

the GAZETTE

BIRCHWOOD GARDEN CLUB

www.birchwoodgardenclub.org

CHARTERED 1931

February Topic: Attracting Birds to Your Garden

The Birchwood Garden Club will hold its February 2018 meeting on Wednesday, February 7, at 7:00 p.m. in the Whatcom Museum of History and Art. The speaker for the evening will be Ken Salzman who will speak on creating gardens and garden features that attract birds and other wildlife.

Providing food, nest boxes, nesting materials, water, and natural habitat can attract birds to our yards, giving us views of them and, when done properly, can create a haven for our feathered friends.

Ken has been birding and photographing birds for over 35 years and is currently teaching classes in birding and wildlife photography at Whatcom Community College.

The yard that Ken and his wife, Stephanie, maintain is a National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat that has attracted over 90 species of birds in the 15 years they have lived there, creating many hours of wonder and enjoyment.

Come relax and learn how your garden can become a haven for our varied and beautiful birds of Whatcom County!

Orchids for Your Valentine

Orchids are exotic, elegant, and romantic. That's what makes them the perfect gift for your special someone on Valentine's Day.

Orchids come in all colors, in all sorts of beautiful and bizarre shapes, and in a wide range of sizes. Most garden centers carry reasonably



priced, easy-to-grow varieties. In the natural world there are more than 20,000 species of orchids, growing in every type of habitat from tropical rain forests to the tundra and semi-arid desert,

and on every continent except Antarctica. Orchids grow in all 50 states, even Alaska!

When buying an orchid, the plant should be securely rooted in the pot and have lustrous flowers and firm, succulent leaves and pseudobulbs. As with other flowering plants, buy orchids with some buds still left to open. Make sure flowers and leaves don't have spots, which could be from poor culture or even disease.

Most orchids require relatively high light intensities and should be grown in an east or south window. Insufficient light is the most common reason orchids don't flower.

Consider the moth orchid (Phalaenopsis) which grows under similar conditions to African violets, making them one of the best choices for growing indoors.

Beautiful Winter Blooming Cyclamen

There is something captivating about a cyclamen. Perhaps the daintiness of the reflexed petals or the bright clean colors of the flowers engage our eyes. Or the fact that these little beauties are at their best during the gloomy winter months.



The Pacific Horticulture Society recommends two species of cyclamen that are especially well-performing in our area.

The first, *Cyclamen coum*, is easy to grow and fully hardy. With captivating foliage and flowers, it

brightens the gray days of winter like no other plant. Rounded, heart-shaped leaves emerge in fall, often with varied silver and gray tones painted onto a deep green base. Midwinter triggers a flush of stubby little magenta, pink, or white flowers poking up through the low dense foliage. Tough and resilient, *Cyclamen coum* will grow well with half-day sun to heavy shade, and is amazingly tolerant of dry conditions. Plants can be slow to establish.

The second species of Cyclamen recommended for our area by the Pacific Horticulture Society is *Cyclamen pseudibericum*. One of the largest hardy Cyclamen species you can grow, it will catch your eye even when out of bloom. Large leaves emerge in late fall

and unfurl to a dark glossy green, often subtly marked with bands of gray. Large, typically bright rose purple or occasionally pale pink flowers are borne in abundance above the leaves from late winter to early spring. They are grown most successfully in bright to medium shade in well-drained sandy loam.



Handsome silver-streaked leaves, spread like heart-shaped doilies under brightly colored blossoms make Cyclamen a standout in the winter garden.

Save the Date!

The Birchwood Garden Club 26th **Annual Plant Sale** will be held on **Saturday, May 5**, 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!

Welcome New Members
Kerin Mana and Dorna Stone

Snacks

This month's meeting snacks will be provided by Dianne Gerhard and Millie Sicard.

Thank You

Plant of the Month: *Grevillea victoriae*

Are you looking for something different? *Grevillea victoriae*, also called Royal Victoriae, is definitely a conversation piece in the garden. With its unusual long-lasting blooms and four inch long silver-backed grey-green leaves, it always looks splendid.

In the past grevilleas have been ignored in the Pacific Northwest because of concerns about cold hardiness. But with the availability of *Grevillea victoriae*, we now have a plant that thrives in our area.

This large (10 feet tall and wide) broadleaf evergreen shrub produces unusual pendant

clusters of beak-like red-orange buds that hang on the plant from fall through winter. In late winter through early summer the clusters open revealing red-orange honeysuckle-like blooms. Sporadic flowers can appear almost year round and are very attractive to hummingbirds.



Native to southeast Australia, *victoriae* is the hardiest member

of the grevilleas. It is fast growing and young plants will grow up to one foot per year. Once established, it is remarkably drought tolerant.

Grevillea victoriae is best in well drained or sandy soils in a location with full sun. Avoid fertilizing as excessive nutrients can kill these plants. Very little pruning is needed to keep it looking great, but light tip pruning while the plant is young can help keep it dense and bushy.

Grevillea victoria is easy to grow and attractive to birds and butterflies. And, as an added bonus, this beautiful winter bloomer is deer resistant!

Sowing Edible Greens Indoors

Sowing edible greens indoors is a fun and productive January gardening activity. If you have a set of grow lights or bright windowsill, you can grow mesclun or other quick-growing greens to add to early spring salads.

Fill a tray with moistened seed-starting mix and sow seeds thickly, then cover with one-quarter inch of soil and mist the surface. Don't let the surface dry out. As soon as the first seeds germinate, keep the lights about 4 inches above the tray.

You can start your own sprouts for salads easily under even lower light, buying seeds at garden stores or online from catalogs. You can buy special sprouting trays that stack, or simply sprout seeds in a jar covered with cheesecloth. Moisten seeds overnight, then drain and place a layer in the container. Rinse and drain daily.

Many seeds can be used such as beans and peas, mustard and other similar greens, grains such as wheat, grasses such as oats, lettuce, and even onions.

There can be no other occupation like gardening in which, if you were to creep up behind someone at their work, you would find them smiling.

Mirabel Osle

Meeting Minutes

January 3, 2018

Submitted by Rhonda Rinn



President Ann Holland welcomed 49 members to the January 3rd, 2018 meeting of the Birchwood Garden Club. Minutes of the December 2017 meeting were approved. The treasury report was done by Jerry McLean. Jerry reported that we now have 101 members!

Old Business:

Regarding the new rule of the Whatcom Museum regarding no live plants in the museum, we will abide by these rules.

New Business:

Nancy McMasters has volunteered to take over the library/museum gardens for the coming year. The sundial at the Cornwall Rose Garden is missing its' gnomon. We have a spare that parks dept. will install.

Announcements:

The club will donate \$500. to the Bellingham Food Bank this year. This amount is up from \$250. donated in previous years.

The annual plant sale will be on May 5th from 8-12:30. Setup for the sale will be on May 4th from 3-6.

The WSU extension- Master Gardeners are having a class, "How Gardening Will Save The World" on February 8 @ BTC. Info at whatcom.wsu.edu.

Our speakers tonight, Joe Jowdy and Bridget Boylan, owners of Red Barn Lavender in Ferndale. They provided information about lavender as well as information about their farm. They have owned their farm for 4 years. They create many lavender based culinary and home products using lavender. Their farm is open to the public in the summer and they have a booth at the Bellingham Farmers Market.

Thank you to Cheryl Haak and Rita Saling 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 – Nancy McMasters

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