

OCTOBER 2021

the GAZETTE

BIRCHWOOD GARDEN CLUB

www.birchwoodgardenclub.org

CHARTERED 1931

October Topic: Growing House Plants

Submitted by Tamara Hall

The Birchwood Garden Club will hold its second meeting of the 2021-2022 season on Wednesday, October 6, via Zoom. The speaker will be Chuck McClung. An email with the Zoom link will be sent to all members prior to the event.

Chuck will familiarize us with the range of house plants, which ones work best, general houseplant care, and disease prevention.

Some of you might remember Chuck from his time at Bakerview Nursery. He has over 20 years' experience in large, family owned, independent garden centers and nurseries.

He is a gardening instructor and author, and is a specialist in orchids, landscape design/maintenance, edible landscapes, and backyard farming. Numerous nurseries rely on his seminars to educate and entertain their customers. His mission is to help others solve their gardening dilemmas.

Chuck has an MS in Botany from Washington State University and has worked in ecological and botanical research for the University of Illinois – Chicago, Oregon State University, and the University of Montana. He has several years' experience in commercial greenhouses.

※

A Note From the President During this Very Unusual Year

By Sheri Lambert

Regrettably we had to cancel our September meeting because of the increase of Covid-19 cases in our County. Our speaker, George Kaas, was set to do the program live in the museum but was willing to postpone his presentation until later in the season. We hope to have him visit this winter.

September is the time for our annual business meeting when the members approve the budget set by the board in August. The members also vote on the proposed slate of officers. Because our by-laws state that we have to do this in September, we asked you to vote electronically.

The budget was sent to all members via email and was approved unanimously. Our bank balance as of Aug. 31, 2021 was \$6,918.00. Expenses for the 2020-21 season were much less than the previous year because the speakers' fees were less with zooming. We anticipate that with a return to normality our expenses will rise.

The proposed slate of officers was also sent via email and received a unanimous vote. The officers and committee chairpersons for the 2021-22 season are listed on page 2, column 3. Unfortunately, for the second year running, we do not

have a Vice President/President Elect. Please let us know if you are interested.

The board discussed raising the dues but on further reflection decided this is not a good year to do that. Dues remain \$10 for a single and \$15 for a couple and are due this month. A check can be mailed to:

Birchwood Garden Club
P.O. Box 362
Bellingham, WA

If you are a new member who joined after March 31, you do not need to pay again; you are considered paid through 2022.

I hope we come out of this pandemic shortly so we can meet in person again. Zoom is pretty slick but it's just not the same!

※

Feeling Vine, Thank You

By Ira Penn

Do you grow vines that twine around or put out tendrils to cling to things? Did you ever wonder how they know where those things are? It's all because of thigmotropism! Plants with thigmotropism can actually sense solid objects.

Now you know. And don't forget, you read it in *The Gazette!*



Autumn is here and the pumpkins are ubiquitous. To celebrate the season I thought I'd include a holiday recipe in this issue.

Take one pumpkin. Measure the circumference. Divide it by the diameter. The result is Pumpkin Pi. (And you thought you'd never use the math they taught you in Jr. High.)

Pumpkin spice seems to be everywhere. I don't understand it. I like pumpkin pie, but I don't need the spice flavor in ice cream, pretzels, tea, jello, donuts, salsa, or butter! Gads, there are even pumpkin spiced dog treats and a Heuchera called 'Pumpkin Spice'. (I don't suggest eating either.)

October also means it's time to get ready for Halloween. As a kid, dressing in a costume and trick-or-treating never really appealed to me all that much. But the free candy was another matter so I did it. I covered myself with a bed sheet and attached socks all over it with safety pins. I went as "static cling."

I don't recall ever doing any tricks. I'm not saying I didn't, I just don't remember.

But there's more to October than just pumpkins and Halloween. There are a whole lot of "official days" in the month. For example:

International Old Persons Day,
National Hair Day,
Mole Day,
National Taco Day,
National Inner Beauty Day,
I Love Yarn Day,
Global Handwashing Day,
Reptile Awareness Day,
National Oatmeal Day, and
World Menopause Day.

Now, assuming that you're not going to be spending all your time celebrating the above "days," it would also be good to note that fall is officially here and there's garden work to be done. October is a good planting month. Trees and shrubs should be planted now so the roots can get established before the spring growth starts. If you're a Peony grower, it's the ideal time to divide the clumps and replant (or pot-up for the BGC Plant Sale). Plant spring flowering bulbs as well. And if you like Garlic, plant the cloves now for a wonderful harvest in June.

Fall can be lovely here when the leaves change color, but I prefer summer when the flowers are blooming. Also, on warm days my neighbor sunbathes in the nude. Dee Dee doesn't think it's appropriate. I'm on the fence.

Back in my vegetable growing days, I used to plant things in alphabetical order. I told a friend about the method and he said, "But that's such a tedious process, where do you find the time?" And I replied, "It's right next to the sage."

✱

I'll never forget the look on the cashier's face when she scanned a packet of birdseed and I asked her how long it took for the birds to grow once I planted them!

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

Deadline is always the 12th of the month prior to publication.

Authors' statements, either of fact or opinion, are their own and do not necessarily express the official policy of the Birchwood Garden Club. While the advice and information in this newsletter is believed to be true and accurate at the time of publication, neither the authors nor the editor can accept any legal responsibility for errors or omissions. The BGC makes no warranty expressed or implied with respect to the material contained herein.

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.

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—Nancy McMaster
Sunshine—Cheryl Haak
Webmaster—Tom Sparks

Meeting Minutes

Ira Penn Substituting for Ann Holland



BGC Board Meeting Cookie Recipe

From Sheri Lambert

No minutes. Not even any seconds. September's meeting was cancelled due to Covid. This, too, shall pass.

*

Miss the Slugs?

By Cheryl Haak

Four years ago we were battling slugs in the garden. They were everywhere munching away on our Hostas, Heucheras and a host of other plants. We all have our remedies for them: Beer in a saucer (what a waste of a good beverage), salt (cruel), Sluggo (kills beneficial bugs) squish underfoot (slipping hazard), or the extremely effective scissors. The latter method is quick and, I hope, painless. I was a bit squeamish at first, but got to where I could do it without a concern. In fact, my neighbor saw me cut one and he proclaimed that I'd better be careful or one day St. Peter might greet me with a very large pair of scissors. So I'm happy there seem to be fewer of them.

But before we start celebrating, we've got another gastropod on the scene that flourishes in a drier and warmer climate. Behold the snail. They are everywhere. My neighbor reportedly crunched 45 of them in one morning in her small front yard.

The first one I saw was a few years ago. It was making its way up our tree outside my kitchen window and I thought, *How cute hauling its own house.* It reminded me of a children's book I

once saw with that spiraling shell. I was delighted to see it. Fast forward and guess what? I no longer see snails as cute.

What happened to the slugs this past year, and how come the snails are so abundant? I've read that slugs need moist and cooler summers in order to thrive. We sure didn't have that! Since snails carry around their defense mechanisms to dryness and warmth, they can retreat into their shells to maintain moisture. If you go hunting for them like I do, on a warm/hot day you can find them in a shaded spot under leaves with their open side down in contact with the moistest soil.

Another possible explanation for the increase in the snails has been our lack of cold during the winters lately.

From further research I learned that one good thing you can do to combat snails is put crushed egg shells around the plant's base. Apparently snails won't crawl over them.

However you chose to defend your plants, know that I, like my neighbor, have begun crunching the things and if I don't have a good crunching place to get them underfoot, I use my scissors. I guess St. Peter will have to add a large shoe to the scissors as my greeting.

*

The August 18 Board Meeting was held in my home and I served cookies. Evidently, they were a hit because several folks asked that I publish the recipe in *The Gazette*. So... here it is!

1 C. Butter
1 C. Oil (I used coconut oil)
1 C. White Sugar
1 C. Brown Sugar
1 Egg
1 t. Vanilla

3 ½ C. Flour
1 t Cream of Tarter
1 t. Baking Soda
1 t. Salt

1 C. Oatmeal
1 C. Rice Krispies
1 C. Coconut
½ C. Chopped Pecans

Combine first 6 ingredients.

Add flour, baking soda, cream of tarter and salt. Mix well.

Add oatmeal, Rice Krispies, coconut and nuts. Mix, drop, and press with a fork.

Bake 350-degrees 10-12 min.

See, Board meetings can be fun. Would you like to be Vice President?

*

Thoughts to Ponder

無

Always give 100% -
unless you're donating
blood!

The BGC is 90!

By Ed Gerhard

When I volunteered to be the BGC Historian I was told that there are two important first steps to the job. Review the information in the “history boxes” and share with everyone what I find.

My review is complete and here of some of the interesting tidbits I uncovered. Hope you enjoy!

The first meeting of the Club was February 12, 1931 in the home of Anna and Dan Laxdall making 2021 our 90th birthday. We continue to thrive as the oldest, continually active garden club in Bellingham. Meetings were held at the Birchwood Presbyterian Church, dues were 25-cents, and money for special projects was earned by holding card parties at members houses.

In the early years the Club held flower shows, demonstrations and plant sales. Some of the more notable were an annual flower show at the Birchwood Church and a very successful annual plant sale with the Orthopedic Guild of Bellingham.

When Bellingham High School was completed in 1938, the Club planted Rhododendrons on the school grounds, and during WWII the Club sent flowers to Veterans Hospitals every week. At Birchwood Elementary School the Club planted several White Birch trees and 15 dozen Daffodil bulbs. BGC also donated plants and bulbs to the Birchwood Church, the Camano Island Tree Arboretum, the Red Cross Building, the Icelandic Old Folks Home in Blaine, St. Joseph Hospital, and the Senior Activity Center.

In 1955, a memorial of gardening books was established in conjunction with the Belling-

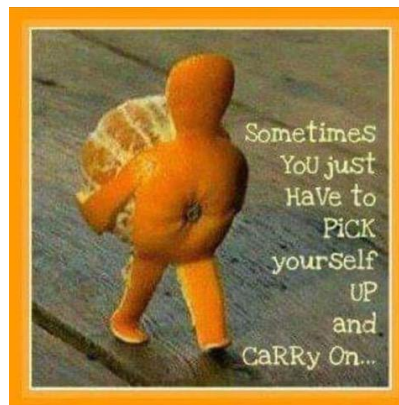
ham Public Library. Today there are hundreds of books and videos available for the community to enjoy.

Over the years the BGC has donated to Bellingham Parks to landscape the Birchwood Neighborhood Park, the Bellingham School District for the Shuksan Middle School courtyard, Whatcom Hospice, the Faith Lutheran Church memorial garden, the Whatcom County Parks Fragrance Garden Endowment Fund, the Sean Humphrey House Spence Putnam Garden, and the Bellingham Food Bank Garden Project.

In 1967 the BGC, as part of the Associated Garden Clubs of Whatcom County (we are the only member club still active) donated \$10,000 (almost \$80,000 in 2021 dollars) to remodel and furnish the Rotunda Room in the Whatcom County Museum. In appreciation the Museum agreed to allow the clubs to use this room for meetings without charge—in perpetuity.

More receipt contributions to the community include: replacement of the sundial and maintenance of the Cornwall Rose Garden, and the planting and upkeep of flower beds at the Bellingham Public Library and Whatcom County Museum.

*



*

Saving Veggie Seeds

By Ira Penn

So you got a great watermelon from the store this summer and you want to try growing the same type in your garden. How long can you save seeds and have them still be viable?

Proper seed storage conditions are key. They need to be kept cool and dark. The moisture content within the seed greatly affects germination rates. Below 45-50 degrees Fahrenheit with 40% humidity is perfect.

Longevity Under Proper Seed Storage Conditions

- Beans 3 years
- Beets 4 years
- Broccoli 3 years
- Brussels Sprouts 4 years
- Cabbage 4 years
- Carrots 3 years
- Cauliflower 4 years
- Chard 4 years
- Collards 5 years
- Corn 2 years
- Cucumbers 5 years
- Eggplant 4 years
- Kale 4 years
- Leeks 1 year
- Lettuce 5 years
- Melons 5 years
- Okra 2 years
- Onions 1 year
- Peas 3 years
- Peppers 2 years
- Pumpkins 4 years
- Radish 5 years
- Spinach 2 years
- Summer Squash 4 years
- Tomatoes 4 years
- Turnips 5 years
- Watermelon 4 years
- Winter Squash 4 years