

the GAZETTE

BIRCHWOOD GARDEN CLUB

www.birchwoodgardenclub.org

CHARTERED 1931

December Topic: Spectacular Christmas Trees

From by Tamara Hall

2020 has been a discouraging year for many of us with the lockdowns, limitations, and concerns. Therefore, it is time for some uplifting holiday actions.

!!! WE NEED TO CELEBRATE!!!!

What better way to relive the joyous holiday than with the Christmas decorations created by Mary Etta Foster. **Join us via Zoom on Wednesday, December 2, at 7:00 p.m.** to start the holiday season with Mary Etta's spectacular Christmas trees and decorations.

In the past, some of us have visited her home and experienced her exuberantly decorated Christmas trees. It was a jaw dropping, wide eyed spectacle. Visitors left stunned, amazed, and filled with the Christmas spirit.

Mark Turner, our club photographer, has put together a wonderful show featuring these amazing trees and decorations, something you won't want to miss. Mary Etta's daughter will be with her mother to help us experience the joy of the ZOOM presentation.

Watch for the e-mail with directions on how to connect to this very special event. Come join in and celebrate the Christmas season and lift your spirits high!

A Seasonal Favorite Christmas Cactus

Christmas cacti are everywhere during the holiday season, with good reason. They're gorgeous blooming succulents that can live up to 100 years!



They have interesting leaf segments and profuse flowers that come in salmon, hot pink, deep red, pale pink, and white—and they're an easy plant to propagate to make new plants.

Just clip off a segment and plant in a sandy soil.

Christmas cactus actually bloom better when "pot bound" in well-draining soil. They need bright, indirect sun. They'll burn in direct sunlight, so if it's indoors near a west or south-facing window, make sure it's filtered with a sheer curtain.

Christmas cacti like humidity, so if your house is dry indoors in winter, put them on a tray of pebbles or near other plants. Water when the top surface feels dry, and never let them sit in water.

Enjoy bright red Christmas cacti to celebrate the holiday season!

Gardening Connections

While we are not able to meet in person, we can still share our beautiful gardens and maintain our connections with each other!

We are asking members who have images of their gardens to send them to Tom Sparks, and he will post them on the Birchwood Garden Club Website at birchwoodgardenclub.org

We all have beautiful plants in our gardens every season that would be wonderful to share with others. What a wonderful way to share the joys of gardening and to communicate with each other.

Please mail your photos to Tom Sparks at sparky111@comcast.net

Cinnamon Walnut Bread

With our virtual meeting format, we miss our delicious snacks. So we will be featuring favorite recipes from members. This month's recipe is from **Dianne Gerhard**.

Serving Size: About 12 large slices

Preparation Time: 15 minutes + 60 minutes baking

- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 large eggs
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 2 1/2 cups flour
- 1 1/4 cup milk
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 3/4 ounce box Instant Vanilla Pudding
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/3 cup chopped black walnuts (or pecans)



Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

Combine oil, sugar, vanilla, eggs, salt, and cinnamon in a large bowl. Add flour, milk, soda, pudding, baking powder, and walnuts. Mix well.

Grease two large loaf pans and sprinkle with a mixture of sugar and cinnamon.

Pour in bread mixture and sprinkle any leftover sugar mixture on top along with a few more chopped nuts.

Bake for one hour.

Garden Quiz

This beautiful plant belongs to Ann Holland.
What is it?



A tropical bulb that produces hosta-like foliage and beautiful white flowers in clusters makes a stunning houseplant that can bloom up to three times a year.

Answer on page 4

Chipmunks in the Garden

They're little. They're cute. They're fun to watch. And they can be incredibly destructive.

At first glance chipmunks might not seem like a gardening problem. But just wait until they've chewed up your freshly planted tomato seeds, dug holes all over your garden, or eaten up your tulip roots.

Chipmunks can be persistent and creative, but with some trial and error, you can make sure they stop destroying your garden!

Try barriers to keep them out of your vegetable garden. A fence with small holes that is buried at least six inches underground with netting may provide protection for stems and roots. Adding some spice with a sprinkling of cayenne pepper or chili powder is a non-toxic way to discourage chipmunks.

Learn to live with the little critters and enjoy their antics!

Plant of the Month: Yaupon Holly (*Ilex vomitoria*)

The Yaupon Holly (*Ilex vomitoria*) is an evergreen shrub or small tree with green leaves and red berries that will add color to your garden throughout the year. However, unlike other hollies, this one does not have prickly spikes at leaf edges.

Native to the southeastern United States, Yaupon Holly provides excellent background structure to the garden or serves as a beautiful ornamental tree. When trimmed into a tree shape, this holly provides a striking focal point to add interest and height to an area of the garden.

Yaupon Holly provides outstanding winter color. The plant produces small white flowers in spring that develop into berries in fall. The berries are bright red, spectacular, and a much-needed source of color

when all else is dormant in the winter months. The berries also attract wildlife and provide food for birds.



You may be tempted to use the foliage and berries in holiday wreaths and decorations indoors. However, it is better to leave the beauty in the garden as the berries contain ilicin, a mildly toxic substance that is considered dangerous to children and pets if eaten in large quantities.

Yaupon Holly grows 10-20 feet high, and matures to a rather large width of 10-12 feet. So provide plenty of space for this ornamental tree to develop. However, the tree can be easily pruned to fit a garden location.

Yaupon Holly does well in a variety of soil types, moisture levels, pH levels, and sun exposures. It does best in sandy soils and full sun. Once roots are established, it is a good plant for drought conditions. It is relatively pest-free and is not attractive to deer.

If you are looking for festive winter color in your garden, look to the Yaupon Holly with its bright red berries and lovely evergreen foliage.

Healthful Herbs

The holiday season will soon be upon us. In America, we have so many wonderful and diverse traditions, but one tradition we all have in common is cooking our favorite holiday foods. And many of our favorite recipes call for fresh herbs.

Julie Meahl from Garden View, looked at some of the herbs we typically use in cooking and catalogued the health benefits. Basil is soothing to the stomach, helps nausea, and relieves nervousness. Cayenne is warming to the heart and helps blood circulation. Cilantro helps eliminate the metal build-up of mercury in our bodies. Parsley is good for your kidneys and bladder. Garlic stimulates metabolism and reduces cholesterol. Mint is great for an upset stomach. Oregano stimulates circulation. Rosemary is good for improving memory.

Herbs are easy to grow in planters or pots, inside and outside. Herbs should be in the full sun, healthy garden soil, and always fertilized organically. Besides the wonderful flavors herbs add to our food, they are also healthy for us.

Happy Holiday Eating!

Answer to Garden Quiz

Eucharis amazonica or Amazon Lily

Meeting Minutes

November 4, 2020

Submitted by Ann Holland



Our President, Sheri Lambert welcomed all via our Zoom meeting.

The last meetings minutes (October 7, 2020) published in the Gazette were approved. There were approximately 14 members at the Zoom meeting.

Treasurers Report: Nancy McMaster gave us the current bank balance and membership income to date. As of October, we have dues income of \$185.00.

Announcements: Sheri let us know that we should send pictures we have of our gardens fall colors or interesting house plants, to Tom Sparks, our web master, so that they may be shared in the Gazette.

Julianna Guy is coordinating the work parties at the new park at Cordata, which is off the Horton Road. At a recent work party 46 volunteers put in 612 plants and they have more to go. If you are interested in joining a future work party at Cordata, contact the Parks Dept. Volunteer program at www.cob./parkvolunteer.

Our presenter tonight was our own Judy Boxx, showing us beautiful pictures of her many pot combinations in wonderful settings. She also gave us many tips as to how to overwinter geraniums and begonias and propagate cuttings for the next year. Judy also uses fuchias in many of her containers. Judy minimizes the cost of large containers by reusing and screening the previous years soil, adding some new soil, Osmocote fertilizer, and compost. She also uses liquid Miracle Grow twice a week.

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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STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

President - Sheri Lambert

President Elect - Vacant

Treasurer - Nancy McMaster

Secretary - Ann Holland

Garden Tours – Sheri Lambert & Carol McBride

Historian – Violet Hayes

Hospitality – Carol McBride

Library Garden – Ann Holland

Museum Garden – 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