

# the GAZETTE

BIRCHWOOD GARDEN CLUB

[www.birchwoodgardenclub.org](http://www.birchwoodgardenclub.org)

CHARTERED 1931

## February Topic:

### Green Earth Technology

Submitted by Tamara Hall

The Birchwood Garden Club will hold its February 2020 meeting on Wednesday, February 5 at 7:00 p.m. in the Whatcom Museum of History and Art. Our speaker for the evening will be a representative from Green Earth Technology who will provide an overview of how this local community business takes waste and makes compost.

Serving Whatcom County since 2003, Green Earth Technology produces high quality recycled products and advances local recycling goals. The company diverts about 20,000 tons of materials for composting each year and serves as a source for organic soil amendments and fertile mulch.

Green Earth Technology takes food scraps, grass clippings, brush, and other yard waste to be composted for a charge of only \$0.025 per pound. And, the company offers many types of soil and compost mixes along with advice on choosing the soil or compost product that best fits your garden needs.

Come to the meeting and hear how Green Earth Technology handles waste products and turns them into great compost for your garden!

## Time for Bare Root Planting

This is the time of year when nurseries and garden centers are stocking bare root trees and roses. The plants survive planting in winter because they are dormant.

An advantage that bare root stock has over container-grown is its stronger and wider root system, which provides better anchorage once established, especially when it's a tree. And when properly planted they establish much faster, with less transplant shock and often a higher rate of survival.

Bare root planting works well for many woody based plants, like fruit and nut trees. Of course, bare root roses are always in high demand, especially in the Pacific Northwest.

Bare root planting season is pretty short, and if you're not on the ball it can slip right by you.

January to early April is typically the time to buy and begin planting your bare root stock.

Before planting, soak the roots in water overnight. If you're not ready to plant, cover the root system with moist soil or compost, and store in a shady location.

When ready to plant, set bare root trees and roses in the hole only as deep as they were growing in the field or container (look for soil stains on the trunk). Grafted roses should be set so that the graft union is about an inch above the soil line.

Providing adequate and consistent moisture for the first year is key to ensuring continued development of the root system. By summer the plants will be engulfed in foliage and on their way to a great finish, which is a beautiful and fruitful garden.

### Save The Date!

The Birchwood Garden Club **Annual Plant Sale** will be held on **Saturday, May 2** from 9:00 a.m. until noon at the Bellingham Public Library. The March Gazette will provide details on preparing plants for the sale and volunteer sign-up sheets will be available at the next meeting. Time to get ready!

# Powerful Winter Color

*Nandina domestic* 'Fire Power' provides showy color in the winter garden. This dwarf nandina features scarlet red and orange foliage that makes this small shrub a knockout during our coldest season.

Many selections of nandina are on the market, but Fire Power is a favorite because of its showy winter foliage and compact growth habit. This evergreen shrub will be a lime-green color during spring and summer and then turn a vibrant red-orange during fall. Unlike other varieties of nandina, the bright foliage stays completely intact all through the coldest winter.

Fire Power is preferable to other varieties of nandina because it does not produce the red berries that are toxic to wild birds and pets. With the Fire Power variety, you can enjoy this beautiful plant while avoiding the dangers of the toxic fruit.

As a dwarf shrub, it grows only 1-2 feet tall and wide. It is a versatile plant in almost any landscape. Grouping or massing three to five plants together is perhaps the most striking and effective way to use Fire Power, but it is also outstanding as a single specimen in a border or along a walk or in a container.



Fire Power is a forgiving plant. It is one of the easiest shrubs to grow in the Northwest garden and tolerates a range of soil and light conditions. In our wet climate,

Fire Power should be planted in well-drained soil. Prepare the soil by mixing generous amounts of organic-humus, like peat moss, compost or processed manure with your existing soil.

It does not require any pruning or pampering. However, this low-maintenance plant will perform best when planted in a sunny location. It will grow in a shady part of the garden, but the leaf color is not nearly as vibrant. Nandina does not have any serious diseases or insect problems and is considered deer resistant.

So if you are looking for a shrub that has showy winter foliage color and is evergreen and easy to maintain, take a good look at nandina 'Fire Power.' This little beauty has just about everything a gardener could ask for, all in one plant.

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## The Birchwood Garden Club Provides Financial Support and/or Gardening Expertise to the following Community Organizations

*Bellingham Public Library*    *Whatcom Museum of History and Art*  
*Growing Veterans*    *Cornwall Rose Garden*    *Bellingham Food Bank*

**Welcome New Members**

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**Sue Fisher**

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### **Snacks**

This month's meeting snacks will be provided by Tamara Hall and Kathy Reed.

**Thank You**

# Tree Bark for Winter Interest

During the dark winter months, trees with outstanding bark can take center stage in your garden with their beauty and interest. Some have bark with interesting texture, while others provide striking colors. An often overlooked feature in the garden, bark is most important in the winter.

Consider the bark of various trees as an interesting focal point in the garden. It may be thin, thick, smooth, colorful, textured or a pleasing combination of all. Bark characteristics can provide an interesting view not normally noticed during the other seasons of the year.

Here is a list of trees that have particularly striking bark to liven your winter garden with color and interest.

## **Paperbark Maple** (*Acer griseum*)

You can't miss this standout tree with its trademark peeling bark in colors ranging from cinnamon stick to coppery orange. Instead of falling off, the papery peel clings to the tree in a complementary color patchwork. Paperbark is deciduous, grows slowly to 25 feet tall, and takes part to full sun.



## **Coral Bark Maple** (*Acer palmatum*)

This type of Japanese Maple is prized for its winter interest and vase-like growth habit. Coral Bark Maple displays vivid red-orange stems in winter that are best displayed against a contrasting background such as dark evergreens, or walls and buildings that contrast with its brightly colored winter stems. Coral Bark is deciduous, grows slowly to 20-25 feet, and takes part to full sun.



## **Japanese Stewartia** (*Stewartia pseudo camellia*)

Mostly known for its white camellia-like flowers, Stewartia has one of the more unique bark appearances. As older bark flakes off, a gray, brown, and pale red patchwork effect appears on the trunk of the tree, creating an interesting contrast to snowy landscapes. A deciduous tree, Stewartia grows slowly to 20-40 feet, and takes part to full sun.



## **Paper Birch** (*Betula papyrifera*)

This tree is distinguished by its gleaming white bark resembling paper shavings (hence the name), followed by an orange-brown interior. This low-maintenance tree thrives in cool climates with consistently moist soil and is especially stunning against stark winter backgrounds. Grows quickly to 50-70 feet tall in part to full sun.



## **Tibetan Cherry** (*Prunus serrula*)

The Tibetan Cherry is an interesting tree year round because of its shiny, silk-like bark. The rich coppery-red, smooth surface of the trunk comes to life in the winter garden as other colors fade.



# Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2019

Submitted by Ann Holland



Our President Patti Salotti welcomed all and two new members; Lisa Anderson and Sharon Pelfrey. There are thirty eight members present. Our speaker tonight is Debra Olberg, owner of Secret Garden Design. Debra presented an overview of Seasonal Tasks and their proper timing.

The last meetings minutes (December 2019) published in the Gazette were approved.

The **Silent Auction** table has several interesting items for our bidding pleasure.

**Old Business:** Nancy McMaster talked about the Cornwall Rose Garden and our club involvement, if any. Zapote Gregory has been the Park Steward for the Rose Garden for many years and would like to decrease her involvement in that area. Is there any one who would like to take over the mentoring of that garden? Should the Birchwood Garden Club take on more responsibility for the Rose Garden? Think about these issues and be prepared to discuss at our next meeting.

**Treasurers Report:** Nancy McMaster gave us the current bank balance and membership income to date.

**New Business:** There are some empty seats on the Master Gardener bus to the NW Garden Show. Please contact Judy Boxx if interested.

Cheryl Haak announced the dates for our plant sale in May. The **set up day** will be Friday May 1<sup>st</sup> starting at 3:00 p.m. The **sale day** will be Saturday May 2<sup>nd</sup> from 9:00 until noon. Start thinking about plants that you can divide so they can live on in a new home.

**Announcement:** Barb Mosher gave us information about the Whidbey Gardening Workshop that will take place at the Oak Harbor High School on March 14<sup>th</sup>. There will be 45+ educational classes, many vendors and a Floral Design Competition. For more information and registration, please go to the web site: [www.whidbeygardening.org](http://www.whidbeygardening.org) or phone 360-639-6058.

Thank you to Elvira and Jim Butler and Cheryl Haak for our snacks this evening. As always, thank you to Sheri and Russ Lambert for our coffee (always decaf).

The Birchwood Garden Club (BGC) is open to everyone in Whatcom and Skagit Counties who supports the objectives of the organization. BGC meets the first Wednesday of each month from September thru May. Annual membership is \$10 for an individual, \$15 for a family, due in September. Membership applications are available from the website: [www.birchwoodgardenclub.org](http://www.birchwoodgardenclub.org).

The Birchwood Garden Club Gazette is published monthly, September thru May, by the BGC. Articles, inquiries, letters to the editor, or other comments should be directed to the Editors, Ken and Stephanie Salzman, at the above address or via e-mail to: [sasalzman@comcast.net](mailto:sasalzman@comcast.net)

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## CURRENT OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

President - Patti Salotti

President Elect - Sheri Lambert

Treasurer - Nancy McMaster

Secretary - Ann Holland

Garden Tours – Sheri Lambert & Carol McBride

Historian – Violet Hayes

Hospitality – Carol McBride

Library Garden – Donna Halwe

Museum Garden – Ann Holland

Membership – Judy Lewis

Newsletter – Ken & Stephanie Salzman

Plant Sale – Cheryl Haak

Programs – Tamara Hall

Publicity – Susan Metcalfe

Silent Auction – Sandy Gurosko

Sunshine – Cheryl Haak

Webmaster – Tom Sparks