runs through 2016.

Please help us spend your membership dollars wisely by renewing now. Timely renewal helps us to plan the printing of the Open Gardens directory, which is a fantastic value for your membership buck, but it is expensive to produce. We use current membership numbers to estimate the optimum number of books to print for our renewing and new members. If we overestimate we have too many extra books; if we underestimate, costs jump more than 30 percent to print a second, smaller run. All the books are mailed together via bulk mail, which runs roughly 70 cents each. To mail books out individually to late renewing members costs more than \$4.50 each. Here's the bottom line: One book costs about \$10.50 to print and mail in a large run. Books from a small additional print run, mailed individually, cost close to \$18 each.

It's easy to renew online at www.n-p-a.org. Pay with your credit card, or download a membership form and mail it with a check.

NPA membership is one of the best deals in town at only \$35 for an individual, \$45 for a household, which includes two people living at the same address, and \$75 for a business. Student memberships are \$20 with proof of current student status.

The Business Membership is for garden-related businesses. It includes a free listing in NPA's Open Gardens directory in the Busi-

ness Spotlight section and on the NPA website. Nurseries and businesses that offer a discount to NPA members are also showcased for free in a section called Discount Offers in the directory and on the website. Both of these listings allow NPA members to easily identify and locate NPA-friendly nurseries and garden-related businesses.

We invite you to consider making a donation to NPA when you renew this year. Since NPA is a nonprofit, your gift is usually tax-deductible; please consult your tax advisor. Every year NPA organizes fundraisers to generate enough money to cover the gap between dues income and the cost of running NPA. Imagine the difference it could make if everyone gave just a little bit more at renewal. It would mean less fundraising and less wear and tear on our wonderful volunteers!



The Petal Pushers neighborhood group of Tacoma, Lakewood and Olympia.

March Mania is coming Saturday, March 12!

Michele Cournoyer

MARCH MANIA PLANT SALE
SATURDAY, MARCH 12, 9 AM – 3PM
Aaron Education Center, Bellevue
Botanical Garden
12001 Main Street, Bellevue, WA 98005

WAKEY, WAKEY, HORTHEADS. It's time for March Mania, one of the first big plant sales of the year. So snap out of hibernation mode and head over to the Aaron Education Center at Bellevue Botanical Garden on Saturday, March 12. There you'll find an amazing selection of choice garden plants and spring ephemerals not readily available at other times of the year.

March Mania is one of NPA's most important fundraising events. What a great opportunity to help support your favorite gardening organization and reward yourself at the same time by shopping for new plants to wake up your garden. For those who remember the days when this sale was held outdoors in the freezing rain, fear not: March Mania is now held mostly indoors and under cover at BBG's Aaron Education Center. And once again we'll have a kid's table with activities to keep



Volunteers Walt Bubelis and Tia Scarce at last year's sale.

your young gardeners entertained while you shop.

Special plants to look for will include Taking Root Nursery's cool selection of double hellebores: *Helleborus* 'Sunshine Ruffles', *H.* 'Peppermint Ruffles', *H.* 'Wedding Ruffles' and many others. And since one can never have enough hardy cyclamens, galanthus, winter aconite, corydalis and unusual winter blooming bulbs, they'll be bringing plenty.

Dan Hinkley groupies will naturally gravitate to the Windcliff tables to check out treasures like *Schefflera alpina*, *Clema-*

tis repens, *Litsea populifolia*, *Sanguisorba hakusanensis* and *Sarcococca wallichii*.

Bouquet Banque never disappoints, this year bringing a collection of stunning plants from China. Look for *Epimedium pubescens*, *E. pauciflorum* and *E. rhizomatousum*; the rare and wonderful *Disporopsis arisanensis* (evergreen Solomon's seal); and *Dysosma pleianthum*, an incredible Podophyllum relative for shade gardens.

For you conifer lovers, Lael's Moon Garden will feature their popular assortment of small conifers, plus *Tsuga heterophylla* 'Thorsen's Weeping', a Great Plant Picks hemlock that looks something like Cousin Itt from the Addams Family. They'll also have several different hellebores, *Ipheion uniflorum* 'Wisley Blue' (spring starflower), *Leucojum aestivum* 'Gravetye Giant' and a selection of ferns, Hostas and Oxalis.

There's more, much more, to discover at March Mania, which brings together a fabulous group of specialty nurseries and growers who are not generally open to the public. For longtime NPA members, it's the sale that has always marked the kickoff of another great year of gardening. Don't miss it.

"The Good, the Bad and Why Bother"

Lecture with George Lasch

EVER WONDER WHAT MAKES a plant "garden worthy"? Why it is that some plants really are superior while others fail?

Come take a critical and opinionated look at what we buy, plant and edit in our gardens. George Lasch will fearlessly lead us on a quest to decipher what attributes really matter when trying to choose the

SUNDAY, JANUARY 24, 2016

Doors open at noon for plant sales
Lecture begins at 1 pm

Aaron Education Center, Bellevue
Botanical Garden

NPA members free/Nonmembers \$15

best plants. His decades in public and private gardens have distilled a knack for seeing plants and gardens in a keen editorial light. George's pointed explanations will shed some light on how plants work with or against us in our gardens. Some popular ones may make the dreaded "Top Five Least Likely to Live" list or the ever-

expanding "Top Five Must Haves." Every level and skill of gardener will be pushed to rethink the plants they choose or lose from their gardens.



George Lasch, NPA Border Supervisor

“John Bartram Lives!” with Kirk Brown

Gayle Richardson

NICOLAY MEMORIAL LECTURE SUNDAY, MARCH 13

Doors open at noon for plant sales
Lecture begins at 1 pm

Center for Urban Horticulture
3501 NE 41st Street, Seattle

NPA members \$5/Nonmembers \$20

“Mesmerizing!”

“Enthralling!”

“Never to be forgotten!”

These—along with a standing ovation—were just a few of the reactions from the lucky attendees at the 2014 Nicolay Memorial Lecture where Kirk Brown presented “Olmsted Lives!”, his one-man show on the life and times of the great American landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted.

Now, for the 2016 Nicolay lecture, Kirk is returning to share the performance for which he is renowned all across the country: “John Bartram Lives!”

“John who?” you might be asking yourself. Not as well known a name today as that of the above co-creator of Central Park and other noteworthy gardens in the late 19th century, Bartram nonetheless is a truly towering figure in the history of American horticulture, and someone we should all know a lot better. Born in 1699 of Pennsylvania Quaker stock, America’s first botanist grew up on a farm three miles from the center of Philadelphia, then a bustling 57-year-old colonial outpost of some 4,500 residents. Interested in plants from an early age, he was soon keeping a small plot of specimens he found intriguing, and his intense study of and search for the riches of America’s forests and fields never waned until his death in 1777, when the Revolutionary War was being waged around him.



Lecturer Kirk Brown brings John Bartram to life.

It was a stroke of luck for Bartram to come to the attention of Peter Collinson, an English wool merchant. Bartram’s family was a large one and the struggle to support nine children, from two wives, was unending. Collinson engaged him to collect and ship to England seeds from American plants, and this first contact grew into a real business for Bartram--- that of sending off every fall what became known as “Bartram’s Boxes,” 3 foot x 2.5 foot wooden chests filled with hundreds of types of seeds and sometimes live plants as well. These were eagerly sought after by the great, the wealthy and the scientifically minded all across Europe. Many of England’s grand private gardens were largely populated with rhododendrons, magnolias, kalmias and other plants that Bartram supplied.

In fact, so respected did Bartram become that Linnaeus himself called him “the greatest natural botanist in the world.” Ironically, this European fame came in advance of America’s own appreciation of Bartram. But he did come to the attention

of a wider audience with, among other things, the publication of books describing each of his plant hunting expeditions in the eastern part of the continent. On various expeditions, he ranged from Ontario to Florida and west to the Ohio on trips that took up to 9 months. Along the way he managed to be named by George III as “King’s Botanist in North America” with a pension of 50 pounds sterling a year, which ensured that specimens he provided ended up in the royal collection at Kew. Ever a plain spoken man, he let it be known that he felt the position should have paid more. (Today’s value/purchasing power of the amount? Anywhere from \$10,000 to \$1,000,000!)

This is just a brief outline of the amazing life and accomplishments of an important American whose garden firsts are almost too numerous to mention. But what can we have of Bartram today?

Well, there’s the pleasure of touring his own property, America’s first botanical garden, now located in the center of Philadelphia. And you could plant your own specimen of a fabled tree that he himself discovered for science in 1765 and personally saved from extinction. And then there’s this opportunity to meet him “in real life” on offer by the NPA. Nowhere else will you ever get such a grand and entertaining opportunity as this when Kirk Brown comes to town to perform the introduction.

So mark your calendar today, cross that bridge, take that ferry. Do what you have to do, and you, too, will be mesmerized and enthralled by one of the most unforgettable pieces of theater you’ll ever experience.

NPA WORKSHOPS & *Classes*

Saturdays, Feb.27 & June 4, 10 am - noon

BAFFLED ABOUT PRUNING CLEMATIS?

*Special two-class series with Laura Watson
Seattle*

Fee: Members \$50/Nonmembers \$75
Class limit: 15



Does the idea of cutting back clematis instill fear in your heart? Has your clematis formed a nest? Then take this two-session class! Left unpruned, clematis vines are apt to have diminished blooming, often with new growth way out on the ends of the vines.

In the March class, clematis expert Laura Watson will demystify pruning through a short PowerPoint presentation in her home and outside pruning demonstrations on clematis in her garden. You will learn how easy clematis pruning can be, once a few facts are understood. Bring along your pruning questions. Go home with a clear understanding of clematis pruning, a detailed handout to help you remember, and no more fear about cutting that clematis back!

In the June class, gather again to enjoy the glorious blossoms that result from knowledgeable clematis pruning while enjoying coffee and treats. As Laura leads you on a tour through the garden, she will point out the blooming clematis that were pruned in the March class, which in June will primarily be the early, large-flowered clematis. Get more of your questions answered and take home another handout, this time with specific information about the clematis strutting their stuff in Laura's garden.

Wednesday, March 9, 10 am – noon

GROWING GORGEOUS HYDRANGEAS: TYPES, CARE AND PRUNING

with George Lasch

NPA Border at Bellevue Botanical Garden

Fee: \$25 Class limit: 15



Join horticulturist and hydrangea lover George Lasch for a tour of the many types of hydrangeas. He will explain the distinguishing traits between species, how best to care for the different types and how to keep your hydrangeas beautiful with the proper pruning techniques. George will demonstrate pruning on several species that grow in the NPA Border at Bellevue Botanical Garden. Bring your questions and be prepared to walk and talk.

March 23, May 25, July 2
& September 28, 10 am - noon

OPEN YOUR EYES TO COLOR IN THE GARDEN

*Special four-class series with
Daniel Mount*

NPA Border at Bellevue Botanical
Garden

Fee: Members \$100/Nonmembers \$125
Class limit: 20



Color is the first thing people notice in the garden, but the last thing you should think about when designing one. Through a series of exercises, lectures and directed garden observations learn about the challenges posed by color in the garden and how to approach them. You will go away with new eyes opened to what garden color is, in its myriad subtle and garish ways, and how to work with it.

REGISTER NOW FOR NPA CLASSES. It's easy to register online at www.n-p-a.org. Or contact the NPA Office at 425-647-6004. We'll be adding more classes throughout the spring and summer. Watch your emails and future editions of The Perennial Post for details. If you have an idea for a class or workshop, contact Classes & Workshops at: classes@northwestperennialalliance.org

Open Gardens 2015 and 2016

Ilse Nethercutt, Open Gardens Editor

HERE WE ARE, getting close to ringing out the old garden year. And what a fabulous year, what a memorable tour season it has been: All told, we ended up with 105 Open Gardens which were visited by (drumroll please) a total of 3,929 members and guests. The NPA at its best! My heartfelt thanks to garden hosts and visitors; you all share in the success of our 2015 Open Garden season. A few lucky ones among you even share in the kindness that our friends at Wells Medina spread around every year: At our November lecture we held the drawing for this year's Wells Medina Nursery gift certificates.

\$50 certificates go to these garden hosts:

Karen Guzak and Warner Blake, *Snohomish*

Fran and Jack Spicer, *Greenbank*

Sara and Emanuel Schroeter, *Fox Island*

Kent and Valerie Ferris, *Seattle*

\$25 certificates go to these members who visited Open Gardens:

Robin Thome, *Snohomish*

Dorota Rynkiewicz, *Everett*

Nancy Skullerud, *Coupeville*

Congratulations, lucky winners, and a big thank you to Wells Medina, for their generosity and continued support of the NPA and our Open Gardens program!

Well, so much for the old, time to start thinking about the coming season. Rainer Maria Rilke wrote "And now we welcome the New Year. Full of things that have never been." That certainly speaks to Open Gardens 2016.

The first thing that has never been is a Toolkit for Garden Hosts. The kit includes a current registration form and

information about how to register, as well as tips for your Open Garden event. Even seasoned garden hosts may find useful information here. You can access the toolkit on the NPA website.

Something else that's new: Open Gardens is getting more help. Julia Graham and Donna Bogumill have kindly volunteered to lend a helping hand. Julia is a garden designer as well as a seasoned garden host, and many of you have seen her stunning garden in Puyallup. Donna is a long-time



Donna Bogumill

NPA member who loves visiting gardens as well as tending her own garden in Olympia, which I have high hopes we will all get to see in 2016. I couldn't be more excited as their different perspectives on Open Gardens and the process of compiling the directory have already given me invaluable insights. Our plan is for them to take some of the communications with garden hosts off my plate. So, don't be surprised if you send an email to me and then get a reply from Julia or Donna.

But wait, there's more! I am asking NPA members in neighborhood groups to help: I am hoping that each group will name a coordinator for Open Gardens from their midst. We are calling them Open Garden Liaisons (OGLs), but really, they are cheerleaders, people who have a



Julia Graham and Sam

passion for Open Gardens and can motivate members in their group to participate and who help make their group's Open Garden event a team project. The liaison would help fellow group members with registration and coordinate the group's tour date, before registrations are sent in. While this will most certainly help us save time and effort in getting the material for the directory ready, it could have the added benefit of building or strengthening the team spirit within each neighborhood group. If you are interested in being your group's OGL and you want to know more, I would love to hear from you, or contact your group leader for information.

What else has "never been" and will be new in 2016? Who knows? Perhaps it is YOUR garden in the Open Gardens directory. One thing is for sure: the new garden season will bring us new plants, new garden projects, and new things to share with each other. Our 2015 season will be a tough act to follow, but I am crossing my fingers for a bumper crop of Open Gardens again. So, what do you say, won't you open your garden in 2016?

I would love to hear from you. Email me at: opengardens@northwestperennialalliance.org or contact your group leader for information.

“Designers for a Day” gives fresh perspective on the NPA Border

Kit Haesloop

WHEN WE LOOK at our gardens day after day, sometimes our eyes become accustomed to what we see in our gardens, and we overlook the areas that need editing or updating. Recently George Lasch and I invited a handful of gardeners to give us a fresh perspective on the NPA Border. Since this perennial border is in a botanical garden, NPA has the added challenge of gardening to make beautiful sweeping borders cohesive with a collection of botanically diverse plants that also provide visual interest throughout the seasons.

Jason Jorgensen of Third Spring Landscape Design, Susan Picquelle of Vivid Landscape Design, Linda McDonald and Mary Palmer, both extraordinary home gardeners, came and spent a couple of hours with us in the Border. George directed everyone through each of the 12 Border beds, focusing on areas that we knew needed some editing and ideas.

The Designers for a Day provided many wonderful ideas. In the red planting area: *Alstroemeria* ‘Bolero’, *Alstroemeria* ‘Red Elf’, *Andropogon gerardii*, *Lobelia cardinalis* ‘Marchant’s Best Red’, *Persicaria*

amplexicaulis ‘Fat Domino’ and *Hydrangea paniculata* ‘Quick Fire’ to name a few, all combining nicely with the existing *Lagerstroemia indica* ‘Pink Velour’ dark pink blooms in the background. In an area made difficult due to deer browsing, extreme dryness and tree shade, tough plants such as *Carex oshimensis* ‘Everillo’, *Podocarpus andinus* ‘Country Park Fire’ and *Pulmonaria* species were some of the designers’ choices. In some garden beds, the designers wanted to see more of a given plant, such as adding more *Canna* ‘Australia’ to create a ribbon, adding more of the striking color combination of *Yucca filamentosa* ‘Color Guard’ and *Ophiopogon planiscapus* ‘Nigrescens’ (Black Mondo Grass), and finally, adding more *Brunnera* ‘Silver Heart’ to brighten up a shady spot.

Designer for a Day was a fun, productive event with lively discussions chock full of creative ideas for the NPA Border. NPA thanks the designers for donating their time and energy, and we welcome everyone to come visit the Border to see its impressive beauty throughout the seasons.



Jason Jorgensen



Linda McDonald



Mary Palmer



Susan Picquelle

Get tagged by NPA!

NPA is moving its existing propagation yard and tool storage area at the Bellevue Botanical Garden to a visible location at the south end of the NPA Border. We will be turning it into a working exhibit to educate volunteers and visitors on growing and propagating hardy, herbaceous plants. NPA will also use the new facility to propagate plants for our various plant sales to support the Border and NPA.

As NPA embarks on the design and construction of the “Plant Propagation Working Exhibit”, we want to recognize our donors that contribute to make this project possible. For donations \$100 and above, NPA will give the donor a plant tag with up to three lines of free engraving. The plant tags will be hung at the completed Plant Propagation Working Exhibit.

At the Grand Opening, all donors will be invited to the party with part of the fun being finding your tag to take home as a keepsake.

To make a donation and receive your free, engraved plant tag, fill out the coupon below, donate over \$100 and mail your check and coupon to: NPA, 19105 36th Ave W, Suite 211, Lynnwood, WA 98036

Thank you in advance for your tax-deductible donation.



GET TAGGED BY NPA! - Plant Propagation Working Exhibit Donation

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Donation amount \$ _____

Each line is limited to 15 characters

Line 1 _____

Line 2 _____

Line 3 _____

Guerilla gardening and a hoe lot of trouble

Gayle Richardson

STREETCRAFT: GUERRILLA GARDENING, YARNBOMBING, LIGHT GRAFFITI, STREET SCULPTURE AND MORE

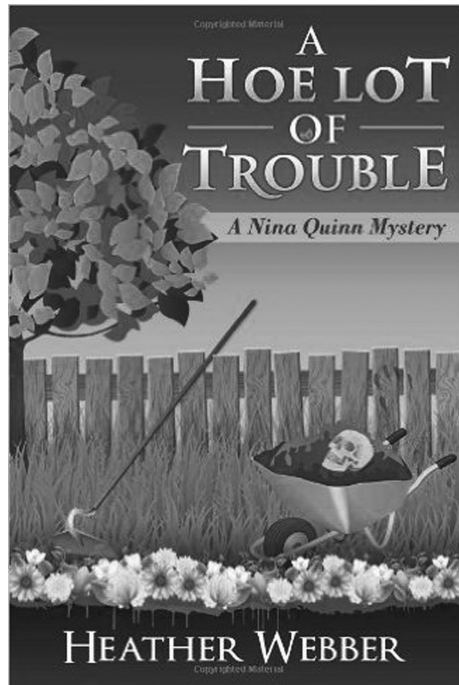
By Riikka Kuittinen

The arresting cover on this title pulled me right in, and that's where I learned about "The Pansy Project" and "The Pothole Gardener." The two are public installations created by people in the UK who felt compelled to do something when confronted by ills of society. Steve When doesn't walk by unfilled potholes—he takes the opportunity to create and install minuscule garden vignettes to intrigue passersby and make them smile, and perhaps catch the attention of the Public Works Department as well. Paul Harfleet's project began when a string of homophobic abuses in London made him realize that he had to take a public stand. Possessing an interest in cities and the ways people use them, he decided no plastic-wrapped flowers for him. He would place a small living plant at locations where such attacks occurred. Pansies seemed the perfect choice, as beyond the more familiar connotation, their very name comes from the French for thought, "pensee," and his aim was to make passersby think about what had happened. Both men have been gratified to receive photos from people around the world who have taken up their causes and created their own installations, some of which can be seen at www.thepotholegardener.com and www.thepansyproject.com

ON GUERRILLA GARDENING: A HANDBOOK FOR GARDENING WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

By Richard Reynolds

If the well-illustrated book above can be considered the coffee table book on guerrilla gardening and other such civic projects,



this one is definitely its manifesto. The author got his GG start when he took over the abandoned planter boxes in front of his public housing high-rise in a bleak area of London, so knows whereof he speaks. The first half of the book tells the history of and rationale for the movement and the second half is an incredibly wide ranging and detailed set of instructions for carrying out GG projects including the inevitable run-ins with bureaucratic government departments. Some gardens will be successful, some will be destroyed, but the good fight must be fought.

A HOE LOT OF TROUBLE

By Heather Webber

Twenty-nine year-old Nina Quinn runs Taken By Surprise, a successful landscape design business specializing in one-day makeovers, and has a hectic private life made even more so when, out of the blue, a friend asks her to investigate the so-called "natural" death of her father-in-law. Joe

Sandowski was not only Nina's gardening mentor, but a farmer holding tenaciously onto a valuable parcel of land. Work goes onto the back burner when Nina takes up the challenge, though she has lost her best source of inside information—her cheating, and now thrown out of the house, police detective husband Kevin. The plot uncoils according to the best "cozy" traditions, though there's not as much gardening emphasis as one could wish (or savvy—at one point fresh sweet corn is shucked in early-May Ohio), but it's a fair exchange for several hours spent in the company of a likable and funny heroine. You can follow events in her life in the subsequent six titles in the series.

BACKYARD

By Norman Draper

Set in a thinly disguised suburb of St. Paul, this comic novel relates the hell unleashed when a local nursery offers a \$5,000 prize for the "best yard in town." Several wannabe winners are profiled along with the high- and low-jinks that ensue when certain people decide to eliminate the competition and events spiral into near insanity. At times you think this is just too much, or too hokey or too whatever, but then the writer comes up with a line or insight that is just so darned funny that you press on—as you should. Perfect for the dark drear of winter, before all the seed catalogs start pouring in.

(And oh, those poor Minnesotans with their limited plant palette, compared to all the glories we can grow and flaunt!) Great cover, loads of fun, and the sequel "Front Yard" has just been published.

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

MUD PIES AND RAINY SKIES

Wendy Lagozzino

USED TO MAKE THE BEST MUD pies. Just the right amount of ditch soil and gutter water made your tastiest dark chocolate pie. Unfortunately, I have been able to make a pretty decent mud pie in my very own side yard for many years now.

Winter maintenance was a slippery slog through died-out grass that was lush and green in summer, the time of year I might have considered correcting the problem. Each end of the 50-foot path was so mucky I had created mosaics for a solid surface. Now, I needed to consider a fix for the rest.

I considered all options. I had placed a French drain a few years ago that didn't seem to be solving the problem. I was looking for something that would spark my creativity and wow my friends. I decided to sample a cement Turfstone paver from a local landscape supply. I would buy one, put it in place and see how I liked it. It was loaded in my trunk for me and away I went. The fact that it was 3 ½" thick was weighing on my mind as I knew that would require lots of soil excavation. Once home, I leaned over to lift it out of my trunk and holy cow, it weighed as much as a Mac truck. How was I ever going to haul 50 of them up into the yard? Nope, this was going back to the store.

Next thing I did was go online to see what other grids might be out there. Permeable pavers, yes. Pavers of all kinds, yes. But what I found instead was something way more interesting I could work with. It was only 1.8" thick, came in small pieces that weighed only a little over two pounds and was made of recycled plastic. Hello, True Grid pavers from Texas. Made for commercial applica-

tions as well as residential, you could snap it together, fill it with gravel or grass and drive semis over it with no damage. Moreover, the openings were 3 ½ inch circles which I planned to fill with attractive ground covers and mini mosaics.

I was too excited to wait until spring to begin, so in March I tackled removing the sod and soil. (Let me tell you, a day doing that earns you guilt-free ice cream.) As luck would have it, I needed soil to fill a hole created nearby where a large shrub was removed. So the two projects went hand in hand. My intention was to put the soil back down inside the grid as I went along but, as fate would have it, my neighbor bought way too much soil mix and offered it to me. My soil was clumpy and wet, so this was a great deal. It was a very exciting day when the gravel base was spread and the grid finally went down.

Over the winter months, I had made 50 little pebble mosaics to place randomly

in the grid. These went down right before the soil mix was placed.

Picking out the plants and installing them in the grid openings was the cherry on top. I already had *Soleirolia soleirolii* (Baby Tears) growing in the beds, so I researched ground covers for wet shade and found quite a few more options. Some areas had part sun, enabling me to diversify my choices. I placed these plants in repeating diagonal patterns along the entire length of the path:

- *Alchemilla ellenbeckii* (Creeping Lady's Mantle)
- *Armeria maritima* 'Nifty Thrifty' (Variegated Sea Thrift)
- *Arenaria balearica* (Corsican Sandwort)
- *Bellium minutum*
- *Ellisiophyllum pinnatum*
- *Erodium reichardii* cultivars
- *Hydrocotyle sieboldii*
- *Leptinella potentillina* (Verdigris Brass Buttons)
- *Oxalis magellanica*
- *Selaginella kraussiana* cultivars
- *Veronica prostrata* 'Goldwell' (Goldwell Speedwell)
- *Veronica repens* 'Sunshine'

Now instead of spending my spring and summer renovating my muddy path, I can enjoy blue skies without the mud pies. Come see for yourself at NPA's Open Gardens 2016! Just tread lightly please.

See Wendy's project photos in full color on the NPA Facebook page, where you can leave comments or ask questions. If you haven't liked our page already, find it online by searching Northwest Perennial Alliance, Facebook or click on the Facebook link on the NPA website.



Wendy's project in progress



This year's attendees to the annual neighborhood group coordinators event enjoyed a working lunch followed by a visit to the Beautiful Tables Exhibit at Lakewold Gardens.

A big thank you to our neighborhood group coordinators

Denise DuBose

ONCE A YEAR, the neighborhood group coordinators get together to share ideas, places to visit, and other thoughts about coordinating our neighborhood groups. Attendees at this year's lunch included Jan Jensen, Dana Davoli, Noma Edwards, Connie Dunn, Elizabeth Malle, Suzanne Davis, Linda Hickman, Carol Glass, Joyce Voldal, Leona Persinger, Kathleen Neal, NPA President Kit Haesloop, and Membership

SAVE THE DATE, MARCH 5, 2016 FOR A THANK YOU PARTY.

Attention, all you 2016 coordinators: be sure to mark your calendars for March 5th. After our March neighborhood group coordinators luncheon in Seattle, we'll visit the Chihuly Garden and Glass Museum! You won't want to miss this. Invitations will be mailed to all coordinators with more details.

Co-Chairs Karen Brighton and Denise DuBose.

NPA member Jan Jansen, from the Petal Pushers, generously offered her house as our meeting place. We had lunch and talked for a couple of hours. The ideas flew – everything from different places to visit, to speakers and many other activities. The coordinators were excited to meet each other so that they could plan joint activities together. We could have talked for a couple of hours more, but we had a special surprise lined up for the coordinators as a thank you for all their work. Lakewold Gardens gave us free tickets to visit the gardens and their Beautiful Tables Exhibit! The exhibit showcased 30 exquisitely decorated tables with different themes. We all got lots of ideas for our holiday get togethers.

Once again, we'd like to thank all the neighborhood group coordinators for their dedication and contributions to the success of NPA.

Would you like to join a neighborhood group?

Karen Brighton

A FEW MONTHS AGO a friend joined the NPA so she could join a neighborhood group. She found a group in her area that was accepting new members and reported back to me after her first meeting. She was delighted to find that she had a lot in common with the members of her new group. Someone lived just around the corner, another had attended the same college, mutual friends

GROUPS LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS

WANTED: Avid gardeners headed into the dark of winter looking for a way to keep their fingers in the dirt, brains in the game and stuff on the cuff. Four NPA neighborhood groups are looking for new members: the Eastside Morning Glories (Bellevue, Redmond and Woodinville), the Lilies of the Valley (Fall City, Carnation and Duvall), the Secateurs of Snohomish County (Everett, Mukilteo, Marysville, Snohomish and Lake Stevens) and the Dirty Divas (Queen Anne, Magnolia, Ballard). If you're interested in joining, contact us at groups@northwestperennialalliance.org. To find more groups, including others accepting new members, visit the NPA website at www.n-p-a.org. Open the Neighborhood Groups page and click on the link to our neighborhood groups list near the bottom of the page.

were discovered, and she was able to find the answer to a perplexing plant question. Gardening is mostly a solitary pastime; being part of a group is an opportunity to make connections with other passionate gardeners in your area.

The opportunity to be in a neighborhood group is one of the reasons people join the NPA, yet only 25% of NPA mem-

bers are in neighborhood groups. Sometimes individuals are frustrated in their attempts to find a group to join. There are a number of reasons for this; as most groups meet in members' homes there is a limit to the number of people a group can hold, or the group in your area meets during the day, and you have a job.

If you have desired to join a group but have become discouraged, don't despair. There are several groups currently accepting new members and if you can't find a group to join, you can start your own. Reach out to the NPA Membership Co-Chairs Karen Brighton and Denise DuBose. We can connect you with a group in your area. If there isn't an open group we can help you through each step of starting a new group, from finding other interested people in your area to planning the first meeting, as well as offering ongoing support.

Contact us at:
groups@northwestperennialalliance.org

Free tickets to the Northwest Flower and Garden Show

Diana Davidson

DO YOU LOVE BEING AN NPA member? Would you like to share your enthusiasm with others & help increase our membership?

NPA members who volunteer to work a three-hour shift in the NPA booth get a free admission ticket to the North-



Gayle Richardson and Carol Atkinson in the award-winning NPA booth in 2015

west Flower and Garden Show for the day they work. Our energetic volunteers talk to people about NPA and all it has to offer. Two people are assigned per shift, so sign up with an NPA friend! You'll be provided with written instructions and guidance for signing up new members.

To volunteer, contact the NPA office at info@northwestperennialalliance.org or 425-647-6004.

This year's show, "America the Beautiful," will be held February 17-21, 2016, at the Seattle Convention and Trade Center in Seattle. If you can't volunteer but plan to visit the show, be sure to stop by the NPA booth (#2501) and register to win a garden-related prize.

Coming soon: NPA Members' Corner

STARTING WITH THE SPRING ISSUE, the Post will publish a new feature which we've tentatively titled "NPA Members' Corner," a space for you to share your own gardening news. It could be a photo of your favorite plant or container, a great gardening tip, or a nifty new tool. Whatever you'd like to share with other NPA gardeners. The deadline for materials is Monday, March 14. Please email your contribution to post@northwestperennialalliance.org.

Like us on Facebook

The NPA Facebook page is the ideal place to share your gardening successes and failures, ask for and offer advice, post photos of your garden, share NPA events you enjoy and show pictures of your neighborhood group in action. To get in on the fun, like us on Facebook or contact our Facebook editor, Sara Drogin, at facebook@northwestperennialalliance.org



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Northwest Perennial Alliance

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.

Website: www.n-p-a.org
 Phone: 425-647-6004
 Email: info@northwestperennialalliance.org

NPA 2015-2016 Officers:

Kit Haesloop, President: 425-333-6529
 Diana Davidson, Vice President: 425-896-8040
 Ellie Sanchez, Secretary: 425-828-6820

Membership:

Memberships are \$35 for individuals, \$45 for household, \$75 for business, \$20 for students. The membership year runs from January-December. To join, visit www.n-p-a.org to pay electronically or download a membership form. You may also mail a check payable to NPA, to the address below. Include your name, mailing address, email address and telephone number. NPA accepts certain credit cards and debit cards by telephone at 425-647-6004.

Donations:

NPA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and your donations are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law. Donations are used to support our educational programs, including Open Gardens, lectures, workshops, the NPA Border and student scholarships.

Submissions and paid advertisements:

Contact the Post Editor at post@northwestperennialalliance.org

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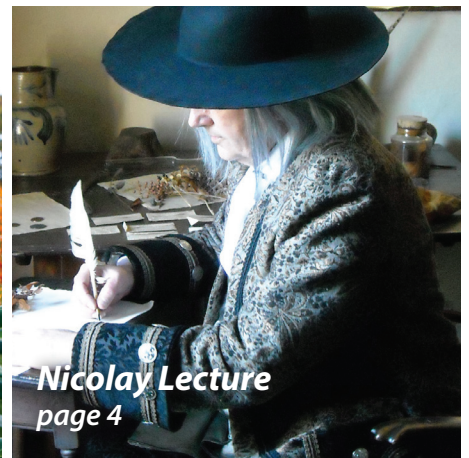
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