

the GAZETTE

BIRCHWOOD GARDEN CLUB

www.birchwoodgardenclub.org

CHARTERED 1931

December Topic: Moths of the Pacific Northwest

Submitted by Tamara Hall

The Birchwood Garden Club will hold its December 2016 meeting on Wednesday, December 7 at 7:00 p.m. in the Whatcom Museum of History and Art. Lars Crabo from the Lepidopterists' Society will be presenting information about moths of the Pacific Northwest.

We have all seen them flitting about our gardens at dusk and later – moths. This is a mixed group of beneficial and pest insects for gardeners. The PNW is home to over 1,200 species of moths in 10 distinct families.

It is important to emphasize the importance of moths for pollination of our native and non-native plant species. Moths (+ earlier life stages) are a substantial addition to the food chain for many birds, bats, predatory insects and other mammals or reptiles.

To improve our awareness of the Moth species, Lars Crabo will be giving us a rundown on the locals and new arrivals. His talk will cover the families, basic identification, their needs, habits, positive attributes and less desirable qualities. Join us for a very interesting presentation.

Great Gifts for the Gardener

Pruning tools make wonderful and much-appreciated holiday gifts for the gardener. Listed below are some basic pruning tools that every “handy” gardener could use.

Hand pruning shears are the proper tool for most small pruning chores. A sharp set of bypass pruners with curved blades that cut with a scissor-like action and give the cleanest cut should be in every gardener's tool box. Pruning shears are designed to cut stems up to 1/4 inch in diameter.

a single cutting blade that, when cutting, presses the stem against a flat piece of metal (anvil) and are less likely to crush stems when cutting.

Long-handled loppers (12 to 18 inch long handles) are used to cut thick branches up to 1/2 inch in diameter. Select bypass types with lightweight metal alloy handles.

A keyhole saw about 7 to 8 inches long with a thin pointed tip allows you to maneuver into tight corners. It can be used to cut very large stems (up to 1/2 inch diameter or greater) near the crown of shrubs. Remove large stubs close to a bud union.

Along with good pruners, think about giving a good pair of leather gloves. Sturdy leather gloves with a gauntlet-type cuff will protect hands and forearms.

As a fun “stocking stuffer,” include a squirt bottle of Lysol or other disinfectant cleaner to clean pruning equipment between jobs. Happy shopping!



The bypass types are preferred over anvil pruners. These have

Avoiding Garden Boredom

By Ira Pen

As I write this piece it's November 6th and the Azalea you see in the picture is still blooming. I had several "spring" flowers bloom this fall and the Azalea is the last of them.

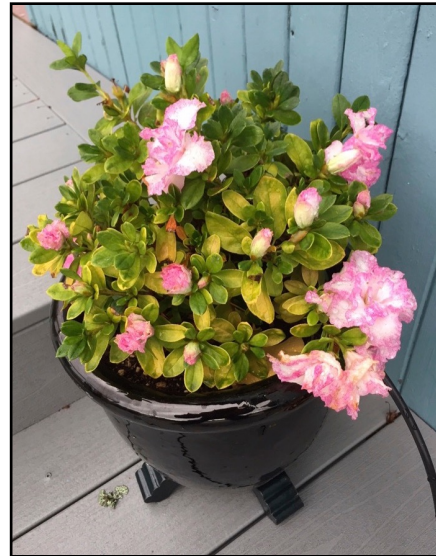
I have no idea what variety the thing is. I got it at a local nursery last spring and it was labeled, but just barely. By that I mean that although I'm used to nursery labels containing inadequate information, this one was really over the top. It said, simply, "Azalea"!

The plant was growing in a very small pot and my guess is that it is one of those little items that was supposed to be purchased as a gift for someone to grow in their kitchen or hospital room for a few days or weeks and then be discarded.

By the time I came across it, the little shrub was almost bloomed out, but there was one flower left and its beauty struck me. The pink-edged, white, double bloom was magnificent. So for the grand sum of \$4.00 (original price—not a markdown) I bought the thing. I planted it in a larger pot on my

deck, hooked it up to a drip irrigation line, and fully expected to have to wait until spring 2017 to see anything.

At the time of planting it was about the same diameter as the 4-inch pot it was growing in. But it grew... and then it grew some



more... and right now it is 11-inches. Since I don't know the variety I don't know what size it is ultimately supposed to attain. It doesn't matter. It's staying in a pot.

Little serendipitous events like this are part of why I love

gardening. One can have so many adventures. I know some folks who plant the same beans and tomatoes each year and some who put in the same Geraniums and Petunias. They're happy and that's fine, but it wouldn't do for me. I have to have something new. I have to experiment. I have to avoid boredom!

A few years ago I wrote about how I'd harvested a few random seedpods from a Japanese Iris. When I planted the seeds I had no idea what they would turn out to be—although I figured that a lot of them would look like the mother plant because such is the nature of Iris genetics. When they bloomed most of them did look like the mother plant but there were plenty of them that looked completely different. I kept three of the different ones for my garden and all the rest (close to 100 plants) we sold at the plant sale this past spring. I had a ball doing it and the Club made money. As Lt. Col. John (Hannibal) Smith of "The A Team" used to say, "I love it when a plan comes together."

Did You Know?

Oak trees don't produce acorns until they are 50 years old!

Snacks

This month's meeting snacks will be provided by Tina Swanson and Lillian Nelson

Thank You

Learn From Experience

Late fall is a good time to take a few minutes before you forget to jot down as many notes as you can about your own gardening experiences this year. Focus on what you've learned and what you want to do differently next year. Then set yourself up this winter with an easy system for regularly recording this kind of information in the future. This record will become your most valued resource over time!

Plant of the Month: *Pinus mugo* 'Pumilio'

The Dwarf Mugo Pine hales from the high mountains of Europe, but makes a delightful addition to Northwest gardens. It grows slowly into a rounded shrub that reaches 2-3 feet tall and 3-4 feet wide. Dark green needles adorn stiff, upright branches.

The Dwarf Mugo Pine should be planted in full sun with moist well-drained soil. Once established, it requires only occasional watering. It is particularly slow-growing and will stay neat and compact for many years, eventually forming a mound of spreading branches covered by dense green needles. With maturity, female cones are produced at the tip of the stems. Grows well in USDA zones 2-9.

The Dwarf Mugo Pine is a great choice for use in rock gardens, foundation or mass plantings, in borders, in groupings with broad leafed plants, or in a container as a specimen. It is extremely hardy and adaptable to any garden. This wind tolerant conifer copes well with coastal situations and urban pollution.

The *Pinus mugo* 'Carstens' variety is one of several conifers that changes color in the winter. Needles are a pleasant medium green in the summer, becoming a rich golden yellow in the winter, then eventually back



to green in the spring. Another distinguishing feature is a late season push of shorter needles, creating the effect of a crown at the end of each terminal branch.

Growing Ginger Inside

Ginger is the perfect herb to grow indoors. It's very low-maintenance, loves partial sunlight, and you can use parts of it at a time, leaving the rest in the soil to continue growing. Besides, it's delicious for tea, herbal mixtures, and cooking!! Really, what's not to love about year-round herb table gardening, especially when it comes to growing ginger inside?

The best places to purchase ginger for planting would be garden centers or seed catalogs. Ginger obtained from a grocery store is not really good for planting because of the growth inhibitor usually used to prevent it from sprouting and because of possible pesticides used in commercial production.

The root for planting has to be plump with tight skin. Ginger grows horizontally, so be sure to use a wide, shallow pot. Fill the pot with rich drainable soil. Put the root in the soil with its eye bud pointed up; cover it with 1-2 inches of soil and water well. Put the ginger pot in a place that is warm and not too sunny. Maintain soil moisture with a spray bottle or by light watering. After a few weeks you should be able to see some sprouts out of the soil. Continue with the regular watering and moisturizing.

You can harvest the first pieces in 3-4 months after planting. Pull some of the soil at the edges aside so you could find some rhizomes underneath. Cut the wanted amount off a sprout at the edges of the pot and return the soil afterwards. As long as you are taking good care for the plant it will never stop producing roots and you could harvest it like this continuously.

Meeting Minutes

November 2, 2016

Submitted by Ann Holland



President Judy Boxx welcomed 38 members to the meeting. We have two new members, Kathy Reed and Alta Toler.

Minutes of the September meeting were approved. Kathy Sparks gave the Treasurer's report.

We, unfortunately, lost a long-standing member, Noreen Morrison, last month. In addition, we also lost member Laurie McLean last May.

Old Business:

Elisabeth Bays has completed the review of the books and all was fine. Thank you to Elisabeth for doing this.

Please remember that annual dues were due in September. New Business:

Judy Boxx will have two sessions of making concrete mushrooms next week. One session will be on Monday, November 7th at 10:00 at her home and another on Wednesday, November, 9th. The cost will be \$2.00 to cover supplies. The group is limited to 12 persons each day.

Thank you to Sandy Gurusko and Rhonda Rinn for our snacks tonight and to Sheri and Russ Lambert for our great coffee.

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.

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

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