

the GAZETTE

BIRCHWOOD GARDEN CLUB

www.birchwoodgardenclub.org

CHARTERED 1931

April Topic: Summer Bulbs and Pollinators

Submitted by Tamara Hall

The Birchwood Garden Club will hold its May 2018 meeting on Wednesday, May 2, at 7:00 p.m. in the Whatcom Museum of History and Art. The speaker for the evening will be Dianne Gaines who will present an overview on summer bulbs that attract pollinators.

Pollinators need our help and gardens can offer them a safe haven. Like other wildlife, bees and other pollinators have four basic needs: food, water, cover, and a place to raise their young. Our gardens can provide all of these essentials, but offering food, in the form of flowers, is the most valuable contribution we can make.

Pollinators need access to nectar and pollen every day that they're active — from early spring through late fall. The easiest way to make sure your garden always has something to offer is to grow summer flowering bulbs.

Dianne Gaines will introduce us to the wide variety of summer flowering bulbs that enhance the beauty of the garden and are especially attractive to pollinators. Come and learn how to make your garden a pollinator paradise!

Annual Plant Sale

Saturday, May 5, 2017

9 a.m. - noon

**Bellingham Library
Meeting Room**



*The Annual Plant Sale
is a fundraiser for the
Birchwood Garden Club*

Nasturtium: An Old-Fashioned Annual

Nasturtiums are a trailing annual plant, easy to grow, with flowers in various colors (mainly red, orange or yellow) all summer. They're great as a ground cover, in large containers, hanging baskets, or trailing out of raised beds and down slopes. Nasturtiums also are planted by many as a companion plant in the vegetable garden to ward off pests, and look attractive at the same time.

Nasturtiums come in three types: dwarf, semi-trailing, and climbing. Dwarf types are bushy and compact and include the 'Alaska Mix' with variegated leaves and flowers in yellow, red and orange. Semi-trailing types, such as the Gleam series, have

semi-double to double flowers in various colors. The climbing types like 'Jewel of Africa' send



Nasturtium 'Tom Thumb'

out six to eight foot strong runners that climb trellises like vines with fragrant yellow, orange, or crimson flowers.

Nasturtium is one of the easiest flowers to grow from seed. The best flowering will be in full sun, but they will tolerate partial shade (four to six hours of direct sun daily). Seeds can be sown directly in the garden beginning in late May, or started indoors to get a good head start on the season. However, as nasturtiums do not fare well when transplanted, use peat pots and plant these directly in the soil.

Nasturtiums are not choosy about their soil but, given a choice, do prefer a light, sandy soil. Don't spoil them with rich, fertile soil and fertilizers as this will only result in lush foliage and few blooms. Soil shouldn't be too wet either, or they may rot.

Trees Need Feeding?

Have you fed your trees recently? If not, they may be quite hungry, if not starving. The best time to fertilize is in spring, after the frost leaves the ground but before trees begin active growth.

Signs that a tree may need fertilizer include yellowish leaves in summer and leaves that turn their autumn color and drop in August. If leaves gradually become smaller year after year, the tree probably needs fertilizing. You should also fertilize trees that make very little growth, even though established and there is adequate rainfall.

A tree may be getting adequate nutrients from the soil already, but it may benefit from additional fertilizer to keep it growing at its best. A healthy, vigorous tree is much less susceptible to attacks from disease, insects, and other stresses.

Trees benefit from all of the elements, but usually respond more to applications of nitrogen. Trees will need differing rates of fertilizer, depending on their stage of life, and growth as dictated by other cultural and environmental factors.

A common method of root feeding for home gardeners is to buy spikes of tree fertilizer and drive these down into the soil. Tree fertilizer tree spikes are readily available in garden stores and come with specific application directions.

Snacks - This month's meeting snacks will be provided by Nancy McMaster and Kathy Reed -Thank You

**Welcome New Members
Jean Boulton and Julianna Guy**

Five Great Native Shrubs for Your Garden

We are fortunate to live in the Pacific Northwest with our wide variety of beautiful and easy-to-grow native plants. Marina French from the Watershed Company recommends five native shrubs that have a proven track record in the landscape garden.

Red-Osier Dogwood (*Cornus sericea*)

This shrub is a winter highlight, with stems that are often bright red, especially after a frost. When its lush green, oval leaves emerge in the spring, the color contrast with the red stems is breathtaking. A relative of flowering dogwood, red-osier dogwood has open clusters of small white flowers. While it is comfortable in sun or shade, planting Red-Osier dogwood in a moist, sunny spot will give it the opportunity to thrive. It forms a thicket with plentiful berries that creates a perfect bird habitat.



Salal (*Gaultheria shallon*)

It is hard to walk in the woods in the Pacific Northwest without encountering salal. Distinguished by its tough evergreen leaves, salal produces large edible berries. As an understory shrub, salal prefers shade to part shade, and, once established, it will spread and become a great, low-maintenance ground cover for shady areas where other plants have trouble growing.



Oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*)

Happy in sun or shade, wet or dry, oceanspray is one of the hardiest native plants. It is a relatively fast-growing plant, especially in sunny spots. In late spring, cascades of large, white to cream-colored flower plumes cover the entire plant, attracting butterflies and other pollinators. These flower clusters will eventually turn brown and remain on the plant through the winter. The dense structure of oceanspray makes it extremely valuable wildlife habitat, providing shelter and food (in the form of insects) for birds such as chickadees and bushtits.



Evergreen Huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*)

Evergreen huckleberry is an especially attractive and adaptable native shrub. It provides beautiful color variations throughout the year, with deep wine-red new shoots contrasting with the rest of the dark, glossy green foliage and pale pink flowers in the spring, berries that change from red to dark purple in the summer, and lush green foliage throughout the fall and winter. While it is most at home as an understory shrub, it can also tolerate sun.



Osoberry (*Oemleria cerasiformis*)

Osoberry, sometimes called “Indian-plum,” is the first native shrub to leaf out and flower in the spring. It’s often the only flower that early-emerging bees can use for food. Though the small, purple plums that female osoberry shrubs produce in the summer are bitter and astringent, birds love them. Highly adaptable, osoberry can be placed virtually anywhere in the garden, though it prefers dappled sunlight and moderate moisture.



Meeting Minutes

April 4, 2018

Submitted by Rhonda Rinn



The treasury report was done by Jerry McLean. He reports we now have 110 members. Our 2 new members are Jean Quanz-Boulton and Julianna Royal-Guy.

Old Business:

Cheryl Hack shared information about the annual plant sale that is coming up quickly, May 5

from 9:00 a.m. until noon. Set-up is the day before on May 4 from 3:00 – 6:00. Signup sheets were passed around again. Please water your plants a couple of days before the sale (but not the day of in order to reduce dripping). Also, deadhead blooms or any foliage that looks beat up from the winter. Please remember to bring box bottoms and if you have a cart to help empty the vehicles that would be much appreciated.

We have our permit from the State of Washington and Susan Metcalf has been contacting radio stations and print media to request publicity. In addition to getting the word out that way, Cheryl passed around posters and flyers to be distributed throughout Bellingham. Labels, pots and potting soil were offered at the meeting.

Nancy McMaster has decided on a day for our annual Library flower bed cleaning. A volunteer sign-up sheet was passed around for Saturday April 14th, 9-noon. We will not be spreading compost this year so mainly weeding and pruning will be done. This work party is fun and much appreciated by all who visit the library.

New Business:

There was a discussion about having a group go to see Herons Wood Gardens in Kingston. An email will go out to members to determine if there is enough interest.

Sheri Lambert stated that the tours of gardens will be on June 6 and July 11. If anyone has a garden or knows of a garden that they would like to have considered for a tour, please contact Sheri.

Our speaker tonight, Kristin Crouch. Her topic “How to Successfully Cultivate Herbs”. Her website is www.thatbloominggarden.com.

Thank you to Corie Jensen and Patti Paul for our snacks this evening. As always, thank you to Sheri and Russ Lambert for their generous donation of coffee for our enjoyment.

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 - Rhonda Rinn
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