

the GAZETTE

BIRCHWOOD GARDEN CLUB

www.birchwoodgardenclub.org

CHARTERED 1931

May Topic: Shade Plants

Submitted by Tamara Hall

The Birchwood Garden Club will hold its May 2017 meeting on Wednesday, May 3, at 7:00 p.m. in the Whatcom Museum of History and Art. Our speaker will be Gwen Odermatt from Petals and Butterflies Garden in Langley, Canada. She will speak on Treasures of the Shade Garden.

Many of our members enjoyed a tour of Gwen's spectacular garden last summer. She has operated this farm nursery for the past 20 years which specializes in attracting butterflies and other beneficial insects and wildlife to gardens. Gwen is on the Selection Committee for Great Plant Picks and teaches the Advanced Master Gardener Right Plant/Right Place course.

Treasures of the Shade and Pond looks at the development of the shady parts of our garden and the plants chosen to make it an interesting, bright and vibrant place. The talk also traces how some plants adapt to brighter places in the garden and presents plantings around the sunnier edges of the pond.

Bring your friends, get out of the sun and maximize your garden in the shade!

Annual Plant Sale

Saturday, April 29, 2017

9 a.m. - noon

**Bellingham Library
Meeting Room**



***The Annual Plant Sale
is a fundraiser for the
Birchwood Garden Club***

Great Volunteers

By Ann Holland

I want to extend a very big “Thank You” to the 19 members who came out on March 25 to preform the Spring Clean-Up at the Bellingham Library Gardens. We raked, weeded, pruned, and put down a layer of Smit’s Compost.

The weather was marginal, however, we all worked for 2.5 hours and got the job done. We logged in a total of 47.5 hours.

Thanks to Kathy and Tom Sparks, Diane and Ed Gerhard, Ann Katherine Walton, Kaye Dykas, Sandy Gurosko, Zapote Gregory, Cheryl Haak, Violet Hayes, Peter Nordal, Carol, Collender, Fred Rhoades, Tamara Hall, Alta Toler, Nancy McMaster and husband, Kathy Piscitello and Carrie Gaasland.

The gardens look great. Thanks so much.

Hellebores Redux

By Ira Penn



In the March Gazette there was a nice lead story about Hellebores. Since I grow more than a few of them (actually I have 25 varieties), I wanted to add some additional words regarding their care and maintenance to the information published in that article.

garden bed? Put it in a pot. Just remember to water and it’ll do fine.

Hellebores will bloom for months but the flowers will start looking a bit ratty. My preference is to cut the stems off at the base as soon as the blooms start to fade, making sure to not cut the newly emerging leaf stalks coming up from the ground. Leaving the flowers on will result in seed production and the seeds, in all probability, will not come true. (If you want to experiment with the seeds to see what you get, fine, but be patient because Hellebores take from three to five years too bloom.) Also, I’ve found that spent flowers seem to attract Aphids—yuk!



After that, just enjoy the plant’s foliage for the rest of the season. In the late winter you’ll notice new flower stalks emerging. At that point cut off all (yes, all) the old leaves at the base, this time making sure you do not cut the new flower stems in the process. That’s it! Enjoy your Hellebore!

New Officers Needed

The Birchwood Garden Club is a vibrant, active group of gardeners because of its volunteering members. We currently need someone to be the club Secretary and President-Elect. In addition, we need a new Plant Sale Chairperson. If you feel inclined to fill these roles, please e-mail Judy Boxx at boxxjj@aol.com.

Snacks

This month’s meeting snacks will be provided by Jill Nelson and Corey Jensen

Thank You

Let’s suppose that you have just purchased a beautiful Hellebore specimen at your local nursery. What do you do with it? Well, plant it of course. But where? Anywhere! They like shade but in our climate they’ll also thrive in the sun. Out of room in the

Plant of the Month: *Syringa vulgaris*

One of Springs favorite visitors, the common Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*) is a classic, sweet smelling, flowering plant from the olive family. It bursts with lavender, blue, or white cluster/ blooms lasting 3- 6 weeks depending on the variety.

Lilac is a multi-stemmed deciduous shrub growing 10-25' high, hardy in USDA Zones 3-8. It is low maintenance and easy to grow. This plant produces secondary shoots from its base allowing the shrub to naturally spread. It is an excellent choice for sunny, rocky, well drained or hilly areas. Sunny areas will

enhance the amount of blooms, while shady environments reduce the size and quantity of bloom clusters.



Lilac flowers come in several colors, purple or lavender being the most popular and having the strongest scent; although flowers

also are seen in shades of blue, red, pink, yellow and white. These fragrant blooms attract butterflies and are wonderful for cutting arrangements.

The common Lilac often produces an overabundance of flowers every other year; this can be amended by deadheading the flowers shortly after the color has faded. Prune in late spring or early summer, after blooms are finished. Remove the oldest 'dead' wood from the Lilac every year down from the ground. This is important to shape and keep the plant height manageable.

Yummy Onions

Growing onions from sets (little onions) is the easiest and quickest way to get going but you may have mixed results. If they start to push up a flower stalk, harvest them right away and use them fresh. Choose the smallest sets if you have a choice, they are less likely to flower.

More and more onion transplants are available now, and this is a nice alternative to sets. They come either planted closely in a square pot or if through mail order, bundled without soil. Either way, separate the plants before placing them 2-4" apart in the row.

Sweet onions don't store well but are delicious when used fresh. Onions good for storage will usually say so in the variety description. The most common type of onion set, Stuttgarter, stores well.

Welcome New Members

We are pleased to introduce two new members who joined Birchwood Garden Club this month.

Kathy Klemmer, Millie Sicard and Jennifer Voegeli

Meeting Minutes

April 5, 2017

Submitted by Cheryl Haak



President Judy Boxx welcomed 57 members and three guests to the April 5th meeting. We welcomed three new members this month, Nancy McMaster and Mary and Richard Nichols.

Minutes of the March meeting were approved.

Kathy Sparks gave the Treasurer's report.

Dianne Gerhard, Plant Sale Chairperson, reported that our annual plant sale will take place on Saturday, April 29th from 9:00 a.m. until noon. Setup for the plant sale will be the day before, on April 28th from 3:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. The setup and sale will be held at the downtown Bellingham Public Library in a room near the rear entrance. Please bring box bottoms, trays, carts and garden books for reference (marked "Not For Sale"), aprons will be supplied and please wear your name tags. Volunteers in the plant sale will have the opportunity to purchase a plant before the doors open to the public.

Dianne also detailed the places where our Publicity Chairperson (Susan Metcalfe) has been advertising. Dianne also advertised on her Facebook page as well as her Nextdoor Neighborhood site. She also passed out to the volunteers small stacks of flyers about the sale to be distributed to merchants in the area. Dianne, Ann Holland and Tamara Hall brought pots and soil to the meeting for members to take home if they needed it for potting plants for the sale.

Ann Holland, Library/Museum Gardens Chairperson, reported a very successful library grounds cleanup with 19 volunteers working for a total of 46 hours. She gave a big "thank you" to all of the volunteers. This work enables the BGC to use the library as the location of our plant sale from year to year.

Old Business: We still need a nominating committee for two yet unfilled positions on the BGC's Board which are Secretary and Vice President. A new member, Carrie Gaasland, has volunteered to be our Treasurer. We are in need someone to chair the plant sale to replace Dianne Gerhard who has done it for many years now. If you would like to volunteer for any of these positions, please let Judy Boxx know. We thank our current volunteers without whom the club would not be possible.

New Business: The BGC was contacted by a gentleman who indicated our new sundial in Cornwall Rose Garden is not accurately showing the time of day. Zapote Gregory did research into the matter and discovered that it is accurate considering it was positioned during the summer months.

We received a notice from Kiwanis and Sehome High School that the sale of mushroom compost will be on April 22 in the Sehome High School parking lot from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. or until the compost is gone. Any questions can be addressed to Rich at 360-312-1452.

Our speaker tonight was Judith Jones of Fancy Fronds speaking about ferns. Thank you to Corie Jensen for hosting her.

Thank you to Linda and Sherry Cline for our snacks tonight and to Sheri and Russ Lambert for supplying us once

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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CURRENT OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

President - Judy Boxx

President Elect - Ann Holland

Treasurer - Kathy Sparks

Secretary - Cheryl Haak

Garden Tours – Sheri Lambert & Carol McBride

Historian – Kay Reddell

Hospitality – Carol McBride

Library/Museum Gardens – Ann Holland

Membership – Judy Lewis

Newsletter – Ken & Stephanie Salzman

Plant Sale – Dianne Gerhard

Programs – Tamara Hall

Publicity – Susan Metcalfe

Silent Auction – Sandy Gurosko

Sunshine – Cheryl Haak

Webmaster – Tom Sparks