

the GAZETTE

BIRCHWOOD GARDEN CLUB

www.birchwoodgardenclub.org

CHARTERED 1931

April Topic: Retire into Your Garden with Ease

Submitted by Tamara Hall

The Birchwood Garden Club will hold its April 2019 meeting on Wednesday, April 3 at 7:00 p.m. in the Whatcom Museum of History and Art. Our speaker for the evening will be Garden Mentors founder Robin Haglund.

Robin Haglund is a pioneering garden coach and award-winning Seattle garden designer with a passion for cultivating beautiful, functional, organically-focused, native-inspired, often edible, sustainable outdoor spaces.

Her fantastic presentation, *Retire into Your Garden with Ease*, will inspire us to look at our gardens with new insights. What changes would make gardening easier? How should we focus on our gardens?

Robin will guide us through important considerations on how to make gardening easier including tools, techniques, layout, plant choices, and tasks and timing. In addition, she will help us determine our gardening goals and whether our gardening approach is causing un-needed strain or stress

Since maximizing gardening pleasure is timeless, this topic is really for all ages!

Preparing for the Plant Sale

Submitted by Cheryl Haak

The Birchwood Garden Club Annual Plant Sale is coming very soon Saturday, May 4, 9:00 a.m. - noon, at the Bellingham Library Lower Conference Room. The community counts on our sale as a source of great plants that grow well in our area. So now is the time to start preparing your plants!

Start dividing and potting your plants. The more time plants have to acclimate, the better they are going to look for the sale. Place the pots in the best areas to insure they thrive. 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 - 2 gallon) and ground cover in 6 inch pots tend to sell best, probably because they are easier for customers to carry away and place in their own gardens.

Prepare labels. Your labels should include the name of the plant, sun or shade, wet or dry, size and color of flowers and/or fruit. Photos of the plant are

always very helpful. Blank white labels will be available at the April meeting.

Keep your plants well-watered, but stop watering (and put in a dry place) two days before the sale. Before you take the plants in, trim off any bad leaves and spent flowers.

Bring your plants to the Bellingham Library lower conference room on Friday, May 3 between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. for set up for the sale. If you are unable to deliver your plants on Friday, but would still like to donate a few for our sale, you are welcome to bring them to 2733 Grant Street in Bellingham a few days beforehand.

Help with the sale. We count on our members to help with the sale -- setting up, helping customers choose their plants, processing sales, and serving as greeters at the door. Sign up at the April meeting or call Cheryl Haak at 360-671-2656 to volunteer to help. Remember that the plant sale is our major annual fund raising event and helps us support our service to the community!

What is Dormancy?

As we get closer to spring we will be anxiously awaiting the day that our plants, shrubs, and trees break dormancy. Have you ever thought about what dormancy actually is? What is it that triggers a plant to go dormant and what triggers it to break dormancy?

Dormancy is defined as a recurring period, such as every winter, in the life cycle of an organism when growth, development, and reproduction are suppressed. This temporary state of inactivity enables the plant to conserve energy until better growing conditions occur.

The biology of the plant species determines when it grows and when it produces flowers, fruit, or seeds. It stores an amount of energy for the time that unfavorable conditions exist; when there is a reduction in sunlight and temperatures and it can not produce the food it needs. At this point the focus becomes survival instead of growth and seed production.

Abscisic acid (ABA) is a hormone found in plants that is necessary for the onset of dormancy. It is triggered when temperatures drop and works to stop the growth of foliage. The cold temperatures of winter gradually break down the ABA, again changing the hormonal balance of the plant, and growth resumes.

Bulbs are the earliest plants to grow and bloom in our Whatcom County spring. The snowdrops are followed by crocuses, hyacinths, daffodils and tulips. These bursts of color herald the arrival of warmer temperatures, longer daylight hours, and bright colors in our landscape. It Is a welcome sight for us all!



Need Volunteers to Advertise Plant Sale!

From Cheryl Haak, Plant Sale Chair

We have 100 new yard signs advertising the May 4 Birchwood Garden Club plant sale.

Alas, only 16 members have agreed to post one in their yards.

Please consider helping advertise for our annual plant sale by posing a sign in your yard and by asking friends, family, or a business to post a sign for a couple of weeks.

The more exposure the better! The income from our sale helps us support community projects and great speakers for our monthly meetings.

Cheryl Haak will bring signs to our next meeting on April 3. Please help make our sale a success by taking a sign to post in your yard!

Snacks

This month's meeting snacks will be provided by Judy Lewis and Marissa Townsend.

Thank You

Plant of the Month: *Leucothoe Scarletta*

The hallmark of this beautiful spreading shrub is its elegantly arching branches lined with lustrous, foliage. Glossy, red-toned leaves of *Scarletta* are especially colorful. This choice evergreen low-growing hybrid has bright scarlet new growth that matures a deep, dark glossy green, then turns burgundy-red for fall and winter. White bell-shaped flowers appear in mid-spring but are upstaged by the foliage.

Over the winter, the cold intensifies the colors on *Leucothoe* enhancing the copper colour of its evergreen foliage. It keeps this colour over the winter into the spring when it brightens with the new red shoots that last through the summer.

Shade loving and naturalistic in form, *Leucothoe* is native to the southeastern United States where it inhabits hilly, mountainous woodlands with fertile, acid soil. It can grow to about 4 feet tall



and can spread up to 5 feet. Plants can be easily managed by late spring pruning after blooms are gone.

Leucothoes are very easy to grow, and will grow in most

conditions from full sun in cool climates to heavy shade and well drained to moist soil, but not waterlogged. It will benefit from an occasional acid feed. *Leucothoes* are hardy in USDA Zones 4-8. The plant is resistant to deer.

Leucothoe ‘*Scarletta*’ is a perfect plant for using in a winter planter before moving it into the garden, in this situation it acts as a backdrop to your colorful winter bedding such as mini-cyclamen and pansies.

Leucothoes can be planted with conifers where the dark red contrasts well with greens and yellows. They are also nice as large-scale, billowy ground cover for shaded hillsides.

Take Pictures of Your Spring Garden

As your spring-flowering garden begins to go into glory mode take photos so you can refer to them later in the year. These will especially come in handy this fall when you are expanding your landscape areas with spring-flowering plants. Can’t remember exactly where all those buttercups are planted? Can’t remember the exact shade of pink those azaleas were so you can complement them with other flower shades?

Having a garden photo album will really help. It can be a “hard” copy with pictures actually in an album or it can exist in a folder on your home computer. While you’re at it, why not sketch a planting map in your gardening journal to show where any spring bulbs are located. With an accurate plot plan you will know where to plant spring-flowering bulbs this fall.

You’ll also be able to plan for continuous flowering by sowing or transplanting annual or perennial flowers among the bulbs after their display has ended to disguise the maturing bulb foliage--as all good gardeners know, we should leave the bulb foliage to yellow and die back in place which completes the process of channeling energy from the leaves to the bulb to support next year’s flowers.

Meeting Minutes

February 6, 2019
Submitted by Cheryl Haak



Thirty members attended the meeting on March 6 presided over by President Ann Holland.

Old Business: Minutes of the February meeting were approved.

We are still trying to fill the position of Secretary. Who wants to be our next Secretary?

Nancy McMaster, our Library and Museum Gardens Chairperson, is soliciting ideas for plants to fill in areas where we had to remove overgrown ones. We need plants that will grow no taller than 1.5'.

Cheryl Haak reported that the plant sale (our only fund raiser) will be held on Saturday, May 4th from 9:00 till noon at the downtown Bellingham Public Library. Setup for the sale will be on the day before, Friday, May 3rd from 3:00 p.m. till roughly 6:00 p.m.

Volunteer signup sheets were passed around for both days. In addition, members were invited to sign up for a yard sign to help advertise the sale. Labels, pots and potting soil were also offered at the meeting.

Zapote Gregory had an impromptu Cornwall Rose Garden cleanup on March 2nd.

Jerry McLean gave us the Treasurer's report.

Diane Gerhard gave a report on progress using the money we donated to the Food Bank last fall which is being used to install raised beds. People who apply for and get the raised beds will be assisted by a master gardener to help them learn the ropes of growing their own veggies.

Anyone who has signed up for purchasing a bee house from Crown Bees will be receiving an e-mail from Crown Bees with instructions on how to pay the one-time \$20 fee. There is no need to pay Tamara when she delivers the bees and their house later this month.

New Business: Another volunteer opportunity: Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association is hosting work parties every Saturday from 9:00 till noon beginning on March 16 through April 27. For more information, see www.n-sea.org or call 360-715-0283 or e-mail sbrown@n-sea.org.

Thank you to Patti Salotti and Ann Holland for tonight's snacks. Thank you to Sheri and Russ Lambert for our great coffee.

Ann also wants to thank and recognize Stephanie and Ken Salzman for producing our wonderful Gazette month after month without fail. She (and the rest of the Club) always enjoy the articles and the plant of the month

Our speaker tonight was Marty Wingate who entertained us with pictures and stories of gardens in England, Ireland, France and Scotland.

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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Secretary - VACANT

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Membership – Judy Lewis

Newsletter – Ken & Stephanie Salzman

Plant Sale – Cheryl Haak

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