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# the GAZETTE

BIRCHWOOD GARDEN CLUB

[www.birchwoodgardenclub.org](http://www.birchwoodgardenclub.org)

CHARTERED 1931

## March Topic: Social Media and the BGC

By Ira Penn

The BGC does some things really well. We have a fabulous annual plant sale (see article to the right). We visit some really nice gardens on our tours. We have some interesting speakers at our meetings. We maintain the Library and Museum Gardens. And... we have a fun, potluck social each year.

But one area where the BGC has been behind the curve is tooting our own horn and recruiting new members by letting people know we're here. Susan Metcalfe has done a wonderful job of promoting us through various print outlets, and Tom Sparks keeps our website up-to-date and pretty, but we have had little to no presence in social media.

Well, that's about to change. Pat Carlson has volunteered to become our Social Media Chairperson and, even though she's new to the Club, she has taken on the job with enthusiasm!

At our March 2 meeting, to be held via Zoom at 7:00 PM, Pat will give us a tutorial about using Facebook and Instagram to help promote the BGC.

We will also be discussing the upcoming Plant Sale and other spring activities.

An email notice with the Zoom link will be forthcoming.

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## BGC Annual Plant Sale is Next Month!

By Cheryl Haak

As mentioned in the February issue of *the Gazette*, the Birchwood Garden Club's 29th annual plant sale will be held on Saturday, April 30, and will start at 9:00 a.m. (sale volunteers arrive at 8:00 a.m.) in the lower level conference room of the Bellingham Public Library at 210 Central Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98225. As in the past, we will be setting up for the sale on Friday, the day before the sale (April 29) from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Please help by donating plants or related gardening items to this BGC major fund-raising event. Annuals, perennials, shrubs, trees, starts, indoor plants and veggie starts, along with pots, books, and other garden items are much appreciated and make our sale a huge success.

On set-up day we will have a designated drop off area for the sale items on the NW corner of the library property near the intersection of Grand and Lottie Streets. The new ramp near there will make our transfer of plants to the pricing area much easier.

There are many jobs that need to be filled in order to make our sale a success and fun for everyone. Please see below

which "job" you might like to have and let me know at [clhaak@comcast.net](mailto:clhaak@comcast.net). If you are willing to be assigned a job, just let me know that too. Please consider volunteering your time for either or both days. Anything you can do to help out would be much appreciated and it's a lot of fun!

In the meantime, look around your yards to see if anything needs division and start potting those plants! The more time the plants have to acclimate, the better they are going to look for the sale. Try placing the newly transplanted plants in places where they are sure to get light and sun to give them a jump start. We have found that medium size plants (1-gallon) and smaller in 6" pots tend to sell best, probably because they are easier for customers to carry away and place in their own gardens.

Prepare your labels by including the name of the plant, sun or shade, wet or dry and, if possible, size and color of flowers and/or fruit. Speaking of labels, let me know if you need them along with pots. I have both available for everyone

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It's been quite the winter. I'm not yet sure what the damage toll will come to, but a cursory look around the yard makes me think that some of the plants just aren't coming back. But then, a cursory look tells you nothing. Unless the plant has heaved out of the ground and there are no roots to be found, you can't tell that it's really dead in late February. Because... in late February it's still winter!

I had a neighbor years ago who succumbed to depression every year around this time. He'd go out in his yard and look at all the plants with their desiccated leaves and be convinced that he'd lost everything. And every year I would tell him the same thing: "Patience! You have to have patience!"

You see, just because we get a sunny day and you're itching to get out and play in the garden, doesn't mean that the garden is ready for you to play in. Plants grow on their own time schedule and, all things considered, they do amazingly well.

If you're the type who can't stand looking at plants that are playing dead (also known as being in a state of dormancy), I have two suggestions for you. First, you could move to the tropics where you'll always have something blooming, or second (which is undoubtedly more practical), you could try growing annuals from seed.

For a modest cost you can set up a small plant nursery with light, heat, humidity, etc. For even less cost you can buy seeds. And in

the middle of winter you can have little seedlings sprouting, which will then grow to a size suitable for transplanting into individual small pots. From there you can plant them into the ground or large pot where they will produce beautiful flowers or become tasty tomatoes or squash. Problem solved.

Of course you don't have to just plant annual seeds. You could plant perennials or biennials and go through the same initial exciting growing process. But if you plant either of those, you'll ultimately have the problem you were trying to avoid. In a year the perennials are going to look dead in early spring, and in two years, the biennials really will be dead.

Gardening is not a hobby for the faint of heart. To do it even half right takes work, and to do it well, takes both work and years of accumulated knowledge, much of which comes from screwing things up as it is acquired.

But be that as it may, I don't know of another endeavor that is as pleasurable and rewarding.

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## the Gazette

The Birchwood Garden Club Gazette is published monthly, September thru May, by the Birchwood Garden Club, P.O. Box 362, Bellingham, WA 98227. Articles, inquiries, letters to the editor, or other comments should be directed to the Editor, Ira Penn, via e-mail at:

[rmqeditor@yahoo.com](mailto:rmqeditor@yahoo.com)

**Deadline is always the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication.**

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The Birchwood Garden Club is open to everyone in Whatcom and Skagit Counties who supports the objectives of the organization. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month from September thru May. Annual membership dues are \$10 for an individual, \$15 for a family, due in September. Membership applications are available at:

[www.birchwoodgardenclub.org](http://www.birchwoodgardenclub.org).

### 2021-2022 Officers and Committee Chairpersons

President—Sheri Lambert  
Vice-President and President Elect—Vacant  
Treasurer—Dianne Gerhard  
Secretary—Lisa Friend

Garden Tours—Sheri Lambert & Carol McBride

Historian—Ed Gerhard  
Hospitality—Carol McBride  
Library/Museum Gardens—Ann Holland  
Membership—Judy Lewis  
Newsletter—Ira Penn  
Photographer—Kathy Sparks  
Plant Sale—Cheryl Haak  
Programs—Tamara Hall  
Publicity—Susan Metcalfe  
Silent Auction—Sandy Gurosko  
Social Media—Pat Carlson  
Sunshine—Cheryl Haak  
Webmaster—Tom Sparks

# Meeting Minutes

Submitted by Lisa Friend



## BGC Establishes Social Media Presence

By Pat Carlson

The February 2 Zoom meeting was called to order by President Sheri Lambert at 7:03 PM. The minutes of the January meeting were approved with a correction.

Pam Borso of the North Cascades Audubon Society discussed the importance of plants to birds, which require food, shelter, safe passage and places to raise their young.

### BUSINESS MEETING

There was a discussion of possibly simulcasting meetings.

**Treasurers' Report:** January expenses included the speaker fee and an increase of the USPS box rental to \$182 for the year. Income totaled \$80, including memberships and another \$30 donation from sale of pots.

**Garden Maintenance:** The garden sign at the Bellingham Public Library has been recovered. Dianne Gerhard said the post at the museum has been found but not the sign. Anne Holland plans to order new signs online.

**Plant Sale:** Cheryl Haak sent a report that she had paid \$10 for the plant sale permit. She also requested \$125 to cover weather-proof stickers that will be used to update the sale date for this year's yard signs. The expenditure was approved. Cheryl has reserved the free Dewey Griffin Subaru reader board in April for plant sale promotion.

**Social Media:** Nothing has been happening with social media. After discussion, Dianne Gerhard offered to post plant sale information on the Whatcom County Gardeners site. Pat Carlson offered to create a Facebook page for the club, and Ira Penn has said he will post about the sale on Instagram.

**Hosta Purchase:** Members discussed a group order of hostas from previous speaker Bob Solberg. Pricing and order details have been confusing, and the group decided the process was too complex. Dianne Gerhard will inform those who had been interested in placing orders.

**Future Speakers:** Staff at Uprising Seeds are too busy filling orders to be our presenters in March. Tamara will seek a speaker on dahlias or peonies. In April the topic will be "Firewise Gardening."

**Continuing Business:** There was a discussion about a seed swap and garden tour opportunities.

We might not have sufficient volunteer power to help with the tiny home garden or with school gardens in the spring.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 PM

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### Thoughts to Ponder

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*If you enjoy wasting time, it cannot be wasted time.*

I moved to Bellingham from the California Bay Area just over a year ago, and found myself growing things under the following conditions: USDA Zone 8, very short winter days and very long summer days, last frost date around mid-April, rainy fall, winter, and spring, dry summer, plentiful deer, winds up to 50 mph. Who could I talk to with gardening experience in that kind of environment? You guys! So I joined BGC and attended the February 2 Zoom meeting, where I was welcomed by the nicest, friendliest group of local gardeners. But what about between meetings? I have so many questions!

Wanting to "do my part," I volunteered to establish a social media presence for the Club to promote events such as meetings and the plant sale, as well as to recruit new members. Also, we will all enjoy the opportunity to show off photos of our beautiful gardens to the general public.

On February 4, I launched our **public** Facebook page, and followed it up with a **private** members-only Facebook discussion group two days later. Ira Penn had created a public Instagram account on January 23, and he has since handed that over to me as well. So we have 3 social media areas, 2 public and 1 private. And guess what? We have interest! Here are the statistics as of February 10:

### Instagram:

Followers 1  
Content interaction 0  
Accounts reached 0

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# Where Do Insects Go in the Winter?

By Ira Penn

You probably noticed that during the winter months the insects didn't "bug" you as much. (Sorry, couldn't resist!) So where were they? What were they doing when the temperature fell to single digits and snow was on the ground?

We could say they were hibernating, and that really wouldn't be wrong, but the scientific term for it is diapause—a state of suspended animation. The insect reduces its metabolism to about one-tenth its normal state and finds a safe place to be. Some can even convert their bodily fluids to alcohol to avoid cell damage. (Don't try this at home.)

Insects know when to go into diapause by watching the number of daylight hours. Shorter days mean winter is coming.

The way insects wait out the winter can take several forms. Some simply lay eggs and die. The next generation hatches when spring arrives. Other insects overwinter as grubs or larvae that find shelter underground or inside logs or under rocks. And some insects overwinter as adults.

Honeybees are especially interesting. They prepare for winter by purging the colony of all non-essential residents. The drone bees that aren't necessary for the continuance of the colony are just kicked out. (Heartless, perhaps, but efficient.) The worker bees and the queen huddle together in a ball with the queen at the center. The ball of bees rotates with each worker spending time in the warmer core and on the outside edges. That way, they all get an even shot at surviving.

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## Social Media

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### Public Facebook Page:

Views 72  
Likes 6  
Engagements 33

### Private Facebook Group

No. of Members 9  
Posts 8

So many people were quick to help me either by providing content or by interacting on Facebook: Susan Metcalfe, Ira Penn, Lisa Friend, Cheryl Haak, Dianne Gerhard, Judy Boxx, and Carol McBride. They immediately saw to it that I had everything I needed to get started. Thank you all!

Now it's your turn. Here's how you can join in and help promote the Birchwood Garden Club:

1. Like the Birchwood Garden Club Facebook page. (Note: the Birchwood GardenING Club also has a page. They are based in the UK.)
2. Request to join the Birchwood Garden Club Facebook Group. If your name is on the membership roster, I will approve your request.
3. Follow the Birchwood-gardenclub (one word) Instagram account.
4. Like, comment, and share posts on all three areas. This interaction causes the algorithms to make the two public sites more visible.
5. Answer my nonstop questions on the Facebook Group.
6. Post your own questions, photos, etc. on the Facebook Group.
7. Send me ideas on features you would like to see in any of the three areas.

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## Plant Sale

Continued from Page 1, Column 3

and can put them outside my garage area for pickup.

### Jobs — Set-up Day April 29 from 3:00 p.m. till 6:00 p.m.

Parking Attendants to save spaces and unload plants.

Need people to help bring plants in from parking area to pricing area.

Set up and line the tables with tarps.

Move plants from pricing tables to sales tables.

Deadhead.

Check for labels and prices.

Post Price Signage. Also post proper signage for the plant types.

Pricing the Plants.

### Jobs — Sale Day April 30 from 8:00 a.m. till Noon

Greet customers and hand out boxes.

Collectors Table (Special Plants).  
Sales Team.

Manage Holding Table: Need two people

Library Guard. Cashiers

Receipt checker (and ask shoppers how they heard of the sale)

Help clean up after the sale.

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