

THE PERENNIAL POST

NORTHWEST PERENNIAL ALLIANCE



SPRING 2011 | VOLUME 21 | ISSUE 2

Calling all plant addicts: the NPA Spring Plant Sale is April 17

Michele Cournoyer

FEW MONTHS hold more temptations than April, when everything's leaping out of the ground in fresh, alluring colors and the gardener's appetite for new plants knows no bounds. What better time to heed the siren call of the NPA Spring Plant Sale?

Once again our biggest sale of the year will be held at North Seattle Community College, a comfortable indoor location chock-full of irresistible arrays of perennials, grasses, groundcovers, evergreens and shrubs. The tables will fill the vast cafeteria, line the hall and spill into a second large room, with "must-have" plants lurking everywhere you look.

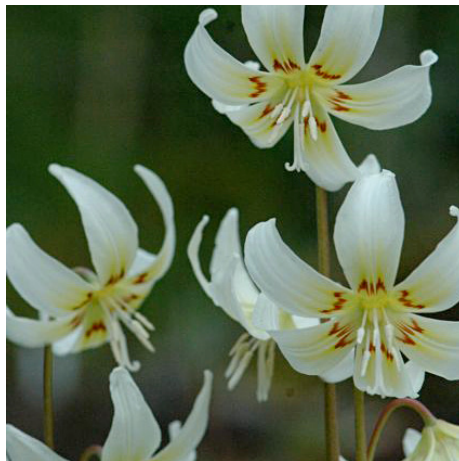
PLAN YOUR ATTACK

Here's a sneak peak at some of the plants, so you can begin to plan your attack:

Lee Farm and Nursery will have *Arabis ferdinanci-coburgii* 'Variegata', a tidy, evergreen groundcover. "This is the plant that really signifies spring to me," Carrie Lee said. "The white flowers on the green and white foliage are so bright on gray days, they are like little lights along the path."

Carrie also loves *Hebe pimeleoides* 'Quicksilver', grown for its evergreen, silvery-gray foliage, perfect for filling in those bare spots in the garden. In the summer, this cute little shrub goes on to produce loads of purple-blue flowers.

Bouquet Banque will make your heart beat a bit faster with their smorgasbord of cool China plants and hard-to-find perennials. Judy Zugish promises choice Chinese epimediums and—at last!—divisions of *Arthropodium cirratum*, a hardy



Photos from Arlen Hill and Judy Zugish

Top to bottom: *Erythronium revolutum* 'White Beauty', *Arthropodium cirratum*, *Olsynium douglasii*.

lily from Australia. "Keen plant collectors have waited patiently while we built up some stock," Judy said, "so this year is a rare opportunity!"

MORE HARD-TO-FIND GEMS

Keeping It Green Nursery specializes in hardy orchids, woodland perennials and hard-to-find natives. This year's treats will include: *Olsynium douglasii*, a Pacific Northwest native wildflower; *Erythronium revolutum* 'White Beauty', a woodland native with lily-like flowers; and *Dichelostemma ida-maia*, or Firecracker Flower, an unusual Northwest native with clusters of showy red, tubular blooms.

From Glenwood Gardens, a nursery that focuses on easy-care plants with year-round interest, comes an array of evergreen

NPA SPRING PLANT SALE

Sunday, April 17, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm
North Seattle Community College
9600 College Way North, Seattle

Helleborus foetidus. Nancy Hansen says most of them naturalize fairly easily and are drought tolerant once established. Choices include 'Frenchy', discovered in the French Alps, with fabulous lacy leaves.

The NPA tables will be offering a fine selection of *Solidago* 'Fireworks' and salvias, late season workhorses that are best planted now. Also, look for our specialty tables featuring dahlias and clematis.

You'll find free, convenient parking in the visitor parking lots off College Way North, between 95th and 97th, along the west side of campus.

To volunteer, email us at volunteers@northwestperennialalliance.org or call our office at 425-647-6004.

See page 5 for more plants and vendors.

- APRIL 9** | **Spring Garden Fling**, Saturday, 10 am - 4 pm. Spring tour of Seattle gardens.
- APRIL 16** | **Spring Garden Fling**, Saturday, 10 am - 4 pm. Spring tour of South Sound gardens.
- APRIL 16** | **Earth Day - Arbor Day Event at BBG**, Saturday, 10 am - 2 pm. Bellevue Botanical Garden 12001 Main Street, Bellevue.
- APRIL 17** | **Spring Plant Sale**, Sunday, 10 am - 3pm. North Seattle Community College, 9600 College Way N, Seattle.
- APRIL 23** | **Spring Garden Fling**, Saturday, 10 am - 4 pm. Spring tour of Snohomish/Whidbey Island gardens.
- MAY 7** | **SWOT Your Garden with Sue Moss**, Saturday, 10 am - 1 pm. See pages 6 & 7 for details and a complete schedule of spring & summer classes.
- MAY 14** | **South Sound Lecture with Judith Jones**, Saturday, 1 - 4 pm. NPA members free/Nonmembers \$10, Lakewold Gardens 12317 Gravelly Lake Drive SW, Lakewood.
- JUNE 24-25** | **Hardy Plant Study Weekend Portland**, Friday-Sunday. Visit www.hardyplantsociety.org for details.
- AUGUST 6** | **Seed Safari in Snohomish with George Lasch & friends**, Saturday, 2 pm - 5 pm. See pages 6 & 7 for details and class schedule.
- APRIL-OCTOBER** | **Docent-led tours**, every Saturday & Sunday, 2 pm. Bellevue Botanical Garden, 12001 Main Street. Reservations not required. For more information call 425-451-3755.

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Donna & Ken Armitage | Michael Farndale | Jana & Rick Nelson |
| Sharon Augenstein | Phoebe Fine | Kimberly Ness |
| Suzanne & John Bachelor | Ginger Fitzhugh & Miguel Morales | Chuck Pavlich |
| Heather Barbieri | Megan Fitzpatrick | Jackie Petersen |
| Janet Bateson | Darlene Ford | Nancy Petersen & Joe Lubischer |
| Marilyn Bentson | Spicer Frances | Jean M. & Gordon Polson |
| Marcia Bergquist | Bonnie Godfred | Connie Purchase |
| Barbara J. Bird & Susan Franer | Roger Gossler | Rebecca Robinson |
| Karen Birzell | Barb Green | Mary & K.G. Ramachandran |
| Sara Bowe | Beth Grimes | Tia Scarce |
| Patricia Bringardner | Kate Griswold | Anne Seidel & Terry Dievendorf |
| Angela Bryant | Denise Hauck | Vicki Sorg |
| Valerie Ann Bystrom | Ingrid Hines | Frances Spicer |
| Linda Campbell & Brian Chambers | Lisa Huggenvik | Diane Ste Marie |
| Chris Cerman | Catherine Kokoris | Deborah Toney |
| Viola G. Ching | Andrea Langkow | Hilary Turner |
| Janet Clark | Chuc & Dave Laskowski | Colleen Weinstein |
| Cheryl Conklin | Mary LeClare Turcotte & Mickey LeClare | Carol Whitaker |
| Gary Crevling | Priscilla Madsen | Laurie Wick |
| Linda Dockery | Nancy A. & Matti Mero | Kay Windisch |
| Michele Drayton | Sue & Curt Mignocco | Karen Wittren |
| Diann Ecklor & Kenneth J. Little | Patricia Mizutani | Won Yang |
| Diane Erickson | Bruce Moulton | |
| Janice Falls | Connie & Hari Narayanan | |

The World of Pteridophytes: A Fascination with Ferns

Pam Felts, Education Chair

JUDITH JONES, of Fancy Fronds Nursery in Gold Bar, collects—and not just the fabulous ferns for which she is famous! Her obsession with ferns, along with her love of all things Victorian, began during her student years while studying children’s theater at the University of Washington. Those passions have been evident in each of her spectacular display gardens at Northwest Flower & Garden shows throughout the years.

An internationally recognized expert, Judith will inform and enlighten us on the glory of ferns at beautiful Lakewold Gardens, in Lakewood, on Saturday, May 14th, when she speaks on “Garden Delights: Pteridophytes.” Her lectures include appearances at the Chicago Botanic Garden, VanDusen Botanical Gardens in Vancouver, B.C. and the Imperial College in London. In addition to Fancy Fronds Nursery, Judith maintains a website and



Photo by Benjamin Jones

Judith Jones, a self-proclaimed pteridomaniac, has introduced six new ferns to the American nursery trade.

catalog featuring more than 150 cultivars. Her mail-order business includes some species rarely available, with useful information on each. And, once upon a time, Judith worked closely with Mrs. Eulalie Wagoner, mistress of Lakewold from 1938 until 1987, supplying ferns for the estate’s gardens. Mrs. Wagoner then donated

the 10-acre property to The Friends of Lakewold, a nonprofit organization, to continue the care and maintenance of the estate for generations to come.

Please join us in welcoming Judith, to learn more about the pteridophytes she loves and her philosophy for successful gardening in our region. As to her years studying theater, we are sure to be entertained with the same talent and creativity that goes into her nursery, display gardens and those unforgettable costumes!

Northwest Perennial Alliance
SOUTH SOUND LECTURE
SATURDAY, MAY 14, 1:00 PM
NPA members free/Nonmembers \$10

Lakewold Gardens
12317 Gravelly Lake Drive SW, Lakewood

Directions:
From I-5, take Exit 124, Head west on Gravelly Lake Drive SW and follow signs.

Annual Arbor Day-Earth Day event marks Bellevue’s 20th Tree City USA award

Krista Loveless

A ceremonial tree planting for the NPA Border will be one of the highlights of Bellevue’s Arbor Day-Earth Day event at Bellevue Botanical Garden on April 16th. This year, the City of Bellevue is celebrating its 20th consecutive Tree City USA award and its 18th Growth Award from the Arbor Day Foundation and the National Association of State Foresters.

Founded by pioneer and journalist J. Sterling Morton in 1872, Arbor Day is a nationally-celebrated holiday that encourages people to plant trees. Since Arbor Day

and Earth Day are observed in April, the City of Bellevue combines the two holidays into one big celebration. This year, the event also coincides with National Volunteer Week.

ARBOR DAY-EARTH DAY EVENT SATURDAY, APRIL 16 BELLEVUE BOTANICAL GARDEN

At the event, families will be able to participate in a “living lab” where they can learn about the many uses of native plants, take a closer look at live insects through “bug TV” with the Bellevue Stream Team, participate in docent-led tours of the Garden, and meet the many volunteer groups that contribute to BBG’s success. Numerous eco-friendly vendors will be on site giving demonstrations and providing information on greener living. A ceremonial tree planting will be held for the NPA Border at 11:30.

FAMILY FESTIVAL, 10 AM-2 PM

Grab your “passport” from a Ranger and journey through the many eco-stations at the park. Activities include a Living Lab native plant workshop, docent-led Garden tours, live bug sampling on “Bug TV” and many others. Get a stamp at each station and return your completed passport for a raffle ticket.

CEREMONIAL TREE PLANTING FOR THE NPA BORDER, 11:30 AM

Raffle to follow.

Winners do not need to be present at time of drawing.

Visit the NPA Booth!

Stop by to say hello to our volunteers, and see what’s new in the NPA Border.

Krista Loveless is Asst. Park Ranger with the City of Bellevue Department of Parks Planning & Resource Management

Creating A Mini Stumpery

Wendy Lagozzino

IN A CORNER of my driveway, I stash a bounty of items possibly useful in some immediately unknown way: Granite rocks fallen from a cliff, dried flower heads and logs. Several years ago, some ancient *Prunus blireiana* plum trees at my church were taken down. Their trunks were magnificently gnarled and knotted such that I knew I had to keep some. Subsequently, four pieces have been sitting in the corner of my driveway for several years. I have enjoyed the way they adorned the corner but found no permanent placement for them. Next door, my neighbor also keeps a few stumps, although his are slotted for burning once he can find time to chop them into manageable pieces. His are short, twisted pieces with roots intact.

There's a place in the back of my mind that is always working on ideas for my garden. I'm not always aware of when it's brewing, but one day I saw my neighbor's stumps with a new eye. They were turned roots up and looked just like a stumpery waiting to be built. With my neighbor's permission, I took one stump, turned topsy turvy and placed it in the corner of my driveway displacing my resident pieces. It fit nicely into that spot. I then played with the remaining four pieces I owned, turning them long ways in front of the corner piece with one along each side. I bordered the front with a few of my granite rocks and voila, I envisioned my first mini stumpery.

After attending several lectures on the famous Vashon Island stumpery of

Pat and Walt Riehl, I had an idea what a stumpery looked like on a large scale. So why not create one with the limited space and materials on hand? I never had any intention of making a stumpery, it just suddenly occurred to me to be the natural thing to do with those materials.



Photo by Wendy Lagozzino

I started by making a sketch of the design and assigning available plant pockets. I designed a variety of woodland plants that complimented each other with texture and form for each pocket. The top plant would be an evergreen fern, *Dryopteris erythrosa*, Brilliance Autumn Fern with its beautiful orange foliage. This would complement an adjacent orange container with its own Autumn fern. It

would be the only one to nestle in the topmost roots of the stump. Seven more pockets were planned with *Asplenium pedatum*, American or Five Finger Maidenhair fern; *Tolmiea menziesii*, Piggyback plant; Hosta 'June'; *Sempervivum*; *Adiantum venustum*, another Maidenhair fern; *Corydalis cheilanthifolia* (which has become the dominant plant) and *Alchemilla mollis*, Lady's mantle.

Next, I laid down a weed block fabric that would attach unobtrusively to the undersides of the wood to hold the soil in. I used a cement block to elevate the middle log creating a step down effect. I then filled the pockets with a good potting soil letting it sift down between the stumps filling up into the pockets. This made a root run for the plants that simulated a rotting stump situation. I found plants with the smallest rootball available and arranged them according to the design and rootball size that would fit into the assigned space.

Now it has been just a few short months since its inception and the plants have filled in nicely, some becoming more dominant than others. It proves to be a restful focal point when arriving home after maneuvering in the hectic city traffic.

Wendy Lagozzino is an avid gardener on Queen Anne who likes to try the new and unusual.



Dicentra spectabilis 'Goldheart'

This plant is my very favorite for a spot in the shade where a highlight is needed. It came from Nori Pope at the Hadspen Gardens, England. You can see how she has used it in her book, *Color By Design*, by Nori and Sandra Pope.



This is the old-fashioned bleeding heart, but with wonderful bright yellow, fern-like foliage. It is slow to develop, but it's a reliable plant that gets better each year.

It's grown mostly for the foliage, but the classic heart-shaped pink flowers are spectacular against the gold leaves.

'Goldheart' needs moist, rich soils with good drainage, partial sun to light shade. It works well planted within a loose groundcover, because it will go dormant as the soils dry out in summer.

Nancy Hansen
Glenwood Gardens
glenwood.gardens@yahoo.com

Dichroa fibrifuga UBC clone

This unforgettable evergreen shrub comes originally from Japan, but came to us from a hort friend at the University of British Columbia. It's taken years of propagation and experimentation, but finally we have some very nice reliable stock and a history



of its behavior in the northwest garden.

Planted out in deep shade, you can expect a three foot height and spread, dark hunter green leaves, showy bold blue blossom clusters, and then, be still my heart! come the bright electric blue fruits in the autumn that hold on through winter. This hydrangea relative does well in our garden planted with good drainage for cold winters and plenty of water in the summer season.

Companion with golden *Hakonochloa* for stunning contrast and refinement.

Judy Zugish
Bouquet Banque Nursery
www.twigtwisters.com

Glaucidium palmatum

Glaucidium palmatum is one of those plants with a presence, instantly hooking anyone lucky enough to witness a mature clump. Elegant and graceful, this *Paeonia* relative looks like a cross between a hellebore and an anemone. *Glaucidium*



grow from a dark brown woody rhizome, similar to a *Paeonia*, forming dense clumps. The leaves are bright green with fine pubescent hairs, and palmately lobed to about eight inches across. The lilac flowers are slightly nodding and formed solitary on a stalk.

Plant in an open, partly shady site mixed with perennials such as *Anemonopsis*, *Trillium*, *Disporum* and *Podophyllum*.

Once planted, *Glaucidium* does not require division and prefers to be left undisturbed

Arlen Hill
Keeping It Green Nursery
www.keepingitgreennursery.com

SPRING PLANT SALE VENDORS

Blue Frog Nursery
Botanica
Bouquet Banque Nursery
De Gro
Earth Wizardry, Pacific Coast Iris

Fancy Fronds
Glenwood Gardens
Growing Girls
Keeping It Green Nursery
Lee Farm

Mt. Forest Farm
NPA Plants
NPA Mercantile
Overland Enterprises
Taking Root Nursery

White Picket Nursery
Specialty tables:
Dahlias
Clematis

NPA CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

Spring & Summer

Our class schedule for spring and summer offers serious learning opportunities seasoned with generous dollops of fun. Learn to diagnose your garden's health with Walt Bubelis, unlock the secrets of good garden design with the very talented Sue Moss, or revel in the beauty of spring with Glenn Withey and Charles Price. Let Gayle Richardson introduce a small sprout in your family to the joys of gardening, cook up an authentic Indian tea with Chitra Parpia, or take an adventurous seed safari with George Lasch. There'll be informative handouts, good laughs, great company, refreshments and even an occasional glass of wine along the way.

Saturday, April 9, 10 – noon
GARDEN HEALTH with *Walt Bubelis*
 Fee: \$20 Class Limit: 15



Learn how to ascertain the health of a garden. Are there obvious problems, hidden or potential issues you need to be aware of? What can you do or not do to make a garden an environmentally friendly place for plants and beneficial fauna? We will analyze a member's garden, looking at soil issues, garden pests, and the local climate. Don't miss this opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge from Walt Bubelis, the popular head of the Horticulture Department at Edmonds Community College for 30 years. Held in the Williamson garden in Steilacoom.

Wednesday, April 13, 10 – noon
DIG IN! with *George Lasch*
 Fee: \$20 Class Limit: 15



Got overgrown grasses? Dwindling Iris? A quick course in how to dig and divide perennials, with demonstrations and tips from Border Supervisor George Lasch. Participants will leave with a freshly divided plant for their own garden. Come prepared to dig in! The NPA Border at Bellevue Botanical Garden.

Saturday, April 23, 1 – 4 PM
SPRING EPHEMERALS
 with *Glenn Withey & Charles Price*
 Fee: \$40 Class Limit: 15
SORRY, THIS CLASS IS FULL



Glenn Withey and Charles Price, famed landscape designers, show you how to jumpstart your garden with a lively show of color by mixing springtime ephemerals with more "permanent" plantings. This class will be held at Dunn Gardens, a horticultural gem that is drop-dead gorgeous in April. Class includes general

spring gardening tips and maintenance how-to's. The afternoon wraps up with hors d'oeuvres & wine.

Saturday, May 7, 10 – 1 PM
SWOT YOUR GARDEN with *Sue Moss*
 Fee: \$40 Class Limit: 15

Well-known landscape designer Sue Moss will teach two methods to enhance your grasp of garden design. We'll begin by discussing the SWOT method, which teaches you how to analyze a garden in terms of its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and



Threats. Next, we'll apply classic landscape design principles as we brainstorm solutions to the needs and possibilities identified in our real-life laboratory, the lovely Redmond garden of Joanne White. The morning concludes with lunch in the garden.

Saturday, May 14, 10 – noon
MAKING MORE with *George Lasch*
 Fee \$20 Class Limit: 15



NPA CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

Spring & Summer

Propagation basics. “Can I have a piece of that wonderful plant?” Wouldn’t it be nice to have a few ready? Learn the many vegetative ways of duplicating your favorite plants. Participants will leave with inspiration and cuttings. Held in the NPA Border at Bellevue Botanical Garden.

Wednesday, May 25, 10 – noon
CHAI & CHAT with *Chitra Parpia*
Fee: \$35 Class Limit: 15

Chitra teaches you how to prepare her fabulous Chai tea and accompaniments, including spinach paneer kebabs, veggie chutney sandwiches, spicy Indian style pretzels, cracked wheat upma (pilaf), sprouted moong salad, traditional dessert



and more! A feast for the senses, beautiful, aromatic and delicious. Class will be taught in Chitra’s kitchen, at her waterfront home in Kirkland.

Saturday, June 4, 1 – 2 PM
MY FIRST GARDEN CLASS
(For children k–3)
with *Gayle Richardson*
Fee: \$10 per child Class Limit: 20

Legendary Children’s Librarian Gayle Richardson weaves together stories and activities in a one-hour program designed to introduce your children or grandchildren to the joys of gardening. Each child

will receive several goodies to take home. Held in the Bellevue Botanical Garden.



Wednesday, June 15, 10 – noon
HERBACEOUS PRUNING SECRETS
with *George Lasch*
Fee: \$20 Class Limit: 15



How to manage your perennials to get the most out of them all season long. Pinching and pruning will yield results that will help your plants earn their keep. Learn the tricks of the trade to help you enjoy them more. Class held in the NPA Border at Bellevue Botanical Garden.

Saturday, August 6, 2 - 5 PM
SEED SAFARI IN SNOHOMISH
with *George Lasch & friends*
Fee: \$50 Class Limit: 15



Join our guides on an expedition to three wonderful gardens in the wilds of Snohomish. At each stop we will hunt up some seeds to bag, while learning about different types of fruits and the when, how and what of collecting them. Light snacks along the way. Our final stop will be where the treasures of the day will be discussed and shared over a glass of wine.



Watch for new Fall and Winter classes, coming in September.

CLASS REGISTRATION

We urge you to sign up early for the classes you want, since class sizes are limited.

It’s easy to register online at www.n-p-a.org

Or contact the NPA Office at 425-647-6004 or classes@northwestperennialalliance.org

Details and driving directions for each class will be sent following your registration.

Murder and Mayhem in the Mulch

Gayle Richardson

AS PROMISED in the last issue of the *Perennial Post*, here's Murder and Mayhem in the Mulch, reviews of a host of horticultural mysteries.

Rothenberg, Rebecca

The Bulrush Murders, The Dandelion Murders, The Shy Tulip Murders, The Tumbleweed Murders

Rothenberg was an amateur botanist and president of her local chapter of the California Native Plant Society. Her series features Claire Sharples, a prickly, independent (and, dare one say, a bit man-hungry) microbiologist working in California's San Joaquin Valley and Sierra Nevada foothills. Her first title was nominated for the Anthony Boucher and Agatha Christie Awards and was listed by the LA Times as one of the top ten mysteries of 1992. Number three, *The Shy Tulip*, deals with a population of *Calochortus invenustus* subsp. *westii* discovered right in the middle of an area a greedy timber baron wants to clearcut. In addition to bringing a part of the world unfamiliar to many of us vividly to life, Rothenberg has a knack for dry and sardonic humor. Sadly, the series ends at four as the author died in 1998 at age 50.

Sherwood, John

Green Trigger Fingers, A Botanist at Bay, The Mantrap Garden

Celia Grant, a spunky, "young sixty" widow, runs Archerscroft Nursery, which specializes in hellebores and other signature plants she has carefully propagated and nurtured. In eleven books written between 1984 and 1996 she and her assistant Bill Wilkins team up in what Publishers Weekly calls a series that "exemplifies the cream of British mysteries."



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

Mills, Mark

The Savage Garden, 2007

In 1958, Cambridge art history student Adam Strickland gets a plum of a thesis assignment from his tutor: go to Tuscany and do a study of a Renaissance garden created in 1577 by Federico Docci to honor Flora, his young wife, dead at the age of 25. Using the layout of the garden itself, with its glades and grottoes, pools, statues and architecture, as well as consulting such writers as Dante and Ovid, Adam discovers a shocking secret that has lain hidden for 400 years. This one hit the best seller lists and my own "favorite books of the year" as well.

Ripley, Ann

Death at The Spring Plant Sale and many others

The above book piqued the curiosity of your reviewer, who has spent many hours volunteering for the NPA Spring Plant Sales. It turns out Ridley must have been hard up for a title, since the murder took place in a driveway eight hours after the sale ended and other puzzlers include the appearance of "stagnant moss," which we'll hope was the creation of a witless copy editor. With seven previous garden mysteries to her credit, Ripley must know "sphagnum." Averagely entertaining.

Walpow, Nathan

The Cactus Club Killings, Death of An Orchid Lover

Joe Portugal has realized that he's never going to be a big star, so has switched to acting in commercials. This leaves him plenty of time to pursue his love of cactus and succulents at the Culver City Cactus Club. When death by cactus rears its ugly head, Joe sets out to investigate with the help of a cast of entertaining associates. In the sequel, he moves out of his plant comfort zone to discover who killed a well known orchid fancier.

Eglin, Anthony

The Blue Rose, The Lost Gardens, The Water Lily Cross, The Trail of The Wild Rose

Eglin, an Englishman now living in Sonoma, has the right chops—he won *Garden Design Magazine's* 1992 Golden Trowel Award for Best Rose Garden. In his series featuring retired botany professor Lawrence Kingston (erudite, bon vivant, and, if memory serves, a bit pompous and self-satisfied) plants play a major role: a genetic impossibility is discovered in a corner of a Wiltshire garden, a hybrid plant with world-changing possibilities brings disaster to its propagator, a plant hunt in China turns deadly, etc. Despite some awkward writing and plotting, the series is gaining fans, and the titles are new enough to be found in libraries.

Freeman, Mary

Devil's Trumpet, Deadly Nightshade, Bleeding Heart, Garden View

A series that has just come to this reviewer's attention. Perhaps not as plant oriented as others in this column, but the "local" setting in the Columbia Gorge area, where Rachel O'Connor runs Rain County Landscape, may appeal.

HERE WE ARE, fresh from the whirlwind of the Northwest Flower & Garden Show weekend and winter's final farewell. Spring has arrived and we are smack in the middle of it. Many of the wee ephemeral flowers have come and gone. The bigger, brasher bulbs have taken the stage. In the Border I am looking forward to the fruits of two days of bulb planting last autumn. Many new Narcissus are up and heralding the most pleasant season. Areas that are still a bit bare are being noted, and our wish lists are evolving as we acquire new plants and add other new gems to search out. This gardening thing is fortunately never-ending!

This spring a few of the new *Helleborus x hybridus* seedlings that Charles Price donated last year managed to put out a few blooms. I think that they have regained their pride of place in my mind again. They are still settling in and next year should see truer colors and habits. The colors and size of the ones that did bloom were quite nice indeed. As soon as the floral show was fading we snipped the flower stems



George Lasch, NPA Border Supervisor

off. It's important to deadhead *Helleborus* to prevent the seedlings from taking over the parent plants, since the offspring are seldom as choice as the original.

We lost some of the Spanish lavender plants early in the winter. Others were just burned a bit. Some that were just too misshapen were culled outright, while others have been pruned back to live growth, with fingers crossed for fast regrowth. We have had less-than-stellar results with most of the new *Echinaceas* the past few winters.

While the pink and white ones come back, the yellow and orange/red ones have all but disappeared. We will continue to try them as they are available and donated, in hopes that we can find some colorful ones that are also good garden plants.

A big thank you to Pacific Topsoils for another donation of mulch. This winter we didn't need as much for coverage, it was more a matter of freshening up with top dressing. We continue to work with Bellevue Botanical Garden volunteer coordinator Lisa Scott to help us find groups of community service volunteers to work in the Border, supplementing the efforts of our NPA volunteers. We are thinking of trying a weekday evening volunteer crew again this summer. If you want to get involved for casual fun, a few hours on a weeknight might work for you. Let me know at border@npa.org.

See you at the NPA Spring Plant Sale, open gardens and classes this spring!

Thank you, garden show volunteers!

NEITHER RAIN, NOR SLEET, NOR SNOW kept our valiant volunteers from the Northwest Flower & Garden Show in February. They showed up right on schedule to don their green volunteer aprons and share their enthusiasm for NPA. Thank you, volunteers, for making all of us so proud to be part of this great organization! Many thanks also to Carol Holloway, who set up the volunteer schedule.

The new booth, designed by George Lasch, was a showcase for NPA's passion for plants, with a wonderful display of spring ephemerals donated by our generous friends at Sundquist and Edelweiss nurseries. The booth was well-stocked with beautiful new brochures and promotional materials created by Michele and Paul Cournoyer, who also designed the volunteer aprons. A big thank you to AAA Washington, who underwrote the cost of the brochures.

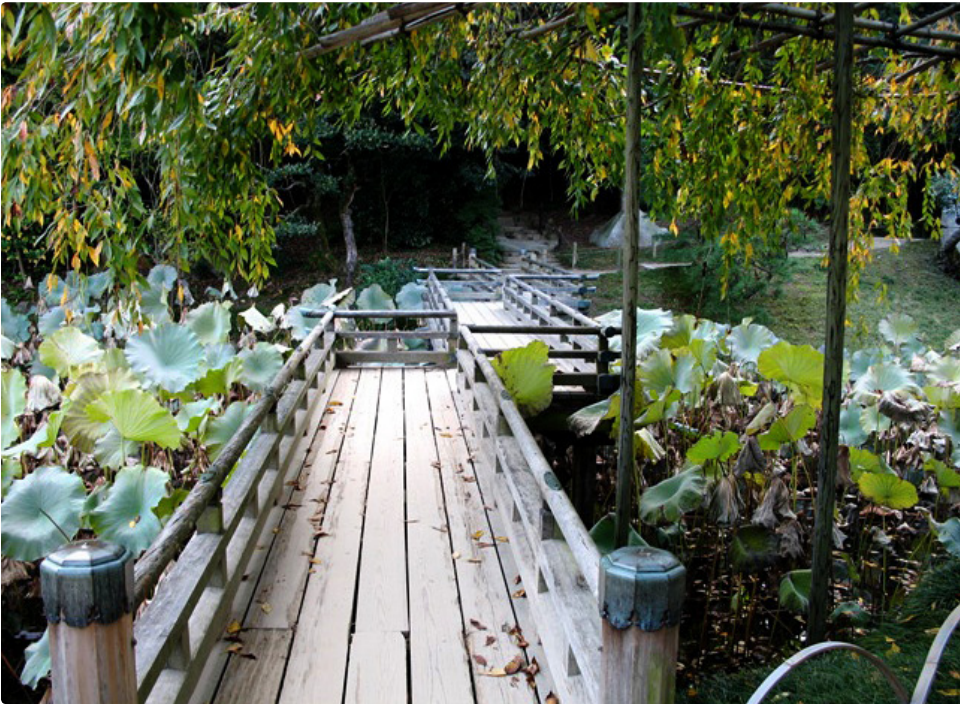
Last but not least, congratulations to the winner of the signed copy of *Bloom's Best Perennials*, Barbara Currey of Tacoma.



Photo by Ellie Sanchez

The Joys of Japanese Gardens

Marilyn Tsuchiya



THE JAPANESE have always had close ties to nature. Shinto, the indigenous religion of Japan, holds that all of nature is imbued with the spirit of one of its many deities (kami), and much in nature is sacred. The nuances and changes of the seasons are celebrated. In spring, there are picnics and sake drinking under cherry blossoms. In fall, there are pilgrimages to gardens to view maples. Japan has more species of maple than anywhere else in the world, and at the end of October into November the mountains blaze with reds, yellows and oranges.

Traditional Japanese garden design mimics nature, often incorporating a miniaturization of a famous scenic spot in Japan, an imagined one from China, or an image from a poem of the Heian period (794 to 1185 AD). The reverence for nature is not limited to mountains or large gardens. It is in evidence everywhere one looks—in a tiny Tsubo-niwa (courtyard garden), a collection of planted vessels in front of a home or shop, or a huge ikebana display in a restaurant or at the entrance to a shrine.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF GARDEN DESIGN IN JAPAN

Garden design in Japan is an ancient art. The first gardens were probably formed around a sacred stone or tree thought to be a place where a kami might live or visit. Pond gardens of the 11th century Heian period were depicted as western paradises dedicated to the Amida Buddha. Beginning in the 13th century, karesansui (dry gardens) connected to Zen temples distilled the essence of nature into an abstract painting through the use of rocks, gravel, and a minimum of plant material. Later, stroll gardens with their winding paths and hide-and-reveal techniques, such as Katsura Villa in Kyoto (the model for the Japanese Garden in Seattle's Washington Park Arboretum), became prominent. Today, designers like Shunmyo Masuno, a Zen monk, are creating cutting-edge contemporary karesansui gardens outside of the Zen temple context.

Traditionally, Japanese gardens use a restrained plant palette. Rocks are an important element of design. In the 16th century, a famous shogun named Toyo-

tom Hideyoshi had his samurai obtain rocks by any method possible, including extortion and theft. The empty space left in the plundered gardens led to the infamous sheared shrubs, which took the forms of the missing rocks!

VISITING JAPAN IN THE FALL

Every fall for the past five years, my husband Kazuo and I have taken small groups to Kyoto and other areas on Honshu, the main and largest island of Japan. Kazuo was born and raised in Japan and has returned yearly or more often since emigrating to the United States 34 years ago. While focusing on the gardens, arts, and cultural traditions of Japan, our group explores misty mountain villages, quiet back streets lined with old wooden houses, shops surrounding temples, and a variety of traditional and contemporary gardens—public and private.

Fall travel to Japan has many delights—bright red blooms on a cluster of



Canna along the railway, blue *Ipomoea tricolor* (morning glory vine) billowing from an upstairs window, the wafting scent of the orange-blossomed *Osmanthus* fragrans, or a glistening hillside of yellow *Solidago* (goldenrod). Other serendipitous encounters captured in the autumn light include lovely groups of orchid-like *Tricyrtis* (toad lilies), clumps of *Chasmanthium latifolium* (a pink-flowering oat grass), the bright yellow flowers of *Ligularia steno-*



cephala, and sweeps of low bamboo. As the maples begin to blaze, Pummelo (the largest citrus in the world) and Pomegranate fruits ripen on tree limbs.

Throughout the fall, chrysanthemums are showcased, either as bonsai shrubs or as specimens with huge, perfect blooms. At the monthly Tenjin-san flea market, which fills the streets surrounding the Kitano Tenmangu shrine in northwest Kyoto, plants are offered for sale that even members of our plant-savvy groups cannot identify. This should not be surprising at one of our NPA lectures Dan Hinkley mentioned that Japan has more hybridized plant species than anywhere else in the world! Even the Saiho-ji Temple in Kyoto has over a hundred varieties of moss! Junji Kagata's bamboo warehouse in Kyoto, which has been in business for over 80 years, is full of unique and rare varieties. Some of the reclaimed material is centuries old and retains the intriguing forms for which it was originally used, such as for roof rafters in traditional houses.

My husband and I are deeply saddened by the news from Japan. All of our friends and relatives are safe but we are heartbroken over the loss of lives and injuries. Damage in the places that we visit is minimal and we will carry on with our October tour. This is the best way for us to support the country of Japan. — Marilyn Tsuchiya

WHY JAPANESE GARDENS MATTER

Japanese gardens have a long history and are rich in mythological and religious symbolism, which contributes to their fascination. The essential message of a Japanese garden, however, is that regardless of what time of year we experience it, we are connecting to the rejuvenating power of nature, a kind of balm to the mind and spirit. This is especially welcome and essential to those of us—in Japan and elsewhere—who lead busy urban lives. From Japanese gardens, we can draw inspiration for our gardens—and for our lives.



Photos by Marilyn Tsuchiya

Marilyn Tsuchiya is a member of the NPA Board and a docent at the Japanese Garden at Seattle's Washington Park Arboretum. Marilyn and Kazuo Tsuchiya's next trip to Japan is scheduled for October 21 to November 3, 2011. Contact Marilyn for more information (marilyntsuchiya@comcast.net).



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.

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If you've forgotten to renew, or would just like to update your information, we've enclosed an application with this edition of the Post for your convenience. Or give the application to a friend or neighbor who enjoys gardening! Share a year of inspiring garden tours, classes & workshops, lectures and gardening fun.

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