

the GAZETTE

BIRCHWOOD GARDEN CLUB

www.birchwoodgardenclub.org

CHARTERED 1931

February Topic: Glen Echo Garden

Submitted by Tamara Hall

The Birchwood Garden Club will hold its February 2019 meeting on Wednesday, February 6 at 7:00 p.m. in the Whatcom Museum of History and Art. Our speaker for the evening will be Dick Bosch, owner of the fabulous Glen Echo Garden.

Located 6 miles east of Bellingham, Glen Echo Garden offers 7 acres of multi-themed gardens including a Blue Garden, Gigantic Stump Garden, Serenity Garden, English Garden, and Begonia and Fuchsia Garden. The Natural Forest Garden, Fern and Moss Garden, and Japanese Garden have been recently added.

Visitors experience a peaceful atmosphere with meandering walkways, fountains, arches, and garden beds filled with unique shrubs and trees. Over 20,000 bedding plants add brilliant color to the natural wooded setting and add highlights to the season.

Owner Dick Bosch purchased the property in 1971 and began recovering the land. After 40 years of landscaping, Glen Echo Garden has become the retirement fulfillment of his garden dream.

Come and get an overview of this Northwest treasure from its gifted creator!

Beautiful Winter Camellia

Brighten up the dark days of winter with a colorful camellia. 'Yuletide' (*Camellia x vernalis* 'Yuletide') is an especially versatile sasanqua hybrid. Attractive winter flowers and bright glossy evergreen leaves make this camellia a must for the Northwest garden.



Yuletide camellia has an upright growth habit with lots of single red (medium-sized) flowers that have attractive bright yellow stamens. It reaches its peak of beauty during the winter months.

It will tolerate more sun exposure than the spring-flowering types of camellias and has a rather bushy low-growing form. Its small leaves

and upright form make it a fine choice for formal and informal hedges. It is also excellent when used as an espalier and makes a lush screen for the back of the border.

Like all camellias, Yuletide needs to be planted in a spot where there is good drainage. If the plant is set too deeply into the soil it will grow, but will not flower properly, if at all. If leaves yellow, apply a rhododendron-type fertilizer.

This plant grows slowly and pruning is seldom required because it has a naturally uniform growth habit. However, should any kind of pruning be needed, the best time to prune is when the plant is in bloom or shortly after flowering in February, March, or early April.

With its bright red and green colors, Yuletide mingles well with just about everything in the garden. So if your garden needs some winter cheer, consider this camellia.

Ornamental Grasses for the Winter Garden

Winters may be long, but you can allay the dreariness in your garden by adding interesting textures and colors. Ornamental grasses are invaluable additions to the winter garden.

Waving gracefully in the slightest breeze, ornamental grasses add movement and create texture and color with shades of bronze, tan, or russet. While the flower heads of late-season grasses are stunning in the fall, they continue to sparkle in winter when frost catches their plumes and spikes

addition, they are a great source of food and shelter for birds.



Japanese Silver Grass

One of the most striking golden sedges, Evergold (*Carex oshimensis* 'Evergold') is a very distinctive grass with narrow arching creamy leaves outlined with fine dark green edges. Valued for its stunning appeal, this highly decorative grass is one of the most beautiful ornamental grasses for the garden, where it provides a lovely contrast with other plants. Likes full/partial sun; grows 10-11 inches.

fabulous ornamental grass that should have a spot in any garden. Spectacular feather plumes with a russet tone in winter tower above graceful arching foliage. Likes full/partial sun; grows 2-3 feet tall.

One of the best and most colorful of the fescue varieties, Elijah Blue (*Festuca glauca* "Elijah Blue") is a wonderful dwarf ornamental grass grown for its superb evergreen bright olive-blue foliage. Densely tufted, the foliage of finely textured, blade-like needles forms a neat mound topped by upright flower plumes that mature to a light tan. Drought tolerant and deer resistant. Likes full sun; grows 8-12 inches.



Blue Fescue



Carex 'Evergold'

and the sun glints through them. Ornamental grasses combine well with flowering perennials and shrubs. They offer a rich and interesting contrast with conifers and evergreen shrubs. In

Adding drama and powerful structure to the landscape, Japanese Silver Grass (*Miscanthus sinensis*) is a

Save the Date

The Birchwood Garden Club **Annual Plant Sale** will be held on Saturday, **May 4**, from 9:00 a.m. until noon at the Bellingham Public Library. The March Gazette will provide details on preparing plants for the sale and volunteer sign-up sheets will be available at the next meeting. Time to get ready!

Snacks

This month's meeting snacks will be provided by Donna Halwe and Rita Saling.

Thank You

Plant of the Month: Galanthus (Snowdrops)

There's nothing quite like the sight of delicate Snowdrops bursting into flower to signal that winter is almost at an end. The sight of snowdrops appearing late in January is a cheerful reminder of the warmer, brighter days to come.

Snowdrops are single or double flowering, with inner petals marked green at the tips encased in milky white outer petals and strappy, grass-like foliage. The flowers has a sweet, honey scent that will attract bees.

Snowdrops give a barren winter garden a breath of life, and give a wonderful woodland feel if planted in drifts beneath a

deciduous tree with Hostas. You could plant in patio pots or window boxes for a neater, more compact display.



Snowdrops are great naturalizers, so will multiply and come back year after year. They are robust and easy to grow. You can plant dry bulbs in the autumn or from

January to March you will be able to buy snowdrops in the green. In the green simply means that you plant the snowdrops while they are in leaf. You can buy them like this, or when your bulbs come through you can lift dense clumps of snowdrops and transplant them elsewhere.

Snowdrops prefer shade, and work really well amongst shrubs or under trees. Ideally they like fertile, moist but well drained soils.

So for a beautiful late winter display and as a harbinger of the spring to come, Snowdrops are a dainty addition to the garden.

Winter Food for Birds

Feeding wild birds offers an enjoyable and educational experience for the whole family. Providing food for wild birds in winter is beneficial as their natural food sources begin to decline this time of year. Insects are dead or hibernating, berries and nuts become scarce, and water can be hard to find.

Offering suet in a wire crate is an especially easy and low-cost way to feed birds during the winter months. Suet feeders are low-maintenance. You refill only once every week or so, you never need to scrub it out, and you can keep it in your yard year round. Both suet feeders and suet cakes are inexpensive and easy to find in local markets and garden and farm supply stores.

Suet is a high energy form of animal fat and seeds to attract insect-eating birds. Some brands of suet also include fruits and berries that entice birds. Suet is a quick source of heat and energy for birds, whose metabolisms are set on fast forward. It traditionally has been used as a good substitute for the insects that birds usually feed upon but are not plentiful in cold weather.

Presenting suet in your yard will attract a variety of birds for your enjoyment. Some of the birds in our area that enjoy suet include chickadees, woodpeckers, jays, juncos, varied thrushes, towhees, and more!



Twenty-six members braved “a dark and stormy night” to quote Snoopy and were welcomed into the new year by President Ann Holland. Ann also welcomed 2 guests to the January 2nd meeting.

Minutes of the December meeting were approved.

Sheri Gerhard from the Master Gardeners of Whidbey Island spoke about the 2019 Whidbey Gardening Workshop on March 2nd from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. at Oak Harbor High School. The cost will be \$40.00 or \$45.00 at the door. For tickets and more information, please visit www.whidbeygardeningworkshop.org.

Old Business: We are *still* in need of someone to be the club Secretary. If you are interested in filling this volunteer position which requires less than an hour of volunteer time per month, please contact Ann.

New Business: After hearing from many of our members, we have decided to return to the original meeting format: Business meeting first, followed by snacks and then our program.

Nancy McMaster, chairperson of the Library and Museum Gardens, spoke about the removal of plants that had gotten too big blocking light coming into the south side of the library windows and also making it less safe for library staff to enter their back door. Nancy passed around forms to get suggestions from members present about new plantings to fill the bare areas.

Ann showed the new sign created for our plant sale announcing the date of the sale which is May 4th. The setup will be on the 3rd of May. Stay tuned to future meetings for more details. Please save those dates.

Jerry McLean gave us the Treasurer’s report.

Sadly, member Ann Katherine Walton has passed away. She will be missed.

Judy Lewis has produced an updated member roster. It is available via email. Ann brought a few copies of the new member list to the meeting.

We received two very nice “Thank You” letters from the Library and the Food Bank.

Thank you to Zapote Gregory and Cheryl Haak for our snacks this evening. Thank you to Sheri and Russ Lambert for our great coffee, which is always freshly roasted and decaffeinated.

Our speaker tonight was Laura Baldwin, the Whatcom County Weed Control Coordinator. She gave us an overview of invasive noxious plants in our area.

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 - VACANT
- 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