



Attention, plant maniacs, March Mania is coming!

Larry Lael, Lael's Moon Garden

WE ALWAYS TRY TO BRING a good selection of more unusual plants to NPA sales because the sales attract a more dedicated group of gardeners. Calling something “unusual” in a crowd like the NPA is a little hazardous because collectively they have seen almost everything. Suffice it to say we will bring plants to the 2013 March Mania that are less familiar than, say, shotweed. We also try to bring plants that other vendors might not bring--spice of life and all that.

Here are a few examples in the random order they occur to me:

- *Pinus contorta latifolia* ‘Chief Joseph’. Plain green shrubby pine in the summer and bright school-bus yellow in winter. Full sun, good drainage. Stops traffic in winter.
- *Rhododendron* x ‘Midnight Ruby’. A dwarf rhodie with near black foliage and pink flowers. Regular water, humusy soil, sun to half day shade. Sun keeps the foliage blacker longer.
- *Pieris japonica* x ‘Katsura’. Shiny burgundy new growth that lasts much of the summer. Pink lily-of-the-valley flowers. The coolest new pieris we’ve seen in a long time. Sun, half day shade, humusy soil, regular water.
- *Bletilla striata* and ochracea hardy orchids. Beautiful ground orchids in three pink varieties (*B. striata* ‘Big Bob’, ‘Lavender Beauty’, and ‘Yokohama Kate’) and one yellow one (*B. ochracea* ‘Chinese Butterfly’). They’ll spread slowly in humusy woodland soil with regular moisture. Though hardy, we mulch in winter for extra protection. Morning sun for best bloom.



Bletilla striata ‘Yokohama Kate’
Photo by Larry Lael



Rhododendron x ‘Midnight Ruby’
Photo courtesy of Briggs Nursery



Trillium erectum
Photo courtesy of Great Plant Picks

MARCH MANIA PLANT SALE
SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 9-2 PM
Bellevue Botanical Garden
12001 Main Street, Bellevue

The first big plant sale of the year in the Seattle area, March Mania attracts hordes of hardcore Northwest gardeners who never let a little rain or snow keep them from checking out this year’s coolest new plants. Tents, free coffee and loads of fun.

- Trilliums. Nursery-grown bulbs of three different species: red (*T. erectum*), white (*T. grandiflorum*) and yellow flowers and mottled foliage (*T. luteum*). They’ll form clumps and have larger flowers over time. Humusy soil, regular moisture and morning sun or full shade.
- *Disporum longistylum* (aka cantonense) ‘Night Heron’. Great woodland bamboo-like perennial with near black new growth and small yellow bell-like flowers. Forms a neat clump. Black color fades to olive green, but holds dark color better in some sun. Humusy soil, regular moisture.
- *Helleborus* x ‘Pink Frost’ Not just another damned Hellebore. Has pink flowers and clean foliage that does not get botrytis over the winter in our garden. (We’re anally retentive so we cut back the old foliage anyway.) Sun to full shade, humusy soil, regular moisture.
- *Thuja plicata* ‘Whipcord’. A threadleaf variety of Western Red Cedar. Forms a small shrub in time. Sun to shade. Regular water.
- *Corylus avellana* ‘Red Majestic’. A contorted filbert like Harry Lauder’s Walking Stick except with burgundy foliage in summer. Beautifully gnarled branches and pink catkins in winter. Sun, drought tolerant once established.

We’ll bring a lot more cool stuff, but hopefully the above list will whet your appetite to come see us and all the other great vendors who will be at March Mania.

See back page for more.

Larry Lael and his wife Bethany are self-professed plant geeks and owners of Lael’s Moon Garden in Rochester, Washington.

NPA EVENTS



- JANUARY 13** | **Wonderful Plants with Winter Interest** lecture with Susie Egan, Sunday, 1 pm. Members free. Center for Urban Horticulture, 3501 NE 41st Street, Seattle. Details, page 3.
- FEBRUARY 1** | **Registration opens for Hardy Plant Study Weekend** in Vancouver, B.C., June 14-16. Register at www.vancouverhardyplant.org
- FEBRUARY 20-24** | **Northwest Flower & Garden Show**, Wednesday – Saturday, 9 am – 9 pm; Sunday, 9 am – 6 pm, at the Washington State Convention & Trade Center, Seattle
- MARCH 2** | **March Mania Plant Sale**, Saturday, 9 am – 2 pm, Bellevue Botanical Garden, 12001 Main Street, Bellevue. Details, page 1.
- MARCH 6** | **Pruning class** with George Lasch, Wednesday, 10- noon. Details, page 00.
- MARCH 23** | **Potting Up Party**, Saturday, 10 am – 2 pm, Bellevue Botanical Garden, 12001 Main Street, Bellevue

Time to renew your NPA membership

NOW'S THE TIME to renew your NPA membership for another year of inspiring garden tours, classes & workshops, lectures and gardening fun. Memberships run from January through December. If you've joined or renewed anytime after September 2012, you're good for all of 2013.

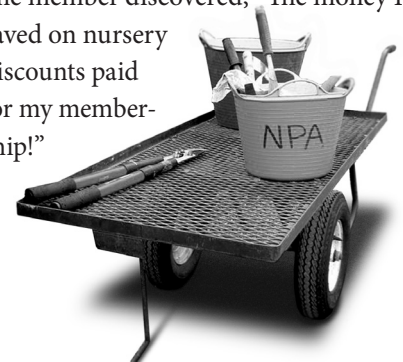
It's easy to renew online at www.n-p-a.org. Either use your credit card to pay online, or download a membership form and mail it with a check. You can include your spouse or significant other for free with your membership.

We hope you'll make a donation to NPA when you renew this year by joining at a higher level, above the basic \$35 level. Every year NPA has to work hard to organize fundraisers that will 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!



There is no better value in the gardening community than NPA. While many clubs charge an extra \$20-\$45 for one day of tours, with NPA you can enjoy free garden tours almost every weekend from April through September with your Open Gardens book. NPA also offers free lectures, The Perennial Post, neighborhood groups and nursery discounts. As

one member discovered, "The money I saved on nursery discounts paid for my membership!"



Wake Up Your Winter Garden with Susie Egan

Gayle Richardson

**“WONDERFUL PLANTS WITH WINTER INTEREST”
SUNDAY, JANUARY 13, 2013, 1 PM**

Members free

Nonmembers \$10 at the door

Center for Urban Horticulture

3501 NE 41st Street, Seattle 98105

SURE, SAFEWAY IS SELLING those pansies and primroses in January, but there has to be more to winter gardening than that. Fortunately, Susie Egan is coming in January to talk about an amazing palette of plants that will wake up your garden and stimulate your senses throughout the year’s dreariest months.



Susie is a Master Gardener, landscape designer, garden writer, garden coach, member of many local, national and international horticultural societies, and a frequent speaker in the Puget Sound area. Yet somehow she still finds time to maintain a two acre display garden and nursery in Woodinville.

Many NPA members are already familiar with Susie’s fervent interest in native and woodland shade plants, but are you aware that you can see more types

of Trilliums at her Cottage Lake Gardens than in any other place in the world? In her quest to establish a National Garden Collection of them, she has amassed 45 of the 47 known species, and we can guess that she’s hot on the trail of the last two.

What better way to spend a most-likely-gray Sunday afternoon than enjoying this talk? In fact, why not bring along a friend or two? This event would make a splendid winter treat.

Refreshment Committee winning raves

It’s not your imagination, the refreshments at NPA’s lectures have become a sizable feast of homebaked treats and goodies, thanks to the members of our refreshment committee, Julia Craig, Jim Killingbeck and his mother, Joan. The hit at the last lecture was Jim’s Amish Friendship Bread, a traditional bread or cake made from

a sweetened sourdough starter that is passed from friend to friend. Jim and Joan both love to bake, and NPA members are the happy beneficiaries of their considerable talents.

The members of the Refreshment Committee are (left to right) Joan Killingbeck, Jim Killingbeck and Julia Craig.



Books for spring reading

Gayle Richardson

I'M INTRODUCING A NEW wrinkle in this column. If a book I review reminds me of some other non-garden-oriented treasure, I'll alert you to that as well.

It's just about time to start curling up with a good book and a hot beverage, so give these a try:

I was never so thunderstruck in my entire life as when, walking down a street in Madrid a few years ago, I came upon the entire wall of a seven story building covered in flowers and shrubs. Thousands and thousands of them, all clinging firmly to a perfectly vertical surface. And the scale! What appeared at first to be perhaps a lavender plant turned out to be a full-sized buddleia in bloom. Questions raced through my mind: how...why...WHO? It turns out it was the visionary work of Patrick Blanc, a French botanist and artist. His book, **The Vertical Garden: From Nature to the City**, (W.W. Norton. Revised and updated 2011) is easily the most spectacular and amazing book I've seen in this or many a year.

In the first section, the author shows us natural habitats throughout the world where plants naturally grow vertically, rather than horizontally. Part two briefly covers the effect of plants on architecture, from superficial to hazardous to destructive. Wait until you see the head of the Buddha embraced by a strangler fig or the roof of house in Tenerife with a roof forested in aeoniums. The last section covers completed projects created with his patented supporting, planting, irrigating and feeding system.

In **The Blueberry Years:**

A memoir of Farm and Family

(St. Martin's. 2011) we meet Jim and Sarah Minick, two young Type A schoolteachers who had a dream and took the plunge.



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

They bought 90 acres in extremely rural Virginia (one stoplight in the entire county) and wrote out a check for 1,000 blueberry plants to a Michigan grower. The plants arrived just at sunset in a semi trailer too big to fit on the country lane to their property, and thus began ten years of unending toil, frustration, joy and satisfaction. It's hard to do justice to this highly engrossing, simply written yet poetic book. Just be sure to put it on your list of must reads for 2013. And, of course, there are pages and pages of blueberry recipes at the end.

Bonus Book: **Population 485: Meeting Your Neighbors One Siren At A Time**

(Harper. 2007) Author Michael Perry is poet who works other jobs to put food on the table. Here he has returned, after 12 years away, to his small hometown of New Auburn, Wisconsin, where he joins the local volunteer fire brigade. The chapters, each concerned with a different rescue or fire, range from the hilarious to the truly shocking and heartbreaking. You will remember this memoir all your life, and it will lead you inexorably on to the subsequent **Truck: A Love Story** and **Coop: A Family, A Farm and the Pursuit of One Good Egg**.

Grace From The Garden: Changing The World One Garden At A Time

by Debra Landwehr (Rodale Press. 2003).

The author visits twenty gardeners across the country who have looked at a garden and seen the horizon: how gardening can bring survival, hope and even a more comfortable future to people in difficult circumstances.

These imaginative folks host thousands of visitors from nursing homes, provide a form of escape for those locked up, or see, in a roomful of bins crawling with earthworms, a way for people to turn their personal economies around. It's truly humbling, as well as heart-warming, to read these stories.

Spotted and seized from a library shelf:

In the Garden with Jane Austen by

Kim Wilson (Jones Books. 2008). One of

my all-time favorite cataloging moments from my librarian days was discovering the subject subheading Homes and Haunts. SO eighteenth century, but very much alive in the twenty-first, and perfectly apt for this photograph-packed tour of Jane Austen's homes and world. Heavily illustrated, with copious quotes from her letters and novels, as well as other books of the period, it provides a tantalizing peek into a world that is foreign to us yet oddly familiar as well. Half a dozen of the gardens covered provide plant lists that are eerily familiar to NPA Border visitors and shoppers at the NPA seed exchange. So have at it and recreate your own bit of Jane Austen's world!

Bonus Book: The other day a novel read long ago floated into my mind and I immediately went to the computer and ordered a copy for a penny. Can't wait for **Antipodes Jane** by Barbara Ker Wilson (Viking. 1985) to arrive and read it for the second, or is it third, time.

NPA CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

Spring

Wednesday, March 6, 10-noon
PRUNING
with *George Lasch*
Fee: \$25 Class Limit: 12



Ever wonder when and where to make the cut? Bring your pruning questions and thoughts to a lovely private garden on the eastside, where George Lasch will help you explore the right and wrong way to cut. The class will cover the basics of pruning shrubs and small trees. Learn the reasons for and against pruning, the right timing and how various plants react. Class goes rain or shine - dress accordingly and bring a pair of bypass pruners.

Wednesday, April 10, 1 – 3:30 pm
GARDEN HEALTH—PREPPING FOR THE GROWING SEASON
with *Walt Bubelis*
Fee: \$25 Class Limit: 20



Give your garden a running start this year by learning how to ascertain the health of your garden. Are there obvious problems, hidden or potential issues you need to be aware of? What can you do to make a garden an environmentally friendly place for plants and beneficial fauna? We'll analyze an NPA board member's garden, looking at soil issues, garden pests, and the local climate.

Wednesday, April 17, 10 am - noon
SUMMER BULBS
with *Jim Fox, Wells Medina Nursery*
Fee: \$25 Class Limit: 20



Learn about summer bulbs: from dahilas to glads, crocosmia to *eremurus*, agapanthus and begonias, tritellia and cyclamen, lilies to ixia, and many more. Jim Fox, Wells Medina's bulb buyer and a geophytophile himself, will give you ideas for using them in the garden, information on which are hardy in our gardens or not - or even how to fool some into acting as if they are hardy. Some summer bulbs are purchased in late winter or early spring to grow on in homes or greenhouses for planting out in May or June. Others only come as potted growing perennial plants. Learn when and where to find them,

the best way to buy them, as well as tips on how to grow them. We will also walk around the nursery to find examples of dormant bulbs or already planted ones to discuss.

Wednesday, May 15, 10 - noon
FROM MUDDY TO MAGNIFICENT
with *Forrest Campbell*
Fee: \$25 Class Limit: 20



See a garden that had both soil and drainage problems in the planting areas as well as the lawns and how thoughtful re-design resolved the issues. Walk through a site assessment to identify the problems . We'll cover basic soil identification and the possible solutions in regards to amend-ments, soil replacements, and drainage options. The class will be held in a garden in Northeast Seattle.

CLASS REGISTRATION

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. And if you have a great idea for a class or workshop, contact Classes & Workshops Chair Sandy Kanaga at: classes@northwestperennialalliance.org

Open your garden: PLANT A SEED ON SOMEONE

Wendy Lagozzino

DO YOU REMEMBER Mrs. Piggle Wiggle? In 1947 Betty MacDonald wrote a series of books starring a little lady who lives in an “upside-down” house in a neighborhood inhabited mainly by children with bad habits. In one story, Patsy Waters won’t take a bath. She is so filthy, Mrs. Piggle Wiggle institutes the radish cure. Seeds are planted on her and ultimately sprout.



Joanne and Giles Bohannon’s garden

Have you ever had someone tell you about something new and wonderful they discovered that you’d never heard of till then? Their delight and enthusiasm about it is so contagious pretty soon you want it too. Oddly enough, you start seeing it around now that you are more aware of it. A seed was planted on you too.

Sometimes people think their garden is too plain or uninteresting to show off. Perhaps they haven’t finished their ultimate plan or developed a section they want to improve. Meanwhile, they have a wonderful path creatively curved with interesting materials that would intrigue

anyone who visited. This might spark an idea for someone who never considered such a path in their own garden. A seed was planted.

I’ve been to lots of gardens that gave me ideas for my own garden. A fence of recycled materials inspired me to think further how I could create a fence in my own yard that would be both whimsical and functional. A neighbor had brought back some old rusty tiller parts for me from a hike in Montana that I didn’t know what to do with. I ended up incorporating them into a short fence around my beds. A seed was planted on me and had grown.

Recently a friend told me she went to a dinner party and was served white balsamic vinegar flavored with apricots and honeysuckle. She loved it and a whole world of different balsamic vinegars was introduced to her from honey ginger, lemon, and grapefruit to jalapeno. I was intrigued. Not too long after that, while walking in my neighborhood, I noticed a sign for a new store that exclusively sold olive oil and aged balsamic vinegars. I bought a tangerine white balsamic vinegar. My friend had planted a seed.

Gardening is like that too. You learn about a plant you were not familiar with and suddenly, you start seeing it everywhere you go. You need one too. You have



An open garden on Whidbey Island

the perfect place for it. Now you just have to find one. Maybe you can grow it from seed.



An inviting, winding path in Linda Knutson and Ron Sell’s garden

A gardener can sometimes show people around the garden talking about their choices and preferences for plants. It might not feel like a very special conver-



Judy Montoure and Dorian Sanchez’s garden

sation with a lot of technical or useful information, but it can linger in someone’s mind and develop an idea for their own yard they never realized. A planted seed can lay dormant for years until the right conditions exist.

Just like in the Bible story, not every seed falls on fertile ground, but you never know what might germinate into a successful and enjoyable result that someone passes forward to the next visitor. Don’t sell your own garden short or your own stories about how you created it. It could just inspire someone to do great things. And you too could be planting a seed.

Wendy Lagozzino is an avid gardener on Queen Anne who enjoys sharing her passion for gardening with others.

Advertise your garden business in our Open Gardens directory

Now NPA members who own a garden-related business can advertise it in our popular Open Gardens directory, with a \$10 listing in a new section called the NPA Business Spotlight. It's an affordable way to reach more than 1,200 enthusiastic NPA gardeners. And since our members pack this little yellow book around for months on end, your listing will keep working for you from April-September. You do not need to open your garden

to have a business listing in the directory. Just cut out the form below and mail it to the address given, along with a \$10 check payable to NPA. (Nurseries can also be listed in our Nursery Discounts section without charge in exchange for offering at least a 10% discount to NPA members.) Questions? Contact Mary Shane at meshane@comcast.net.

NPA BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT REGISTRATION FORM FOR THE 2013 OPEN GARDENS DIRECTORY

Please cut out or copy this form, fill it out and mail it to the address below. The cost is \$10 for each business listing. Make your check payable to "Northwest Perennial Alliance" or "NPA." (Form is also available online at www.n-p-a.org)

I will confirm receipt of all registration forms and payments. If you do not receive a confirmation within five days of sending, please call me at the phone number below. Deadline for registration is February 15th, 2013. Entries received after the deadline may not be included in the directory, so don't delay!

**NPA Business Spotlight, Mary Shane, 911 Val Vista Drive, Montesano, WA 98563. Phone 360-249-4125
or email: mshane@comcast.net.**

List your business information exactly as you wish it to appear in the Open Gardens Directory. Leave blank any fields you do not wish to appear in the directory.

Business Name: _____ Name of Business Owner: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Business Hours: _____ Website Address: _____

P.O. Box: _____ Zip Code: _____ Telephone: _____

Email Address: _____

If your business has a Facebook page, do you want this sentence to be included in your listing? "Like us on Facebook: _____" (Your business name will be on the blank line.) () Yes OR () No

Business description: Please limit to 50 words. (I will edit as needed for grammar, punctuation, length and clarity.)

Only current members of the NPA are included in a section of the Open Gardens Directory. Kindly be sure you have renewed your membership for 2013 before mailing this form. The directory will not be printed with listings from members who have not renewed.

NPA Booth at the Northwest Flower and Garden Show

Diana Davidson

Be sure to visit the NPA booth, #2501, at the Northwest Flower and Garden Show. It's held at the Seattle Convention and Trade Center, February 20 – 24, 2013. We're preparing an eye-catching display highlighting the show's theme, Gardens Go Hollywood. You can also sign up for a chance to win a garden-related item.

Free tickets available for volunteers

Every NPA member who volunteers to work a three-hour shift in the NPA booth

gets a free admission ticket. Our enthusiastic volunteers talk to people about NPA and all it has to offer. Two people are assigned per shift, provided with written instructions, a coordinator for each day, and guidance for signing up new members.

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



Sign up for our Seed Packing Party

Whether a veteran packer, or someone interested in trying it for the first time, you are invited to a NPA Seed Packing Party on Saturday, January 12, 1-3 PM at the Garden Office of the Bellevue Botanical Garden. If you'd like to attend, or have questions, contact Gayle Richardson at seeds@northwestperennialalliance.com

This soup was a big hit at the NPA Board's holiday party.

Walt's Spiced Pumpkin Soup



Walt Bubelis dishes up his delicious spiced pumpkin soup.

- 1 tbsp canola oil
- 1 onion, chopped fine
- 1 tsp minced garlic
- 1 tsp curry powder
- 1 tsp cumin
- ¼ tsp cardamom
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 2 cups reduced-sodium fat-free chicken broth
- 1 can, 15 oz, pumpkin
- 1 can, 12 oz, evaporated fat-free milk
- 6 tbsp plain fat-free Greek yogurt & parsley leaves for garnish

1. In a large pot, heat oil over low for 30 seconds. Add onion and cook 3 minutes or until soft. Add garlic and cook 1 more minute. Stir in spices, salt and pepper and cook another minute, stirring.
2. Whisk in broth and pumpkin. Bring just to a boil, reduce heat to low and simmer for about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add milk and simmer for 2 minutes.
3. Using an immersion blender, puree soup until smooth. Add a little more broth to thin, if desired. Ladle into bowls and garnish with yogurt and parsley. Add pepper to taste.

Amendments I did: Used fresh cardamom from pods, breaking them open and grinding with mortar and pestle the seeds.

Used regular organic chicken stock.

Skipped the immersion blending as I like the texture of the onion.

WE SAW SOME FUN TIMES and some less-than-ideal days in 2012. The season started out pretty good--if you don't mind endless rain and cool temps for months on end. The upside was that it produced spring flowers lasting for weeks on end. Thousands of bulbs blanketed the Border in blues and yellows, cresting right around Mother's Day when visitors started returning in droves. The hybrid Hellebore 'Pink Frost' was a show stopper from February on, opening with pale green, white and pink flowers that matured into long lasting deep wine-red and purple.

As for the vermin that have a penchant for our lush garden – deer and rabbits in particular—I'm feeling cautiously optimistic about a new repellent program. After years of rotating through all sorts of repellants I have settled on blood meal. It is as effective as any, inexpensive and about as natural as you can get. I did several blanketing applications from late winter on, trying to interrupt the deer feeding pattern and get them to steer away from the Border entirely. I dusted everything with the powder, even things they would never touch (very few!) to put up an olfactory wall and get them browsing elsewhere. And it seemed to work!

The endless spring rolled into a fine summer that was long, warm and dry. The flowering of one of the towering *Cardiocrinum giganteum* in the shady end of the Border was a highlight of early summer. As we slid into the warmer months, the mature clumps of *Actea* (*Cimicifuga*), *Hosta* and *Lysimachia* put on quite a show. In the more exposed beds we have added more *Agastache* and grasses, and both are giving long seasons of color and interest. Hardy ginger added their cobs of tropical orange for a few short weeks and their lush foliage lasted well into November. Many *Kniphofias* marched their bloom spikes from April right through November,



Helleborus x 'Pink Frost'

Photo by Larry Lael

peaking in July with huge clumps crowned with a seemingly endless supply of flowers.

Summer also brought a fun idea in community participation to the Border, with the installation of new hummingbird feeders maintained by local Girl Scout troops. The scouts, coached by members of the Eastside Audubon Society, cleaned and filled the feeders all summer long. The experiment went well and eventually the Annas and Rufus hummingbirds would visit the sugar water dispensers, although it was tough to pull them away from all the nectar sources in the garden.

When the rains of autumn finally returned we were glad for them. The dust of the gravel paths was washed off the fuchsias and asters and the low light angles made everything glow. The areas that in spring were covered in bulbs were again washed in waves of classic blue and gold: Asters and mums with goldenrod and *Yucca* foliage made a wonderful draw to visitors for months. *Aster x frikartii* started things off with big, long lasting lavender blue flowers in midsummer. The other

more "regular" asters have gotten large enough now that their clumps of foliage can get stems from the center up and past the rabbit feeding zone. This fall also saw a rabbit fence added along the outside of the West Border. The fence was a project created by a local Eagle Scout, and I have to say we do see fewer rabbits about.

Now winter has arrived in the garden. A few good hard frosts and rather shortened days signal the end of the season for some things and the beginning for others. Our remaining *Camellia 'Yuletide'* is starting to open its rich red blooms. The little *Cyclamen* coum are glowing bright spots at both ends of the Border. The Hellebores are already starting up with the *H. niger* selections in full bloom by Thanksgiving (don't worry, they have tons of buds to keep them going through spring!). The colorful hybrid hellebores are pushing up early and I know our clumps are going to be impressive this year. Please come take a stroll some quiet winter day to see the real delights of the garden.

Taking care of the Gardener

Anne Nelson

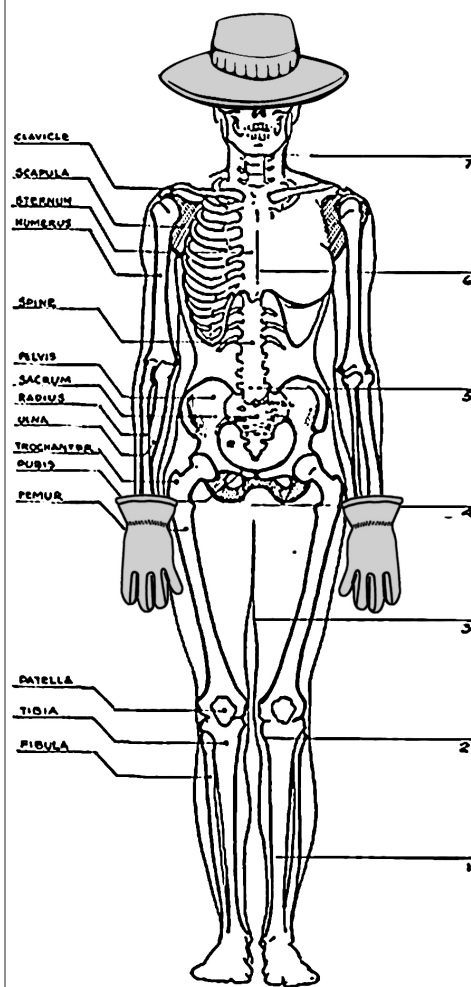
THE ANCIENT GREEKS had it figured out, long before Troy ever was, when Hesiod wrote his “Works and Days.” There he described tasks, when and where it is proper to do them. When it is warm and breezy, go sailing. When it is cold and dark by mid-afternoon, cocoon by the fire, mend your nets, retell old stories. In our world of thermostats and all the light we want, it is easy to forget those cycles. But as gardeners, we are closer to the rhythms of light and warmth that Hesiod knew.

Hesiod taught us to care for ourselves as we care for our work and the tools we use. Hurrying from last-minute autumn garden cleanup, to last-minute caring for the end-of-the year, it’s easy to forget to take the time to care for ourselves in all the busy-ness.

Horticulturists learn that the most important gardening tool is our body. In a class on tool maintenance, we turned toward the speaker with a startled recognition. If she was hurt, or hurting, the bills wouldn’t get paid. Her therapeutic massage was charged as a business equipment maintenance expense.

Although not every gardener is a professional horticulturist, with a business to charge massages against, there is plenty we can do to care for ourselves. Rules for good body mechanics are annoying reminders until an injury sidelines us. We can incorporate a check for those mechanics whenever we head for the garden.

Take a moment to be aware of yourself. Take a deep breath. How does that feel, as it fills your lungs? Cold? Crisp? Fragrant? Blow it out again, feel your spine as the breath leaves. Is it straight or can you feel where it curves? Is it a happy curve? Are your feet happy in those shoes? The body has its wisdom, and will let us know what it needs, but it is better if we start the dialog.



Check your bending and lifting postures. Size up that trug or pot; feel your feet and back and shoulders, knees, and neck, as you hoist it. Any complaining? What would make it feel better? Leveraging the pot to start the lift? A pot lifter? Another pair of hands or a dolly? A less-full trug? Bending those knees?

Check your gardening tools. Hold each in the way you use it. Is it too tall to be easily leveraged? Is it too short, so that you have to crouch to use it? A new garden tool is less expensive than a trip to the doctor’s, so go for it!

THE CASE FOR GLOVES

Grandma assured me, climbing the stairs from Penn Station to the streets of Manhattan, that my dismayingly blackened white glove was doing its job. The glove, not

my hand, was dirty. As gardeners, we recognize each other by our mulch-lined cuticles, and scratches where the roses fought back. But here’s a thought: we know what it is we are spreading on our gardens. We know that the soil we cultivate is made healthy by a wide variety of microorganisms, bacteria, protozoa, fungi, decaying vegetation and worm poop. Wear gloves. Staph aureus is ubiquitous: button your sleeves when you go to trim the roses. Ask for gauntlets for your birthday.

THE SOUL OF THE GARDEN

Take the time to enjoy your garden. This is an easy failing: caught up in the task list, we forget to celebrate the part we are taking in creation. Our gardens build beauty. They return the environment to healthfulness. They nourish the life around us, providing refuge for fellow creatures. That deserves a pat on the back. Add whimsy, let it gladden your spirit. Invite the senses, with the sound of water or the rustle of the wind in the miscanthus. See that poor ailing shrubbery as an invitation to step back into the cycle, a new planting in the new season, working with the world around us.



Anne Nelson gardens in an uncivilized quarter acre in Seattle, in the company of a patient spouse and their dog, Bonkers.

South Sound neighborhood groups have three times the fun

Katie Padwick, Nancy Davenport and Jan Jensen

Neighborhood group members in the South Sound have a lot more activities to choose from, thanks to the networking of three very active groups: Harbor Gardeners, Growin' Wild and Petal Pushers. The coordinators of the three groups communicate with each other about their activity schedules, enabling members of all the groups to see what is coming up. The majority of meetings, activities and speakers are open to members of all three groups, provided space is available.

Last year was filled with great multi-group events. In April, Growin' Wild planned a trip to the Rhododendron Species Garden in Federal Way. Originally open to members of the three groups, there was such enthusiasm it was decided to open up participation to all NPA groups. About 50 members attended! In May, Growin' Wild members, with members of other groups, traveled to the Bloedel Reserve for docent-led tours. In July, Harbor Gardener members shared an inspiring day touring some of their members' gardens. September saw members participate in making garden stakes and touring Coenosium Gardens near Eatonville.

Harbor Gardeners is the oldest and largest group, with 50+ members from Gig Harbor, Port Orchard, Key Peninsula and the Belfair area. Members of this group enjoy meeting the members from the other NPA neighborhood groups and feel the collaboration provides them the opportunity to learn about new gardens, speakers, local gardening events and activities. In September, Harbor Gardeners organized a "flash" field trip to the Old Goat Farm in Graham. Members from the other groups joined the fun, which included a talk from owner Greg Graves, a personalized tour of the gardens and plant shopping.

The Growin' Wild group meets in the evening and is going into its fifth year.

Members of this group come from Port Orchard, Gig Harbor and Tacoma. In February 2013 the group will host a representative from Proven Winners who will present a slide presentation featuring new plant and shrub introductions for the coming season. The members of Harbor Gardeners and Petal Pushers will be encouraged to attend. If space permits, members of other groups will also be invited.

Petal Pushers just started meeting in February 2012 and includes 30 members from the Olympia area, Lakewood, Fircrest, Tacoma and Montesano. This group appreciates being invited to the activities and tours of the other South Sound groups. Their 2013 calendar includes opportunities to invite Growin' Wild and Harbor Gardeners on visits to nurseries and gardens. Meeting programs are planned for some hands-on activities, and the other groups will be included in those as well.

News your group can use

If your group is at a loss for ideas for monthly activities, NPA has a long list of projects and field trips that have been suggested by other groups. You'll find the list posted on the Neighborhood Groups pages of the NPA website at www.n-p-a.org along with a complete list of NPA neighborhood groups.

Several neighborhood groups are currently looking for new members. They include Shoreline, Edmonds/Lynnwood/Mukilteo, Renton, Enumclaw and West Seattle. For more information, contact Barb Danek at bdaneknb@gmail.com or Denise DuBose at stevdub@comcast. If you're interested in starting a new group, contact us and we can give you suggestions on how to do that. It's really easy!

NPA Advisory Board

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Northwest Perennial Alliance

The Northwest Perennial Alliance is a group of ardent gardeners with a passionate devotion to herbaceous plants. Members comprise a wide range, professional and amateur, but all with the aim of furthering perennial gardening in the Northwest.

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

NPA 2012-2013 Officers:

Michele Cournoyer, President: 425-868-5541
Gayle Richardson, Vice President: 206-632-2735
Ellie Sanchez, Secretary: 425-828-6820
Gary Davidson, Treasurer: 425-896-8040

Membership:

The membership year runs from January to December. To join, visit www.n-p-a.org to pay electronically or download a membership form. You may also mail a check for \$35, 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. 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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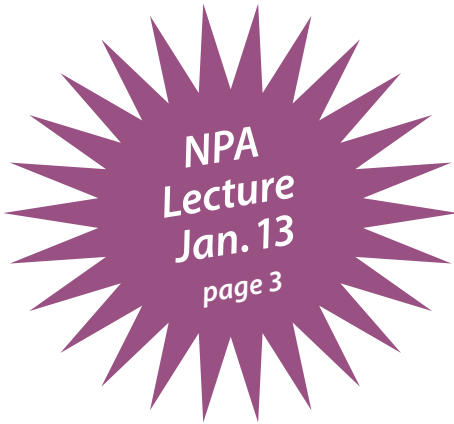
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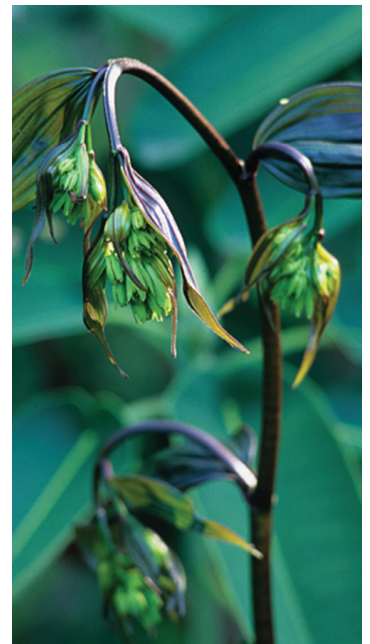


Great plants and nurseries coming to March Mania!

MARCH MANIA PLANT SALE
SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 9 –2 pm
Bellevue Botanical Garden
12001 Main Street, Bellevue

March Mania vendors:

- *Botanica*–Pamela Harlow
- *Bouquet Banque*–Bill Roeder
- *De Gro*–Melinda Ramage
- *Glenwood Gardens*–Nancy Hansen
- *Growing Girls*–Beth Burman
- *Lael's Moon Garden*–Bethany & Larry Lael
- *Lee Farm*–Carrie Lee
- *NPA*–George Lasch
- *Overland Enterprises*–Mark Overholt
- *Taking Root*–Kathy Norsworthy
- *White Picket*–Kristi Fina



Clockwise from top right: *Pieris japonica* 'Katsura', *Trillium luteum*, *Disporum cantoniense* 'Night Heron', *Erythronium* 'Pagoda', *Pinus contorta latifolia* 'Chief Joseph'.

Photos courtesy of Lael's Moon Garden, Briggs Nursery and Great Plant Picks