

THE PERENNIAL POST

NORTHWEST PERENNIAL ALLIANCE



SPRING 2011 | VOLUME 21 | ISSUE 2

The NPA Spring Plant Sale is April 22

OUR BIGGEST SALE of the year will be held April 22 at North Seattle Community College, a comfortable indoor location crammed to the rafters with irresistible perennials, grasses, groundcovers, evergreens and shrubs.

This sale is an important fundraiser for NPA and a vital source of income for many of the vendors who participate. These are local growers, small nurseries owned by hardcore plant geeks, offering plants you just can't find at the big box stores. In fact, many of our vendors aren't open to the public, so sales like ours are your only chance to browse their unique selections. You'll find healthy, locally grown, locally adapted plants that have the best chance of doing well in your garden. As an added bonus, you can shop tax free, saving almost 10 percent, while you help support the educational programs of NPA. *Read more about our vendors on page 5.*

DOOR PRIZES EVERY HOUR

We're adding a new wrinkle to this year's sale, a door prize every hour on the hour for some lucky shopper. Just pick up a free



Joanne White and Debbie Vaught at last year's sale.

ticket on your way in and listen to see if your number is called. You must be present to win.

FREE LECTURES AT 10 AM, 1 PM & 2 PM

10:00 am — "*Underutilized Plants and Personal Favorites*" with **Walt Bubelis**
Overwhelmed by the huge selection of great plants at the sale? Let Walt point out his personal favorites and show you plants that don't get used often enough in our gardens.

1:00 pm — "*Best Drought Tolerant Plants*" with **Mark Overholt**

Learn about tough, beautiful plants that only need a sip of water to perform their best all summer long. Mark's presentation of favorite drought tolerant plants will include bulbs, shrubs and perennials.

2:00 pm — "*Embarrassing Plant Questions*" with **George Lasch**

An interactive session where you can finally get answers to your most vexing gardening problems. Or if you're embarrassed, write your question down and submit it anonymously. Great fun, and a real learning opportunity for all.

PLENTY OF FREE PARKING

For quick plant sale access, park in the lots on the west side of campus, along College Way North. Parking is free in these lots on Sunday.

NPA SPRING PLANT SALE

Sunday, April 22, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm
North Seattle Community College
9600 College Way North, Seattle

Summer Magic at Windcliff

SATURDAY, AUGUST 4
FUNDRAISER AT WINDCLIFF

Afternoon tickets:
\$50 members/\$75 nonmembers

Evening tickets:
\$175 members/\$200 nonmembers



Photo courtesy of Dan Hinkley

Mark your calendars now for the highlight of the season, a fundraiser for NPA at Windcliff, the famous garden of Dan Hinkley and Robert Jones, coming August 4th. Two separate Windcliff events will be offered, an afternoon tour with refreshments and an evening tour with dinner.

Windcliff continued on page 10

- APRIL 22** | **Spring Plant Sale**, Sunday, 9 am – 3 pm. North Seattle Community College, 9600 College Way N, Seattle. See page 1 for details. Vendors, page 5.
- MAY 6** | **South Sound Lecture with Tina Dixon**, Sunday, 1:30. University Place Library, 3609 Market Place W, Tacoma
- JUNE 15-16** | **Bus Tour to Portland**, Friday-Saturday. Departs 8:30 am Friday, returns (approx.) 8 pm Saturday. Prices & details on page 3.
- JUNE 23** | **Bellevue Botanical Garden 20th Anniversary Celebration**, Saturday, 2 – 5 pm. Bellevue Botanical Garden 12001 Main Steet, Bellevue. Free.
- AUGUST 4** | **Fundraiser at Windcliff**, Saturday. Afternoon and evening events at Windcliff, the garden of Dan Hinkley and Robert Jones. Prices and details, page 1.
- APRIL-SEPTEMBER** | **Open Gardens every weekend**, Saturdays & Sundays, 10 am – 4 pm. It's the peak of Open Gardens season for NPA members, with dozens of gardens open to tour all summer long.

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Carole Andrews | Michael Farndale | Artha Nafe |
| Kenneth & Donna Armitage | Dorothea Feek | Jana & Rick Nelson |
| Cathy Atkins-Pittenger | Judy & Mark Fenton | Rick & Jana Nelson |
| Jane Barnes | Laurie Foster | Kelli Jayn Nichols & Matthew Liu |
| Anne Baum | Holly Graves | Pam Ogle |
| Karen Benson | Ruth Gustafson | Amy Palmer |
| Phyllis Berglund & Hank Kruse | Kit Haesloop | Sandra Rankins |
| Cathy & Graeme Blake | Chris & Phil Harvey | Kathryn Russell |
| Heather & Dick Brandt | Charles & Karen Heiberg | Jack Sanzalone, Jr & Dawn Sanzalone |
| Lynn Briere & Zoe Sexton | Karen Heiberg | Marise & Robert Schader |
| Corinne & David Brown | Sandra Hodge | Cynthia Sheridan |
| Carol Burton | Suzy & Gordon Johns | Karen & Mani Soma |
| Nancy Butler & Katherine Urmann | Kathleen Key & Mark Aronszajn | Robert Spearman & Karrie Berglund |
| Diane & Robert Cairns | Geneene Kluck & Douglas Pook | Carol Steffy |
| Claudia Calderhead | Kurt Laidlaw | Mark & Cathy Stempski |
| Nancy & Nick Chase | Donna & David Litton | Sole Switzer |
| Maureen Conroyd | Deanna Lorentzen | Sharyn Thimmesch |
| Greg Cooper & Lorraine Shulman | Maureen MacDonald | Deborah Toney |
| Alacyn Coupe | Gayle Macy | Mary Lou & Dirk VanWoerden |
| Cynthia Creasey | Devota & Joseph Madrano | Joachim Voss & Don Horn |
| Margaret Cruse | Mary Manous & Weldon Debosk | Nancy Wiechmann |
| Renee & Lyle Curry | Julie Martin | Luanne Williams |
| Suzanne Dobrin | Barbara McFarren & Sean Noel | Catherine Wing |
| Pat & Fred Erickson | Kathy McMahan | Jenny Wyatt |
| Kathy A. & Chip Ewert | Bruce Moulton | Laura & Paul Yoshihara |
| | Marianne Mulcahey | |

All aboard the NPA Bus Tour to Portland

George Lasch

Join NPA for a fun and fabulous tour of private gardens and wonderful nurseries in Portland and beyond! Meet our luxury coach at the Wilburton Park and Ride for an early departure on Friday morning. Our first stop will be at the wonderful garden of Lucy Hardiman in Portland. A longtime horticultural icon, Lucy has made some big changes to her garden recently; stroll through the pitch-perfect colors of a garden that belies its size. We will relax and enjoy a boxed lunch from the Elephant Deli at Lucy's as we get up to speed on what is happening in the Portland Garden Scene.

Next we'll alight at Nancyland, the whimsical garden of Nancy Goldman. Filled with all kinds of great plants and sculpture that are well placed, re-used, re-painted, re-done and out done, it's a just plain fun place. A serious garden designer as well a fun gal to be around, Nancy will likely accompany us to our next stop.

There are many smaller nurseries and garden centers across the city, but Garden Fever stands out. When people are asked if they could only stop at one quintessential Portland place, this tops the list.

Then on to Pistols Nursery where you will find the perfect plant or gift or avian accoutrement. Plenty to see and buy here, from seeds to gloves to unusual plants.

At the end of the day we'll unwind at the Marriot Portland City Center, a hotel located close to everything. We will reconvene and walk a few blocks over to Mother's Bistro for a group meal on Friday night. Mother's has a wide menu and will be able to accommodate our group with separate checks, too! If you need more there are plenty of places for a night cap nearby – but be to bed early for a busy, fun-filled day on Saturday!

We'll check out of the hotel and board

the bus heading out of town for an adventure to the South and West.

The first stop--and one everyone will be looking forward to--will be at the famed Xera Plants Nursery. A wholesale in the Northwest only nursery, they have agreed to let us in to tour and shop for two hours. Be ready to shop! They are used to



First stop on our fun-filled bus tour will be Lucy Hardiman's wonderful garden.

larger orders and faxed orders, so have patience while they tally up our onesies and twosies purchases. They accept cash or checks only. After your haul has been stashed on the bus, we'll head back up into Portland to see two more private gardens.

A veritable tour of the globe awaits us at the garden of Craig Quirk and Larry Neil. Their garden has everything from classic NW Asian style to Xeric to Bali-Tropical and some fun shade and bog areas, too. The tropicals should be out and going for it by June and the shade garden's lushness of unusual plants will be in full force.

Just down and around the corner is the fantastic garden of Cynthia Woodyard. Touted as the "Glenn and Charles" of Portland, Cynthia's company is indeed well regarded. When I asked the popular Dunn Garden duo where they stop when down South, they both answered Cynthia's! Expect some amazing plant combinations, luxurious containers and fantastical design. Make sure your personal camera is charged. Photos only for personal use and not for public sharing.

Next, the coach will whisk us northward for a date with the great people at Joy Creek Nursery. If you like Clematis this is a "must shop." Most are familiar with their extensive and ever changing catalog, but there are many new and old selections that never make it into print. We'll have just enough time to do a loop through the sales

area. As we have all learned, "When you see it, buy it!"

Finally, before heading home, we'll detour onto Suavie Island to see what Cistus Nursery has to offer this season. Famed plantsman Sean Hogan and his group of plant nerds will be on hand to help you make decisions for the mind boggling array of potted goodies. If there is any budget left, this would be the place to finish it off.

Load your boxes of never-seen-one-of-those-before's onto the bus. Then, well-sated, we'll head for home.



NPA BUS TOUR TO PORTLAND
JUNE 15-16, FRIDAY-SATURDAY

**Luxury coach from Wilburton
Park and Ride**

Depart 8:30 am Friday

Return (approx) 8:00 pm Saturday

\$275 per person, double occupancy

\$365 per person, single occupancy

*Price includes: Bus, hotel, 2 box lunches
& admission to gardens*

Limited to 25 people

Make reservations online: www.n-p-a.org

Or email the NPA office:

info@northwestperennialalliance.org

Special thanks to travel agent Charlie Brakebill of Professional Travel (charlie.brakebill@gmail.com) for her help with our hotel arrangements for this tour.

Exciting and reliable spring perennial favorites: Overwhelming, intimidating, but not impossible to grow.

Rizaniño "Riz" Reyes, Landwave Gardens

SPRING IS EXCITEMENT. Spring is anticipation. Spring is the renewal of a passion for plants that resides inside each gardener, awakens every March and carries through May. The selection of plants available to us is overwhelming as our gardens begin to explode out of the earth like rockets on course for a botanical adventure that's only just begun.

Selecting a favorite amongst spring blooming and foliage plants is impossible and it frustrates me to have to select just a few for this article, but I will refrain and instead aim to whet your appetite as you mark your calendars and save up your plant buying budget.

Among the first plants to come into flower after the dark, gloomy days of winter are delicate, but hardy spring ephemerals. These are valuable in the landscape because the colonies of extravagant color can be so incredibly eye catching if one allows them to spread or politely self seed. The true



Erythronium

beauty of their presence in the garden is the fact that they often thrive in fairly difficult conditions simply because they come and go. Many spring ephemerals are woodland



Pacific Coast Iris

plants that thrive under the canopies of bare deciduous trees in the forest which are just starting to bud and leaf out. This creates a filtered light that these special plants absolutely thrive and shine in.

Anemones are simply irresistible in the spring garden because of their cheery color and very unique forms, especially the Wood Anemones (*Anemone nemorosa*). A charming little double called 'Vestal' is very choice and prized by collectors all over the Northern Hemisphere. Then there's the short-lived, but ever so spectacular *Anemone blanda*. I like to plant the 'Blue Shades' strain in drifts; their intense range of blues are just jaw-dropping in full bloom.

The so-called Dog-Tooth Violets aren't really violets, but of the genus *Erythronium*. It gets its common name by the bulb it produces, which resembles a large canine's tooth. From that small tooth in the ground pops up bronzy mottled leaves and slim stems that produce beautiful bells to ring in the season. An established clump is quite remarkable. The ever popular 'Pagoda' is dependable and easy, as are our

native *E. oreganum* and *E. revolutum* and the hybrids developed from the two.

Pacific Coast Irises are becoming more and more popular with gardeners, and while the rest of the country is restricted to the more common bearded or Siberian types, we are blessed to be able to grow native species and their intriguing hybrids here in the Northwest, where they are real workhorses in tough spots like dry shade in the home garden. Most of them also have attractive, evergreen foliage and remain throughout the season after bloom, making them even more valuable in the landscape. Species such as *I. douglasii* and *I. tenax* can be found at spring plant sales, but the ones to seek out are the hard-to-find hybrids only a few growers possess and can never propagate enough of.

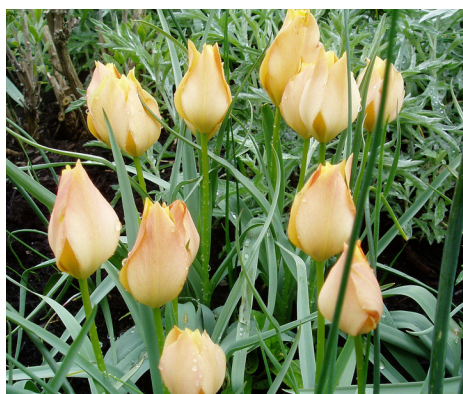
I can't write an article about spring blooming plants without mentioning the multitude of popular bulbs everyone expects to see in the spring landscape. Species tulips and dependable daffodils are absolutely incredible, and reliably come back year after year in the garden. One of my most favorite species tulips has to be *T. batalinii* 'Bright Gem'. I fell in love with this cultivar as a gardener at the UW Botanic Garden's Center for Urban Horticulture and each May, I'm enthralled



Anemone blanda 'Blue Shades'

by the naturalized clumps of this variety in the Soest Perennial Display Garden. *Narcissus* are another staple in the garden and the toughest seem to be the shorter, more diminutive selections such as the fiery 'Jetfire' and the rugged, but elegant and lightly scented 'Jack Snipe'.

My recent obsession with *Epimedium* started with a small collection of the Chinese species that slowly began to expand with the numerous hybrids and even more species I don't have in my possession.



Tulipa batalinii 'Bright Gem'

Photos by Riz Reyes

They're known for their delicate flowers that float above often evergreen foliage, and the shapes and color range continue to expand and entice gardeners as more and more hybrids are being developed and introduced. The tough, dry-shade tolerant *x perralchicum* 'Frohnleiten' has spectacular winter foliage color that it makes it difficult to cut back so the bright yellow flowers can pop up and open. For a most unusual and intensely colored bloom, a selection called 'Hot Lips' developed by Diana Reick of Collector's Nursery is a must have, as is the charming and readily available *E. grandiflorum* 'Lilafee'.

It's not all just about flowers in spring, emerging foliage is equally important and among the most intriguing are our wonderful assortment of ferns available to us here in the Pacific Northwest. Their emerging fronds, or crosiers, are simply a sight to behold and there are so many to choose from. I often select ferns with year-round interest and interesting new

growth. Some favorites include the tough and dependable *Dryopteris erythosora* (Autumn Fern) and our native *Blechnum spicant* (Deer Fern) mixed with *Oxalis oregana* (redwood sorrel). The furry fronds of emerging *Polystichum polyblepharum* (Japanese Tassel Fern) are unusual and dramatic.

Overwhelming? Yes. Intimidating, perhaps? Sure. Impossible? NEVER. We're in the Pacific Northwest, a Mecca for plants; a place where Asia can meet the Mediterranean and South Africa can coincide with Australia, and Eastern Europe can grow with South America. The diversity of spring blooming plants we have is simply astonishing and I've barely scratched the surface. Shop to your heart's content at the plant sales this spring and celebrate this awakening and a new beginning to your gardening season. (Editor's note: You'll find most of the plants mentioned in this article at the NPA Spring Plant Sale on April 22.)

SPRING PLANT SALE VENDORS

Blue Frog Nursery

www.bluefrog-nursery.net
Russ Smith
Perennials, ground covers,
shrubs, trees and azaleas

Botanica

www.botanicaplants.com
Pamela Harlow
Uncommon and underused
perennials

Bouquet Banque

www.twig-twisters.com
Bill Roeder
Fat, juicy, healthy, two-gallon
perennials

de Gro

Melinda Gracey
Uncommon perennials and
some temperennials

Earth Wizardry

Pacific Coast Irises
Richard Greenberg
Outstanding selection of hard-
to-find Pacific Coast Irises

Fancy Fronds

www.fancyfronds.com
Judith Jones
A large selection of both
common and rare ferns

Glenwood Gardens

www.glenwood-gardens.com
Nancy Hansen
Shrubs, dwarf stuff, conifers
and perennials

Growing Girls

Beth Burman
Unusual shade loving perennials

Jordan Nursery

Hardy Fuchsias
www.jordannurserygreenhouses.com
Kevin Jones

Keeping It Green

info@keepingitgreennursery.com
Arlen Hill
Hardy orchids, unusual woodland-
ers and hard-to-find natives

Lee Farm

www.leefarmandnursery.com
Carrie Lee
Trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses,
and hardy fuchsias

Overland Enterprises

Mark & Susan Overholt
Drought-tolerant perennials for
sun or shade

Ramble On Rose

Marta Gorny
Perennials, wholesale
since 1980

Taking Root

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

White Picket

Kristi Fina
Unusual perennials, drought-
tolerant plants, salvias and
hebes

Wind Poppy

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

Remembering Kevin Nicolay

KEVIN NICOLAY was one of the founders of the NPA in 1984. He was a noted plantsman and teacher, and one of the better botanical illustrators of his time. Kevin imported seeds and cuttings of rare and unusual plants, and introduced hundreds of plants to American gardens before his death in 1990. NPA holds an annual Kevin Nicolay Memorial Lecture in his honor. This year the lecture included an auction of one of his paintings, which sold for \$1,500. The winning bid came from NPA Vice President Gayle Richardson. Several long-time friends and admirers also took the occasion to share their memories of Kevin, some of which follow.



Anyone phoning the home of Kevin Nicolay in his last year was greeted by a prim, pseudo-British voice declaring, 'You have reached the studio of Kevin Nicolay, Slave of the Goddess Flora. He is unable to come to the phone right now because he is either painting plants, writing about plants, talking about plants, or taking care of far too many plants...' Though tongue-in-cheek, this message was an accurate summation of Kevin's lifestyle. An internationally acclaimed garden communicator and plantsman extraordinaire, Kevin was considered one of the finest botanical illustrators of his time. Sadly, he lost his struggle with AIDS at the age of 33.

Jean Emmons, botanical artist, and former student of Kevin Nicolay.



One of the showstoppers in my garden is a massive sweep of *Chrysanthemum* 'Bronze Elegance'. Kevin gave me a start and I seldom look at the display without remembering him.

Pam Harper, photographer and author of many books on perennials.



Kevin Nicolay, one of the original founders of NPA

A few years after moving to Seattle, I moved into a small mother-in-law cottage in the Central District only a couple of blocks away from Kevin's home. At that time I had a wonderful, yet energetic dog that insisted on long walks... It was not long before we happened to walk by Kevin's garden. Although I never met him I enjoyed our regular sidewalk visits. As a new gardener just learning about plants in the Northwest it was a real treat to see all sorts of wonderful plants marching through the seasons (including) rarities like hellebores and other early spring bloomers in the lush planted plot.

Richie Steffen, Curator, Elisabeth C. Miller Botanical Garden



I am the reason Kevin came to the West Coast. I met him in Cleveland...and when I moved to Victoria in 1980 I invited Kevin to come and visit. His visit lasted three months! He painted many paintings in his guestroom in my house."

Maedythe Martin, American Primrose Society, Victoria, BC.

The main memory I'd want people to take away would be how many plants Kevin introduced to the PNW that nowadays we take for granted. People need to remember that in the early 1980's we had to grow *Echinacea purpurea* from seeds, as no retail nursery had it for sale. These are just a few of the plants that were doled out by Kevin to nursery growers and friends: *Cimicifuga* or *Actaea* 'Brunette', *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Dawson's White', *Fuchsia magellanica* 'Aurea' and *Helleborus x. hybridus* (the first good black flowered form in the region, among other colors). In some ways it is hard to believe what excitement and frisson these plants generated, seeing them for the first time early on in our gardening career. Mostly, we remember Kevin's spirit. He was both kind and generous, gossipy and funny, talented and lazy. He was human, like all of us, but such a bright light.

Glenn Withey, of noted garden design team Withey/Price, who designed the NPA Border.



At his funeral there were no store bought flowers at his request, only those grown in our gardens. Jerry Sedenko's wonderful sense of humor is now my fondest memory. He said, "Come on now, let's not get too maudlin. We all know that Kevin is not pushing up daisies. He's pushing up the rarest and best plants he can find!"

Barbara Flynn, friend and fellow gardener extraordinaire



NPA CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

Spring & Summer



Saturday, May 12th, 10-1pm

PACIFIC COAST IRIS

with *Richard Greenberg*

Fee: \$25.00 Class limit 15
Skyway & Wallingford private gardens

Join Pacific Coast Iris aficionado Richard for a tour of two gardens and learn all about these Northwest gems. You will be introduced to many cultivars, species and hybrids of iris and talk about their cultivation, propagation, aesthetic use in the landscape and desirability as a garden worthy plant. You will see many colors and forms of iris and see why it is called the Rainbow Flower.

Wednesday, May 16th, 10-Noon

HERBACEOUS PLANT MANAGEMENT

with *George Lasch*

Fee \$20.00 Class limit 15

Getting the most out of your herbaceous plants all season. The basics of pinching, staking, training and other techniques. Class to be held in the NPA Border where we will discuss and demonstrate some of

the tricks to helping your plants perform at their best. Bring your questions for the group to discuss.

Saturday, May 19, 1-2 pm

MY FIRST GARDEN

with *Gayle Richardson*

For children 5-7
Fee: \$10 per child Class limit 8

Children ages 5-7 are invited to attend this class for budding gardeners. They'll learn a bit about the fascinating world of seeds and proceed to sow and transplant, as well as enjoy a garden craft or two. Each child will go home laden with goodies and, with luck, the itch to garden forever.

Wednesday, June 20th, 10-1pm

SOFTWOOD CUTTINGS

with *Kathy Norsworthy*

Fee: \$20.00 Class limit 15
Kenmore, WA

With the right tools, techniques, timing and conditions, it's easy to propagate new plants from softwood shoots. Some of the plants we will be working with include: spiraea, lavender, weigela, caryopteris and hardy fuchsias.

Wednesday, July 11th, 10-1pm

SEDUM WREATHS

with *Kathy Norsworthy*

Fee: \$20.00 materials \$30.00
(payable to instructor)
Kenmore, WA

For a beautiful display of everlasting color and texture, add a living Sedum wreath to your garden. Learn tips and tricks to keeping your wreath alive through the seasons. All supplies and tools provided.

Saturday, July 21st, 10-12noon

THE GLORIOUS CLEMATIS OF HIGH SUMMER

With *Laura Watson*

Fee \$20.00 Class limit 15

Come and learn from clematis guru, Laura Watson, about some of the easiest clematis to grow and to prune, including the integrifolias, the viticellas, and the texensis. The class will combine a PowerPoint presentation with a guided tour of Laura's garden where many of these clematis will be in glorious bloom.

Wednesday, August 15th, 6-8pm

SUMMER EVENING STROLL

with *George Lasch*

Fee: FREE Class limit: 15 must
preregister!

Spend an evening in the wonderful NPA Border with Border Supervisor George Lasch. We will explore the best plants for the Dog days and how to get the most out of them. Come prepared to discuss plants, good and bad, and to enjoy the garden.

CLASS REGISTRATION

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

Books for spring reading

Gayle Richardson

1001 GARDENS YOU MUST SEE BEFORE YOU DIE

Rae Spencer-Jones editor. Barrons, 2007.

You'll get a real rush of satisfaction as you "pick up" this chunky 4.5 pound book. The first gardens listed are in British Columbia and you start ticking them off at a great rate: Sun-Yat-Sen—check. UBC—check. Van Dusen—check. Butchart—check. Ha! you think, 1,001 will be a snap. Then things begin to fall apart as you hit some of the less visited spots in the world. But all gardeners will find lots here to remember fondly, to drool over wistfully, and perhaps some itineraries to plan. Who knew Bayern, Germany was the place to go? Thirteen gardens! The whole of Ireland gets only one more.

Beautifully illustrated with color photos. Keep this one on your coffee table to entertain friends and amuse dinner party guests.

BACKYARD GIANTS

by Susan Warren. Bloomsbury, 2007.

Subtitled "The Passionate, Heartbreaking, and Glorious Quest to Grow the Biggest Pumpkin Ever," this is one you'll tear right through. We've all seen those snippets in the paper or on the nightly news... the nation's biggest pumpkin, weighing in at some unimaginable poundage, has just been crowned. But who grows these things? They're no accident, that's for sure.

As she follows a father and son duo of wannabe winners, Warren thrusts us deep into the fascinating, quasi-surreal, sometimes heart-stopping world of competitive squash growing: the ins, the outs, the players, the subterfuges, the glory, and yes, the big money. All is told in a detailed, yet never tedious or dull, style. This was definitely one of my top favorites in 2011.



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

Give it a try. You'll never look at a packet of pumpkin seeds on a nursery rack the same way again.

HANDMADE GARDEN PROJECTS

by Lorene Edwards Forkner. Timber Press, 2011.

"Step-by-Step Instructions for Creative Garden Features, Containers, Lighting & More." The author is a proponent of creating garden art and vignettes by using eco-friendly and recycled materials. More ideas than money is her mantra. Some projects have been done to death, e.g., making a fountain/water feature, but others are original and unique, for example, a bird bath converted with a simple twist into a cornucopia of flowers worthy of comparison to Audrey Hepburn's hat at the Ascot races in *My Fair Lady*.

If you like to work with your hands, this is the book for you, and if you're not much of a one for that, this could give you the push to try.

THE ARMCHAIR BOOK OF GARDENS: A MISCELLANY

by Jane Billingham. Lyons Press, 2011.

Books can be more than black type on a white page, more than just a story. Books can be works of art.

With all the talk lately about how Kindles, Nooks and other downloadable titles are going to replace books, please remember, they have their place, but it's not the ONLY place. For six centuries, physical printed books have given tactile pleasure to readers who hold them, and our civilization will be immeasurably the less if we let that go. As Jeanette Winterson said in her recent Seattle appearance, on being asked if she used such reading devices, "No. I just want to touch something."

Somebody thought about this book's atypical, yet so-pleasing-in-the-hand shape. Somebody—the publisher—was willing to spring for expensive paper. So thick, smooth and creamy, you don't just turn the pages, you caress each and every one of them as you do it. And almost every page is illustrated with a superb, color botanical illustration. All this adds up to something a reader is going to remember for a long time, and that's not even counting its content. Short essays, or excerpts from books, range from the Bible to a man living under a New York City pier in the 1990's. More than a few evoke laughing out loud (e.g., Germaine Greer writing as 'Rose Blight'), while others cause you to stop and re-read a particularly evocative sentence (e.g., the late Derek Jarman's "the garden is off, the gun of spring fired"). Like a box of rich chocolates, delicious to dip into, a little at a time.



Thank you to our donors

Many thanks to our generous 2012 Donors for supporting the many programs of NPA, including Open Gardens, the NPA border at Bellevue Botanical Garden, student scholarships, lectures, workshops and horticulture classes at Edmonds Community College. Membership dues alone do not cover the cost of providing these benefits; your gift supports our tradition of offering a broad range of activities and events that can be enjoyed by both new and seasoned gardeners alike.

PLATINUM (\$500 and up)

Lynn Garvey
Michelle & Christopher Epping

GOLDEN SHOVEL (\$250-499)

Jan & Randy Mote
Chitra Z. & Zak Parpia
Charles Price & Glenn Withey
Joanne White

SILVER TROWEL (\$100-249)

Nicola Bocek-Lilley
Barbara BonJour
Mary Ann Byhre
Gerrie Cherry
Michele & Paul Cournoyer
Sylvia Duryee
Joe & Kathy Freedman
Kathy Gehrt
Jeff Graham & John Longres
Gerri & Bob Haynes
Peggy & Harvey Hinman
Sylvia Matlock
Linda S. Park
Rod Parke & Dale Burke
Janet Patrick
Irene & Leonard Peyton
Judith & Kirk Prindle
Marcia & Klaus Zech
Delia & Milt Zeutschel

PEONY (\$75-99)

Luanne Coachman
Cynthia Creasey
Kathryn A. & Jerry Crosby
Christine Hansen
Margaret & Rahul Hayes-Thombre
Kathryn Highland
Darlene & Dan Huntington
Janet & Mel McIntyre
Rosalie & Chuck Preble
Ralene Walls
Sheila Walter
Polly Zehm & Phil Crane

HELLEBORE (\$50-74)

Barbara Asmervig & Michael Thanem
Karen Baer
Lynden & Kay Baum
Shannon Bergstedt
Walt & Dona Bubelis
Dana Burns
Ellen Carnwath
Connie Caroll
Jade Chan
Candy Charlwood
Cyrilla Cook & Andy Stankovics
Kathleen Cook
Bonita Dennison
Tanya DeMarsh-Dodson & Al Dodson
Gabriele Dickman
Tina Dixon & Paul Stredwick
Pat Drummond
Lisa & Pete Dufour
Michael & Leslie Gillespie
Marjorie & Thurman Gillespy
Judy Giniger
Carol Glass & Jeff Haley
Sandy Gordon
Holly Graves
Linda & Jan Gray
Molly Green
Linda Hall & Mike Lubrecht
Cheri Hansen
Norm & Pat Hansen
Laurel Harrington
Carol A. Hart
Daniel Hinkley & Robert Jones
Caroline Holloway
Annie Horton
Lisa Irwin
Suzy Jamieson
Jan Jensen & Harry Welling
Nancy Kartes
Carolyn Keneipp
Teresa Kluver
Don & Joanne Knobbs
Blossom & Ron Kroman
Kurt Laidlaw,
Mary & Margaret LeClair Turcotte
Cynthia Lenz
Donna & David Litton

Mary MacFarlane
Scott & Jean Manning
Chaeryl Marshall
Linda & Roger McDonald
Kathy McMahan
Maggie Medearis
Joyce & Bob Meredith
Jane & Conrad Messmer
Jan & Brian Miller
Bruce Moulton
Marianne Mulcahey
Rick & Jana Nelson
Ilse Nethercutt
Peggy Ostrander
Katie & Gordon Padwick
Patricia Paquette
Robin Parer
Monica Payne
Mary Powell
Judith & Chris Pruitt
Fiona Pyle
Barbara Reisinger
Zari Rennie
Kathy Riley
Jana Royal
Marilou T. & Howard Rush
Liz Sanborn
Jean Savory
Virginia Schuett
Mary Shane
Sue Shilley
Deborah Smith
Eric Smith
Steve & Pauline Smith
Patricia Stensel
Nils Sundquist
Mary Alice Tennant
Myrna Torrie
Marilyn Tsuchiya
Jane G. Urner
Norma & Rudolf Vogeli
Laura Watson & LeRoy Shelton
Karen Wetmore
Sherri Wilson
Jenny Wyatt
Kathy Yerke
Jean Zook

SPRING IS HERE! Well, not here at the moment I am typing (I think this is snow event number 4), but hey, spring is sometimes a lion and sometimes a lamb—and often both in the same day. I do hope the weather is a bit more lamb-like by the time this lands in your mailbox.

The bulbs are going for it despite erratic temperatures. It is interesting to see the differing patterns that they were planted in when so many hands tucked them into the warm soil last autumn. If you got your hands dirty in that planting party come by and see the result of your handiwork. Alliums were popular in the past and several new hybrids were added—a few white-flowered giants will be swaying in the breezes by the south stairs soon.

The center area that was empty for so long has been planted up with more grasses, tons of bulbs, many summer blooming

perennials (including the stylish new ‘Blue Boa’ Agastache) and, for all-season interest, a few Witch Hazels that help remind us of a dear man who was also interesting in all seasons.

Not all is going well in all the beds though. Further south near the low stairs is a bed that seems to be letting its clay roots show. Despite additions of organic matter and some strategic planting, plants still seem unhappy at best there. Many of the newer daylilies that are due this spring will be headed into this bed of less-than-ideal performance. Fingers crossed for a showstopper by the stairs.

New additions in the pipeline include several daylilies, some older, tried and true selections as well as a bunch of brand new

hybrids. Charles Price focused on fragrance and taller-than-normal height. The main reason for returning to these garden stalwarts was that deer and rabbits don’t seem to care for them. Add to that their vigorous growth in just about any soil and wide range of colors, and it is understandable why daylilies are so very popular.

Another new project that is coming to fruition is the tagging team. We now have three dedicated people ready to place new, black metal display labels in the Border to identify showy plants at their peak. So the next time you are strolling along, see something you like and want to know its name, then find it neatly displayed, think of the great volunteers that helped make that happen.



Two new signs sprouted in the Border this spring, including this one at the top of the center stairs. NPA would like to thank the Bellevue Botanical Garden Society for donating the money to design, produce and install the signs.

Windcliff *Cont'd from page 1*

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 4
FUNDRAISER AT WINDCLIFF**

The fundraiser returns five years to the day after NPA’s last event at Windcliff, when members who waited too late to buy tickets were dismayed to find that it had sold out.

Windcliff is perched on an isolated bluff overlooking Puget Sound, with breathtaking views of Mount Rainier and Seattle. The garden was created in 2005, when Hinkley and Jones moved from their rare plant nursery Heronswood to five sun-soaked acres in Indianola, a short ferry ride from Edmonds.

Dan Hinkley is a rock star in the gardening world, a legendary plant explorer, gifted writer, lecturer and talented plant breeder. His partner Robert Jones, an architect, designed their home at Windcliff. Together they’ve created a memorable, magical place like no other. Windcliff offers a stunning palette of rare plants and an even rarer opportunity to see them, since the garden is not open to the public.

Docents will be present to help identify the many choice and rare plants for strolling visitors. Afternoon tours will include cookies, iced tea and lemonade. Evening ticket holders will be treated to fine wines and a buffet supper on the terrace, catered by popular Northwest chef and food

writer Greg Atkinson, owner of the new Restaurant Marché on Bainbridge Island.



Windcliff hosts Robert Jones & Dan Hinkley

Windcliff tickets can be purchased online at the NPA website, www.n-p-a.org. Or contact the NPA office for tickets at info@northwestperennialalliance.org.

South Sound lecture with Tina Dixon on May 6

CREATING SUCCESSFUL CONTAINER GARDENS

SUNDAY, MAY 6 AT 1:30

University Place Library, Tacoma
NPA members free/Nonmembers \$10

For all those who missed Tina in January because of the snow, here's a second chance to catch her great lecture. Don't miss the Queen of Containers as she shows how to create containers that are the talk of the town. She'll share how to choose the right soil, containers and plants, and discuss design principles. Tina's creations have been featured in numerous books, newspapers and magazines. She's also appeared



Tina Dixon, the Queen of Containers, will speak at the University Place Library in Tacoma on May 6.

at the Northwest Flower & Garden Show and the San Francisco Flower & Garden Show.

Planning underway for 2014 Study Weekend hosted by NPA

The summer of 2014 is closer than you think. At least that's the viewpoint when you're planning Study Weekend, billed as three days of horticultural nirvana for Northwest gardeners. The event rotates between horticulture groups in Oregon, Seattle and Vancouver, B.C., with each group hosting it once every four years. It will be NPA's turn in 2014 and the co-chairs of that event, Sue Moss and Michele Cournoyer, are already buckling down to work.

"It's never too soon to start planning an event of this size and importance," Michele said, confirming that plans are underway. "We've already started recruiting our committee chairs." NPA members who'd like to volunteer to help with Study Weekend should email Michele at: michelemc@comcast.net.

"We'll be keeping the theme under wraps until we get closer to the event," Sue said. "But you can expect to see an announcement about the date and venue as early as this fall."

NPA's last Study Weekend in 2010, chaired by Janet Endsley, sold out weeks in advance. We're looking forward to another smash hit in two years.

EUGENE CANCELS STUDY WEEKEND 2012

Hardy plant enthusiasts throughout the Northwest were disappointed in March to hear that the Willamette Valley Hardy Plant Group had canceled this year's Study Weekend, which had been slated for June 7-10 in Eugene. The group reported that there were not enough early registrations to make the event financially viable.

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 2011-2012 Officers:

Michele Cournoyer, President: 425-868-5541
Gayle Richardson, Vice President: 206-632-2735
Ellie Sanchez, Secretary: 425-828-6820
Chris Wolfe, Treasurer: 425-776-8758

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:

Contact the Post Editor at
post@northwestperennialalliance.org

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Thank you, Northwest Flower & Garden Show volunteers!

Volunteer teams like Gary Damora and Neal Pulham helped quadruple NPA membership sales this year at the Northwest Flower & Garden Show. Many thanks to NPA Vice President Gayle Richardson, who ran our booth, and to Carol Scheuffele and George Lasch, who stepped in as day supervisors. Michele and Paul Cournoyer produced the materials for our booth, including a “Gardening Tips” DVD starring George Lasch, that was given out with each membership sold at the show.

