

the GAZETTE

BIRCHWOOD GARDEN CLUB

www.birchwoodgardenclub.org

CHARTERED 1931

March Topic: Foliage First

Submitted by Tamara Hall

The Birchwood Garden Club will hold its March 2018 meeting on Wednesday, March 7, at 7:00 p.m. in the Whatcom Museum of History and Art. The speaker for the evening will be Karen Chapman, co-author of *Gardening with Foliage First* and owner of *le jardinet*.

Many gardeners don't realize the power of foliage plants in the garden. Foliage defines the garden space and unifies the garden via repetition. The leaves and bark of foliage plants provide color and texture highlights. And, intentional use of foliage plants allows seasonal performers to “pop” in the garden.

Through her talk, Karen Chapman will present her framework for organizing foliage plants into three categories: spotlight (focus on the details), highlight (less is more), and limelight (showtime). In addition, she will provide multiple examples of specific foliage plants in each category.

Come and learn how to take your containers and gardens from predictable to exceptional through the use of foliage plants. Copies of *Gardening with Foliage First* will also be available for purchase.

Winter Plants to Attract Hummingbirds

Pacific Northwest gardeners delight in seeing the Anna's hummingbird that stays in our region throughout the winter. Incorporating some of the following plants will definitely attract hummingbirds to your garden during the dark days of winter.



The strawberry tree with its small, white urn-shaped flowers offers nectar to hummingbirds beginning in late fall. And, mahonia “winter sun” with its striking sprays of vibrant yellow flowers is an absolute hummingbird magnet.

As winter continues, the white flowers of the evergreen shrub

sarcococca provide nourishment for hummers during January and February. Hummingbirds also feed on the nectar of the flowers of winter-blooming hellebores and the camilla “yuletide.”

The unusual spidery flowers of grevillea “canberra gem” draws hummingbirds to its bright orange-red flowers all winter. Witchhazel with its bright flowers on bare branches is a mid- to late-winter favorite of hummingbirds. In late March, on the cusp of spring, the native red-flowering currant becomes a main attraction to our overwintering hummingbirds.

In addition to nectar from blossoms, Hummingbirds need protein, obtained from eating insects and spiders. Add a few conifers to the landscape to allow for foraging for insects along the branches.

Get Ready For the Plant Sale

Submitted by Cheryl Haak

The Birchwood Garden Club 26th Annual Plant Sale will be Saturday, May 5, 2018 in the lower conference room of the Bellingham Public Library, 210 Central Avenue.

As in the past, we will be setting up for the sale on Friday, May 4 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Please help by donating plants or related gardening items to this BGC major fund-raising event!

Annuals, perennials, indoor plants and veggie starts, along with pots, books, and other garden items are much appreciated and make our sale a huge success.

We will have a designated drop off area for items in the back parking area of the library, Lottie Street, on Friday, May 4 beginning at 3 p.m.



Landscaping With Ornamental Grasses

Grasses can provide height, color, contrast, wildlife shelter, spiky accents, and feathery waves to gardens and landscapes. Many grasses retain their shape and foliage structure through the winter, giving added texture to the garden.

In our area, Spring is the ideal time to plant ornamental grasses. During planting, add a little compost to the soil and water regularly for the first couple of months to help the grass develop a good root system.

There are two main varieties of ornamental grasses -- cool season (fescue, oat grass, deschampsia) and warm season (miscanthus, fountain grass, switch grass). Each one differs slightly and grows best based on the climate. Fortunately, we can grow both varieties in our area. Some of these grow in nice round clumps and others tend to spread. One of the benefits of ornamental grasses is that they come in various sizes, which

makes them a landscaper's friend.



For best appearance and function, it is important to plant an ornamental grass in the right location. Small grass varieties look best at the edge of walkways or patios. Large grass varieties are best planted where they can spread out and fill a large area. They look best in a far corner of the yard, against a fence, or as a backdrop to other smaller landscape features.

It is best to leave the ornamental grasses alone and refrain from pruning in the fall. This will provide extra protection for the crown of the plant from those occasionally freezing nights. In the early spring, cut the grass back to about 4 to 6 inches.

Snacks

This month's meeting snacks will be provided by Judy Lewis and Candy Mathews.

Thank You

Plant of the Month: *Forsythia x intermedia* “Show Off”

You know spring is just around the corner when forsythia bursts into bloom. This shrub is famous for being one of the earliest shrubs to flower each spring, adding cheery yellow blossoms to a yard that may be otherwise dulled by winter.

Show Off is not your typical forsythia! This new compact selection offers a superior flower display over older varieties and remains small so there is no need to prune. Now you can have a nice tight, compact forsythia shrub without doing any work!

Show Off also offers a superior flower display over older varieties. It is covered from base

to tips with large bright yellow blooms in early spring. The attractive dark green foliage,



unlike other Forsythia's, provides season long interest.

The bright yellow flowers with four petals are the main attraction

on this shrub. You will see them unfurl before the leaves do. They are formed in clusters on the stem. After pollination, small brown capsules are produced.

With a maximum grow of 4-5 feet height and width, Show Off is excellent as a short hedge, in mixed borders and foundations. Its flowers are beautiful in cut displays.

Forsythia is a fully hardy shrub and really easy to look after. It can be planted in full sun or part shade. Full sun is the preferable choice to ensure the best possible floral show and growth. It is almost always free of pests and is deer resistant.

Safe Gardening!

Many gardeners suffer back injuries and pain. Here are some basic principles which apply to any means of lifting, lowering, and carrying whether lifting bags of fertilizer and compost, lifting rocks, moving pots, or pulling weeds.

Start slowly, don't rush, don't jerk. Move heavy objects in an unhurried, controlled manner.

Lift with your legs and not your back. Lift with your knees and waist bent, not your back. Keep your back straight. Knees should be directly above your toes, your shoulders above your knees

Keep objects close to your body when lifting. Stand close to the object when squatting down to lift.

Make sure you plan ahead when lifting where the object will go. This avoids twisting improperly, carrying around heavy items, or lifting too much too high.

Make sure you have good footwear to provide solid support, and that surfaces you'll stand or walk on when lifting and carrying aren't slippery, or with hazards such as cords, ropes, or stones.

Don't ignore pain. The saying of "no pain, no gain", doesn't apply here. Take time to rest if your body feels tired.

Meeting Minutes

February 7, 2018

Submitted by Rhonda Rinn



President Ann Holland welcomed 41 members and 2 guests to the February 7th, 2018 meeting of the Birchwood Garden Club.

Minutes of the January 2018 meeting were approved. The treasury report was done by Jerry McLean. He reports we now have 106 members.

Old Business: Zapote Gregory will take charge of the replacement gnomon for the Cornwall Rose Garden sundial. Mark Turner delivered our new brochures tonight. They look great!

New Business: Judy Lewis has updated the member roaster. She will send to all members via email.

Announcements:

Cheryl Haak reports that it is time to start getting ready for our annual plant sale that is held at the Bellingham Library. The sale will be on Saturday May 5th and is from 8:00am until noon. We will set up on Friday May 4th from 3:00pm until 6:00pm. A sign up sheet was sent around for volunteers. Everyone who volunteers is entitled to purchase one plant per day before the sale begins.

Donated plants should be brought to the library between 3:00 and 6:00 on the 4th. Cheryl will have soil available at the March and April meetings. Bring buckets to fill if you are in need of soil. Any plant that is brought to the sale should have a tag that tells the name of the plant, is it sun or shade, wet or dry growing conditions and size and color of the flowers/fruits.

Our speaker tonight club member, Ken Salzman on creating gardens to attract birds and other wild life to a garden. His presentation including beautiful photos he has taken of birds, is truly inspiring. In the 15 years that he and Stephanie have been on their property, he has identified 91 species of birds! He has great ideas for how to attract birds and other fowl to our yards.

Thank you to Dianne Gerhard and Millie Sicard 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