

the GAZETTE

BIRCHWOOD GARDEN CLUB

www.birchwoodgardenclub.org

CHARTERED 1931

December Topic: Ground Covers

Submitted by Tamara Hall

The Birchwood Garden Club will hold its December 2017 meeting on Wednesday, December 6, at 7:00 in the Whatcom Museum of History and Art. Our speaker for the evening will be Ryan Carpenter from Sunbreak Nursery who will walk us through the splendid array of ground covers that thrive in our Northwest gardens.

Sunbreak Nursery has been a wholesale powerhouse in the ground cover (and fern) market supplying all the big nurseries in the Northwest since 2004. You have seen and bought their wonderful plants. Now come and learn what plant will deliver for the special needs in your garden.

Ground covers provide a wonderful service to the garden. They are a less intensive alternative to lawn

grass because they require less water, time, and chemicals to maintain. And, ground covers require less maintenance than perennials. They cover the ground and provide a barrier to weeds.

Ground covers can take on the toughest challenges including extreme cold, minimal water, blazing sun or deep shade, and wet ground. These hard working plants provide attractive foliage and flowers during a time which you have selected.

How can you not love this group of garden performers? Not only are they beautiful, but they are great garden problem solvers. Come and find ground covers best suited to your garden needs.



Happy Holidays Garden Gifts

Most of us give gifts this month for one holiday or other. If the recipient enjoys gardening, or even if a non-gardener, there are so many gifts you can have fun buying and giving.

For the gardener, each year there are many new gardening tools. Small tools might include special trowels and digging implements, specialty pruners, and even new styles of garden gloves. Every good gardener has a hand pruner, but how many have a pruning holster that straps onto your belt?

Larger tools might include a special perennial spade or fork, tools with interchangeable implements for a single handle, or even power equipment such as hedge shears. Many tools now are designed to be more ergonomic and easier on your hands, arms, and body.

For the non-gardeners, consider potted bulbs for indoors, such as paperwhites and amaryllis. If they like birds, what about a new bird feeder? If a cook, what about an apple peeler or juice extractor? If they like to spend time outside, consider wind chimes or a garden ornament.

Break away from the traditional poinsettia and give some unusual holiday potted plants such as moth orchid, cyclamen, or even a flowering bonsai tree. These plants not only will be colorful during the winter, but they become a permanent part of a houseplant collection.

First Aid for Storm-Damaged Trees

According to the National Weather Service, a well-established *La Nina* weather pattern is predicted to bring a greater frequency of winter ice and snow storms to the Pacific Northwest. Not good news for those of us who love our trees!

As noted by the National Arbor Day Foundation, in the aftermath of a major storm, the first impulse is generally along the lines of “let’s get this mess cleaned up.” But hasty decisions can often result in removing trees that could have been saved.

Doing the right things after trees have been damaged can make the difference between giving your trees a good chance of survival and losing them unnecessarily. The National Arbor Day Foundation urges home gardeners to follow these rules in administering tree first aid after a storm.

Don’t try to do it all yourself. If large limbs are broken or

hanging, or if high climbing or overhead chainsaw work is needed, it’s a job for a professional arborist. They have the necessary equipment and knowledge needed, and are generally listed in the telephone directory under “Tree Service.”

Take safety precautions. Look up and look down. Be on the alert for downed power lines and dangerous hanging branches that look like they’re ready to fall. Stay away from any downed utility lines-low-voltage telephone or cable lines. Don’t get under broken limbs that are hanging or caught in other branches overhead. And, unless you really know how to use one, leave chainsaw work to the professionals.

Remove any broken branches still attached to the tree. Removing the jagged remains of smaller sized broken limbs is one common repair that the gardener can make after a storm. If done

properly, it will minimize the risk of decay agents entering the wound. Smaller branches should be pruned at the point where they join larger ones. Large branches that are broken should be cut back to the trunk or a main limb.

Repair torn bark. To improve the tree’s appearance and eliminate hiding places for insects, carefully use a chisel or sharp knife to smooth the ragged edges of wounds where bark has been torn away. Try not to expose any more of the cambium (greenish inner bark) than is necessary, as these fragile layers contain the tree’s food and water lifelines between roots and leaves.

Resist the urge to over-prune. Don’t worry if the tree’s appearance isn’t perfect. With branches gone, your trees may look unbalanced or naked. You’ll be surprised at how fast they will heal, grow new foliage, and return to their natural beauty.

**Welcome New Member
Lyz Staman**

Snacks

This month’s meeting snacks will be provided by Tamara Hall and Sandy Gurosko.

Thank You

Plant of the Month: *Malus hupehensis*

While most gardeners prize *Malus hupehensis* (Tea Crabapple) for its spring blooms and autumn color, this small tree has a pleasing silhouette and bright fruit that bring beauty to the winter garden. As an added bonus, the fruit can be harvested for cooking and making jelly.

In spring, fragrant pink or white blossoms smother the branches. These flowers are followed by masses of small cherry-like red fruit which are carried well into winter. Combined with yellow leaves in autumn, the Tea

Crabapple will provide interest for most of the year.



Like most crabapples, it is somewhat small in stature, growing to 20 feet tall and 15-20 feet wide. It has upright branches which give it a more narrow, vase shape. This vase or goblet shape is suited for use in smaller

gardens as a dramatic focal point and in larger gardens as part of a grouping or against a forest verge.

Happy in most soils, the Tea Crabapple will tolerate some shade, but fruits better in sun. It does not require pruning, but some gardeners do some light pruning for shape. It does not like too much heat but has considerable cold tolerance.

The Tea Crabapple has multiple attributes, offering a pleasing shape, fragrant blossoms, and decorative and useable fruit.

Rose Hips: Attractive and Edible

While we grow roses mainly for the magnificent flowers, the fruit have value as food and medicine (as well as adding to the beauty of the plant).

Rose hips, sometimes called rose haw, are a superb source of vitamin C, having a much higher content than citrus fruit. Rose hips also contain other beneficial vitamins and compounds such as pectin.

This somewhat spherical fruit of the rose, usually red to red-orange but sometimes purple, is seldom seen on our modern roses. However, the old-fashioned shrub types, especially the rugosas, bear them abundantly.

Besides being healthful, rose hips offer the adventurous cook a strange and different ingredient. Rose hips have a fruity, spicy, and tart flavor and can be used fresh, dried, or preserved. Rose hip syrup, puree, jam, jelly, and sauce can be used as is or as a flavoring in other recipes. The simplest use is to steep them for tea.

The hips are usually left on the bush until after the first frost, which makes them turn bright red and slightly soft. By leaving them on the rose bushes, this signals the plant to stop producing flowers and to start preparing for winter—what you want it to do. You should be able to gently squeeze ripe hips, but they shouldn't be too soft or wrinkled.

To prepare, trim off the blossom and stem ends with scissors, cut in half lengthwise, remove the tiny hairs and seeds in the center, and rinse. Never use aluminum utensils or pans as they tend to destroy the vitamin C.

To dry hips, simply spread the prepared halves in a single layer on screening or trays and place in a dehydrator, an oven set on the lowest setting, or in a dark, dry, well-ventilated place. Store in glass jars in a dark, cool place.

Happy Holidays



Meeting Minutes

November 1, 2017

Submitted by Rhonda Rinn



President Ann Holland welcomed 51 members and 4 guests, Michelle and Fraser Baker, Lyz Staman and Padma Augustine to the November 1st meeting.

Minutes of the October 2017 meeting were approved. The treasury report was done by Jerry McLean.

Announcement: The Skyline Garden Club of Anacortes hosted tonight's speaker, Robin Haglund of Garden Mentors, for a presentation "Year-round garden for Hummingbirds" on November 20th at 1:30p.m. in Anacortes. Cost for non-members is \$5.00. (Skyline Beach Club, 6041 Sands Way, Anacortes)

Old Business: None

New Business: Ann announced the appointment of Patti Salotti as our new Vice President. We thank her very much for accepting this job.

Our speaker tonight was Robin Haglund of Garden Mentors. She provided a very inspiring presentation, "365 Days of Non-Stop Color in the Garden". She encouraged us to check out her website- gardenmentors.com or follow her on Instagram.

Thank you to Ira Penn and Christie Woodward for our snacks this evening. As always, thank you to Sheri and Russ Lambert for their generous donation of coffee for our enjoyment.

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 - Ann Holland
President Elect - Patti Salotti
Treasurer - Jerry McLean
Secretary - Rhonda Rinn
Garden Tours – Sheri Lambert & Carol McBride
Historian – Violet Hayes
Hospitality – Carol McBride
Library/Museum Gardens – 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