

GardenNOTES



NORTHWEST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

FALL 2009

NHS FALL PLANT SALE

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, NOON TO 6:30 PM

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 9:00 AM TO 3:00 PM

LISA IRWIN

CLEAR THE DECKS! CLEAR THE BEDS! Throw out those under-performers (your plants, not your spouses) and join us for the **Fall Plant Sale on September 18 and 19 at Magnuson Park in Seattle**. Even if you don't think you have room for another plant, come see what's new that you can't do without. This year we will have more than 30 outstanding specialty growers from around the Puget Sound area to dazzle you with their wide variety of plants.

Fall is a great time for planting. As the temperatures lessen and the rains begin, plants have a much easier time developing root growth. When spring finally comes the plants will be well on their way. We expect a good selection of plants that will not only benefit from fall planting, but many that will provide an awesome fall display.

Kelly and Sue of **Far Reaches Farm** will be bringing some exotic plants from Yunnan. *Salvia bulleyana* has large broadly deltoid two-tone textured leaves and tall flowering stems with lots of purple tubular flowers in June and August. *Geranium delavayi*'s flowers feature vibrant magenta-purple reflexed petals subtended by a white fuzzy nose. Other plant highlights from



*Oh la la! Ciscoe Morris is all ready for the NHS fall plant sale.
See related articles on pages 1-4. (Nita-Jo Rountree)*

Far Reaches include *Melianthus villosa*, and *Bergenia* 'Eric Smith'.

Laine McLaughlin of **Steamboat Island Nursery** has recently stopped her retail sales at the nursery to concentrate on growing, so now the only ways to get her fine plants are at plant sales like ours and through a few nurseries. She specializes in unusual plants, many from "Down Under."

I love woodland plants and some

of my favorite vendors for fabulous epimedium, cyclamen, hosta, and polygonatum are **Naylor Creek Nursery, Bouquet Banque Nursery, Botanica, and Overland Enterprises**. Be sure to check out all of them.

In addition to the growers and nurseries you have come to love at previous NHS plant sales, we have several new vendors joining us this year. **Elemental Plants** from Seattle has ►

NHS FALL PLANT SALE ... cont. from page 1



Barbara Asmervig (left) greets Kelly Dodson (right) of Far Reaches Farm at the 2008 NHS Plant Sale (Ann LeVasseur)

predominantly Northwest native plants and specializes in trees and shrubs. Some of their special plants include *Rudbeckia alpicola*, *Pinus longaeva*, and *Cupressus macnabiana*. Lael's **Moon Garden Nursery** (located in Rochester, WA) features trees, shrubs, edibles, and select perennials. **Samara Nursery** (Oakville, WA) specializes in Japanese maples. **Taking Root Nursery** (Kenmore, WA) will carry unusual perennials, hostas, ornamental grasses, and ferns.

The spot to look for real bargains will be at the member donations tables. Plants that have been lovingly divided and nurtured by members will be for sale. If you have some plants to donate, please contact **Michelle Scannell at 206-226-9899**.

Another returning highlight of the Fall Plant Sale is the Great Plant Picks display—a terrific place to get information on top performing plants for our area.

Each year it takes many volunteers to run the Fall Plant Sale. If you haven't already signed up to help, please contact **Lois Willman at merriam@scattercreek.com**.

The Fall Plant Sale is NHS's largest fundraiser of the year. The money raised goes to support all of our programs including lectures, classes, scholarships, grants, and other member benefits. For further information and directions to Magnuson Park, please see page 10 of this publication or visit our website at www.northwesthort.org. 

2009 NHS FALL PLANT SALE VENDORS

Blue Frog Garden Nursery: Perennials, ground covers, shrubs, trees, and azaleas

Botanica: Uncommon and underused perennials

Bouquet Banque Nursery: Fat, juicy, healthy, two-gallon perennials

Cascade Gardens: Bamboo

Chimacum Woods: Species rhododendrons

Country Side Nursery: Variegated foliage plants, shrubs, and trees notable for fall color

DeGro Flower & Garden: Uncommon perennials and some temperennials

Edwards Nursery: Hardy perennials, trees, and shrubs

Elemental Plants: Predominantly Northwest native perennials, trees, and shrubs

Fairmeadow Nursery: Evergreen oaks, perennials, Northwest native trees, and shrubs

Fancy Fronds Nursery: A large selection of both common and rare ferns

Far Reaches Farm: Unusual perennials and bulbs, drifting into a few woodies and alpines

Foliage Gardens: Ferns and related plants

Glenwood Gardens: Shrubs, dwarf stuff, conifers, and perennials

Keeping It Green Nursery: Hardy orchids, unusual woodlanders, and hard-to-find natives

Lael's Moon Garden Nursery: Trees, shrubs, edibles, and selected perennials

Landwave Gardens: Hard-to-find specialty plants

Lee Farm & Nursery: Trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses, and hardy fuchsias

Madrone Nursery: Special perennials and some native plants

Mount Forest Farm: Hostas, ferns, and shade perennials

MSK Rare Plant Nursery: Native and rare plants adaptable to the Pacific Northwest

Munro's Nursery: Hardy perennials, trees, shrubs, and shade-tolerant plants

Naylor Creek Nursery: Hostas, epimediums, asarums, cimicifuga, and shade perennials

Old Goat Farm: Perennials for sun or shade

Overland Enterprises: Drought-tolerant perennials for sun or shade

Pan's Garden: Sedums, sempervivums, and specialty perennials

Perennial Pleasures: Ferns, sempervivums, ground covers, and other perennials

Ramble on Rose Perennials: Perennials

Robinwood Nursery: Eclectic selection of perennials, grasses, fuchsias, and shrubs

Samara Nursery: Large selection of premium Japanese maples

Steamboat Island Nursery: Temperennials, uncommon perennials, shrubs, vines, and grasses

Swans Trail Gardens: Unusual perennials

Taking Root Nursery: Unusual perennials, hostas, ornamental grasses, and ferns

The Desert Northwest: Cold-hardy desert plants and Southern Hemisphere natives

The Greenery: Species rhododendrons, woodland natives, and companions

White Picket Gardens: Unusual perennials, drought-tolerant plants, salvias, and hebes

Wind Poppy Farms: Grasses, sedges, rushes, water plants, and perennials

LOOKING FOR TREASURES AT THE NHS FALL PLANT SALE

CISCOE MORRIS

HOW MANY TIMES have you heard expert gardeners advise you to buy a plant only if you know all about it and know exactly where you're going to put it? That may be good advice if you have a giant sequoia in your shopping cart, but for your perennials and small shrubs, that's a sure-fire recipe for gardening boredom. Impulse plant shoppers unite and follow the "Ciscoe Rule." When you see an exciting new plant, buy it quickly before someone else gets it, especially if that someone else is reaching for it!



The daily surprises are the exciting part of gardening. It's great to watch your spectacular new plant grow and bloom in your garden. When you arrive home with your new treasure, I admit that you'll end up having to move about 12,942 plants in order to fit it in, but hey, isn't change what makes gardening fun? Not to mention how much more attractive and interesting your garden will be after you fill it with fantastic rarities. Best of all, your new plants will stump the living tweetle out of everyone who visits your garden, and they'll beg you to tell them where you found them. Unfortunately, if your visitors can't make it to the **NHS Fall Plant Sale**, they are probably out of luck, because it's just about the only place you can find many of these rare treasures.

You never know what new surprises await you at the sale. Last year I almost broke into tears when I scored the practically impossible to find cascading toad lily *Tricyrtis macranthopsis*. This magnificent plant is different than the



TOP: *Tricyrtis macranthopsis*
LEFT: *Cardiocrinum giganteum*
var. *yunnanense*
LOWER: *Agapanthus 'Graskop'*

other toad lilies in that it has long, arching stems adorned with golden yellow, spotted red bell-shaped flowers. It looks stunning spilling over the side of a tall container. Another incredible toad lily is *Tricyrtis* 'Shining Light'. If you beat me to it, you'll be one of the only lucky gardeners owning a *Tricyrtis* with blue flowers.

Speaking of blue, make sure you snag an *Agapanthus* 'Graskop' before they sell out. The buds on this magical, extremely hardy African native appear black, before opening to reveal pendulous flowers of shimmering, dark violet-blue.

Of course you can't leave the sale without buying a slew of unusual lilies.

If you're a fan of the giant Himalayan lily, then *Cardiocrinum giganteum* var. *yunnanense* is a must. It features the same nine foot tall stems and unbelievably fragrant creamy-white, tinted green flowers as the species, but this one sports beautifully bronzed leaves that are so attractive you won't mind waiting the five to seven years to finally see it bloom.

It goes without saying that no one can live without *Arisaemas* (cobra lilies) in the garden. The foliage is spectacular, but the exotic spathe-shaped flowers are equally alluring. The new 'Himalayan Giant' variety has huge leaves that add a tropical flair.

You won't only find fantastic perennials, of course. The **NHS Fall Plant Sale** is the place to find an incredible selection of unusual trees and shrubs as well. You can't leave without a *Pseudolarix amabilis* (golden larch) in your box, or a plant with exotic triangular evergreen leaves such as *Acacia praviissima*. That brings to mind the incredible selection of eucalyptus to choose from. I brought home a spectacular 12 footer last fall unheeded by the size of my little Mini Cooper. I did, however, learn a little lesson. Constantly remind yourself that you have oversized plants sticking out of your sunroof. As I drove home, I decided to stop at the local drive-through espresso bar. I forgot about the eight-foot overhang and decapitated my new eucalyptus buddy. The loss was so depressing that I just had to make a quick u-turn back to the sale resulting in, you guessed it, more plants! 🌱

Ciscoe Morris is on the NHS Advisory Board. He is also a popular TV and radio gardening personality and garden writer.

CAPTIVATING FALL PLANTING COMBINATIONS

MARTY WINGATE

I LOVE A PARADE, especially when it comes to plants. What a delight to see the seasonal succession of color and texture marching through the garden month by month. Yet if I had to choose a favorite time of the year, mid- to late summer would be my pick—at least until February—when I'm longing for signs of new life.

Late summer must have been a subconscious motivator when I planted the low raised brick bed outside our kitchen windows to be at its height August through October. Full-sun exposure up against our neighbor's garage wall makes this spot a great heat trap, but instead of using the area as a vegetable garden (shame on me), I've planted with a variety of shrubs, bulbs, and perennials that kick into high gear when other parts of the garden begin to look tired.

At five feet high and wide, *Lobelia tupa*, first to pop out in mid-July, looks more shrub than perennial; it's difficult to believe that the plant dies to nothing at the first good freeze in November. Into October, spikes of coral-red, hooked flowers appear like torches and are frequently visited by hummingbirds.

Just taller than the lobelia, *Helianthus* 'Lemon Queen' begins flowering slightly later, at the end of July. Sunny yellow, two-inch-wide flowers just keep coming, and even after it's finished blooming, chickadees spend the winter pecking at the seed heads.

I'm not much of a staker, and I don't have time to cut perennials down by half so that they bloom on shorter stalks—please, I'm barely able to keep up with the necessities. But

when it comes to the six-foot stems of 'Lemon Queen', which slowly begin to bend outward as the season progresses, I hit upon the perfect solution: Three of Mary Taylor's rusted metal trellises plunged into the ground about 30 degrees from

vertical. With a suitably organic look the stems are reined in, protecting passers-by as well as neighboring plants. Better yet, the sunflower never looks as if it was cinched up.

At its base, and mirroring the sunny yellow flowers, grows *Caryopteris* × *clandonensis* 'Worcester Gold' with eye-popping bright foliage. I forgive its habit of leafing out late—looking like a little bundle of sticks until May—and appreciate its smart appearance from summer into fall. And those whiskery blue flowers complement the scene.

Blue helps to cool things off as summer warms; it comes from 'Worcester Gold' as well as *Aster* × *frikartii* 'Mönch' which begins blooming in late July. Beautiful lavender-blue flowers and no need for staking, 'Mönch' is the plant Graham Stuart Thomas described as "... not only the finest perennial aster; it is one of the six best plants, and should be in every garden." I hear and obey.

Not just flowers make a good garden. The coppery tones of pheasant's tail grass, *Anemantele*



ABOVE: *Helianthus* 'Lemon Queen' LEFT: *Lobelia tupa*, (Marty Wingate)

lessoniana, do just what a grass should: provide movement in the garden. Its texture and color create a fabulous foil to the large leaves of the smoke bush *Cotinus* 'Grace'. The foliage of 'Grace' changes throughout the day, depending on where the sun is: light on the leaves make them a matte purple, but when the light comes from behind, the leaves glow with a warm coral hue that matches the lobelia.

Rounding out the show, and the last to appear on the midsummer-to-autumn stage, *Chrysanthemum* 'Single Apricot' finishes the season with a flowering well worth waiting for. Cultivar names abound for this selection, which might be the same as 'Hillside Sheffield'.

While the flowers of 'Hillside Select' fade, the autumn garden show begins. Other charming combinations appear, and my favorite time of year in the garden changes to fall. We gardeners are such a fickle lot. 🍂

Marty Wingate is a Seattle-based writer and speaker about gardens and travel.

GARDEN WISDOM OF THE AGES

SUE GOETZ

DO WE BECOME GOOD GARDENERS because of the season, our work, or because of what mother taught us? Defining a “good” gardener is not the inference here; the garden as a teacher is. A garden makes good observers, patient workers, and people who have healthy egos behind successes and a hefty dose of humility with failures. Nature has the upper hand here after all. More often than not, it is simply a lesson in getting back to the basics: sun, soil, and water. The plants merely become the player in the things that drive their success.

I have a bit of an obsession with collecting old garden books, haunting the shelves of thrift stores and antique markets. Some of my books were written in the 1800s and some within a generation. When I read through the words of wisdom, I have a bit of déjà vu; the same skills and knowledge are there. It is not new technology of the millennium or some new “thingy” to pull weeds. It all goes back to the same inherent desire to get back to the earth. Early garden writings gave observations that became learning tools. Most old books had few photos or even any ink of vibrant color; they are not the photographed visuals we have become so reliant on these days. Writers of past used good descriptive wording that painted the pictures. Most information was based on observation and trial and error. Well-loved books with handwritten inscriptions of the book owner’s name make me imagine what their garden looked like. Penciled numbers or notes written in margins long ago allow me to wonder if it was to calculate compost or how many seeds



Old garden books

to plant. Scraps of paper and pressed leaves are also a gift of the past tucked into pages. In 1924, Julia Cummins tucked an unknown leaf in the pages of Louise Shelton’s book *The Seasons in a Flower Garden: A Handbook for the Amateur*. Was it for identification or simply a bookmark? From garden design to the simplicity of weeding, every book has tidbits to glean.

An original 1953 handbook from the Brooklyn Botanic Garden titled *American Gardens: A Source Book of Ideas* shares sound advice on design. “Probably the commonest error of the amateur gardener and horticulturist is his failure to recognize the importance of garden design...the plain hard work that goes into an unplanned and nondescript garden might just as well go into a planned one.”

A favorite find in a local thrift store for two dollars was *The New Garden Encyclopedia: Victory Garden Edition*. An addendum to the original dictionary shows layouts, notes, and information from a government sponsored victory

garden program to aid families in wartime. Information on the war effort “...food is no less a weapon than tanks, guns, and planes” (President Franklin Roosevelt) and sketches lay out ultimate edible gardens. The 30 pages of victory garden tips are timeless: “To produce good food crops, a soil should be of at least average depth, and sweetness, and in good physical condition. Average depth means eight to twelve inches of topsoil.” “Cheap seed doesn’t pay.” And “Keep tall growing plants to the north and west sides where they will cast less shade on others.”

One mantra we always hear is: fall is for planting. In the book, *The Garden of Experience* written in 1919, Marion Cran shares her wisdom. “But the “Awe-time” (her word play on autumn) has come to mean to me also the “hope-time” for I know now, being a gardener, that I may not linger sentimentally upon the contemplation of picturesque decay, but must gird my loins and turn to good hard work for this is also the planting time of the year. The decline of each summer must carry at its core the promise of hope of next.”

Wit, wisdom, and a look into the past—sometimes the search for something new begins with the wisdom of old. Maybe that is why I love these old musty books. Gardens make us lifelong learners and the past wisdom of gardeners reminds us to be willing apprentices with nature. 🌱

Sue Goetz, is an NHS board member, garden designer, speaker, and freelance writer who owns *Creative Gardener*, www.thecreativegardener.com.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE: LEE NEFF

DANIEL SPARLER

DEVOTED GRANDMOTHER and wife, accomplished academic administrator, gifted writer and editor, beloved teacher, skilled mediator and diplomat, tireless community organizer, loyal friend—this is but a partial list of avatars of the inimitable, the indefatigable Lee Neff.

Let it be noted that this article will not be a puff piece prancing along a primrose path. Brace yourselves for some shocking truths. Yes, the sainted Lee Neff has a dark side, one that will be revealed shortly, dear readers.

But first things first: Lee is currently finishing a term as recording secretary of NHS having served on its board since 2006. You may have assumed she comes from a long line of accomplished horticulturists; however, this is not the case. Lee admits that her mother was a self-described “member of the asphalt bloc,” whatever that means, “although she paid me 25 cents an hour in high school for weeding.”

Lee’s interest in things green was briefly piqued in the summer of 1975 when she spent a summer in Lebanon. “I saw a caper bush (*Capparis spinosa*), which was very exciting.” Yet it wasn’t until a move to Seattle in 1981 that the gardening dragon within her was aroused. “The next spring I opened my eyes to the beauty around me. Then I



Lee Neff (left) and Daniel Sparler

met Sue Buckles who was gardening at Children’s Hospital” (where Lee’s husband John served as medical director for many years).

And the rest is history. She discovered Wells-Medina Nursery. “I still have the bill of sale from the first plants I ever bought there from Bob Lilly.” What was on that ticket? *Rhododendron* ‘Unique’, *Hemerocallis* ‘Hyperion’, and some Russell hybrid lupines.

In 1992, she began to construct her iconic garden in the Seward Park neighborhood of Seattle. At this point your humble author enters the picture, having moved to Lee’s neighborhood at the same time. Ah, the gardening

adventures we shared together over the years! Then, in 2007, she and John sold their spectacular estate and absconded to the wilds of Eglon on the Kitsap Peninsula.

All right! What you’ve all been waiting for: Three things you may not know about Lee Neff.

1. She shares a birthday with Fidel Castro.
2. She has a shameless, helpless addiction to the Seattle Mariners.
3. (Take a deep breath for this one, gentle readers.) She is prone to slipping the innocent, novice gardener gifts that keep on giving.

With a sweet smile she bestowed on me not one, but two pretty but treacherous Trojan horses: *Allium triquetrum* and *Geranium nodosum*. More than a decade later I’m still trying to eradicate these thugs.

Lee’s current project on her two acres north of Kingston is inventing a Northwest hedgerow, employing not only native plants, but also exotics that grow well here. It will be 10 feet deep and 200 feet long. The plant population is now 250 and growing. Her kitchen garden, with the notable assistance of Nancy Heckler, is also garnering great fame. 🌱

Daniel Sparler is an NHS board member.

~ WELCOME NEW MEMBERS ~

C. Andrew Barker
Amandalei Bennett
Jayne Bray
Margaret G. Brooks
Sally Brunette
Mary Emel
Laurie Feetham
Susan Gandee

Glenda Jackson
Colleen James
Judy Katri
Rosina McIvor
Donald Meyer
Judy Montoure
Lisa Nowak
Andria Orejuela

Jane Orvis
Sonchen & Jock Patton
Tahra Smith
Debra Sobelson
Jennifer Stock
Sharon Sylvester-Smith
Jane Thomas

NHS wishes to thank
Wells Medina Nursery
and Monrovia
for co-sponsoring the
WINDCLIFF—ROY LANCASTER
event coming up on
September 5, 2009.

EXHIBITS AT THE MILLER LIBRARY

BRIAN THOMPSON



Giclée print from Shirley Pinchev Sidell is now on display at the Miller Library

“TO LIFE” features images from the Elisabeth Carey Miller Botanical Garden by photographer Shirley Pinchev Sidell. Using giclée printing (the process of making fine art prints from a digital source using ink-jet printing) on European etching paper, the artist skillfully brings out the sculptural quality her subjects, which include ferns, camellias, and fruit from other gardens.

This exhibit is now on display at the Miller Library through the end of September, and the artist will be hosting a free public reception on **September 14**

from 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm. Prints and note cards are available for sale, with a percentage of proceeds benefitting the Miller Library.

Next up, “**Marvels of Modernism**” on exhibit from October 1–30 celebrates post World War II garden and landscape design with photographs of a dozen innovative—at their time—sites throughout the country, including the courtyard of the Pacific Science Center in Seattle.

Elisabeth Carey Miller Memorial Lecture

Roy Lancaster will share how his life as a renowned plant explorer has impacted his home garden in Hampshire, England, in “Mad About Plants—A Plantsman’s Garden,” the 2009 Miller Memorial Lecture. The date is September 17 at Meany Hall on the University of Washington campus at 7:30 pm. The lecture and reception are free courtesy of the Miller Charitable Foundation, but you must RSVP to the Miller Library either by calling 206-543-0415 or by sending an e-mail to hortlib@uw.edu with “Miller Lecture” in the subject line. Be sure to say how many are in your party and please note we will not be mailing tickets this year. This event is co-sponsored by the Miller Library, NHS, and the Miller Garden.

A big **THANK YOU** goes to NHS for the Dan Hinkley book launch fundraiser on May 27. It was wonderful for the staff and the many users of the Miller Library to experience such a strong outpouring of support! 🍷

Brian Thompson is the manager and curator of horticultural literature for the Elisabeth C. Miller Library.

~ THANKS TO OUR 2009 PATRONS ~

The Wednesday Evening Lecture Series would not be possible without the tremendous support of our patrons. Their generosity helps NHS provide a world-class educational program for Northwest gardeners. Thank you, patrons!

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Mr. & Mrs. Don G. Abel | John MacKean |
| Phoebe Andrew | Theresa Malmanger |
| Lois Andrews | Hans & Tina Mandt |
| Alison Andrews | James K. Marshall |
| Barbara Asmervig | Judy Massong |
| Charlotte Behnke | Bruce & Coco McDougall |
| Jim & Suzette Birrell | Shirley McEvoy |
| Constance Bollen | Irene & Robert Mills |
| Elisabeth Bottler | Renee Montgelas |
| G. Maria Carlos | Ciscoe Morris |
| Barbara Carman | Maureen Morris |
| Patricia L. Church | Sue Moss |
| Marianna Clark | John & Lee Neff |
| Michael Coie | Charles Ogburn |
| Stacie Crooks | Mary Palmer |
| Lynn & Ralph Davis | T. Keith & Janet L. Patrick |
| Craig Delphey | Peg Pearson |
| Tanya DeMarsh-Dodson | Rose Peck |
| Sue Dickson | Lois Pendleton |
| Tina Dixon | Susan Picquelle |
| Anita Dunn | Phyllis Pierce |
| Mrs. Phil Duryee | DiAnne Polson |
| Janet & Michael Endsley | Suzanne Ragen |
| Dave & Cindy Fairbrook | Sashi Raghupathy |
| Carolyn Fisher | Ravenna Gardens |
| Betsy Fitzgerald | Judy Redmond |
| Kathy Fries | Pat Riehl |
| Maren Gilliland | Elsa C. Rosenkrantz |
| Marilyn Glenn | Nita-Jo Rountree |
| Greg Graves | Marilou Rush |
| Pam & Jay Green | Liz Sanborn |
| Mary Louise Griffin | Michelle Scannell |
| David B. Grimes, | Gale & Marcel Schwarz |
| Yardworks Etc. | Stephanie Smith |
| Jean Hanson | Leah Soltar |
| Richard W. Hartlage | Richie Steffen |
| Joyce Hawkins | Philip R. Stoller |
| Deborah Heg | Nancy Strahle |
| Jackie Hightower | Sunnyside Nursery |
| Catherine Hillenbrand | Bernadette Swensson |
| Martha Holschen | Brian Thompson & |
| Gail & Ty Hongladarom | Jack Henry |
| Jocelyn Horder | Lois Vania |
| Deborah Horn | Marie Weiler |
| Darlene & Dan Huntington | Beth Weir |
| Lisa Irwin | Wendy Welch |
| Becky Johnson | Joanne White |
| Ann Keller | Carolyn Whittlesey |
| Katherine King | Madeleine Wilde |
| Karin Kravitz | Lois Willman |
| Kurt Laidlaw | Sherri Wilson |
| Denise Lane | Glenn Withey & |
| Raymond J. Larson | Charles Price |
| Barry & Susan Latter | Martha Woodman |
| Julie Lawrence | John A. Wott |
| Jeanne Marie Lee | Jennifer Wyatt |
| Ann LeVasseur | Kathy Yerke |
| Janet Lewinsohn | Zenith Holland Gardens |
| Kiki & Dave Lewis | Marlene & Lee Zuker |

THANKS TO OUR 2009 DONORS

~

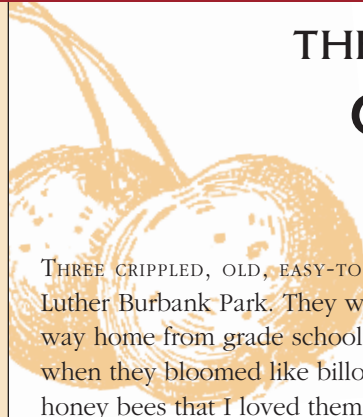
We wish to thank our donor members for their generous support.

CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS

Nancy Alvord
Joanna Beitel
Ralph & Lynn Davis
Mr. & Mrs. Philip R. Stoller
Wells-Medina Nursery

SUPPORTING MEMBERS

Phoebe Andrew
Alison Andrews
Barbara Asmervig &
Michael Thanem
Charlotte Behnke
Ginny Brewer
John & Kathleen Bullivant
Clinton Inc.
Paige Embry
Sue Ewens
Susan Goetz
Mike Hayes
Raymond Larson
Jeanne Marie Lee
Dorothy Lennard
Karen Long
Susan Maki
Maureen Morris
Daniel Mount Gardens
Lee C. Neff
Ann S. Ormsby
Linda Park
Barbara Peterson
Elsa C. Rosenkrantz
Marilou Rush
Meredith P. Smith
Daniel Sparler & Jeff Schouten
Richie Steffen
Nancy Strahle
Carolyn C. Temple
Pamela J. Trojanoski
Dennis & Dorene Tully
Ralene Walls
Maro Walsh
Marie Weiler
Wendy Weyerhaeuser
Joanne White
Glenn Withey & Charles Price
Woodinville Garden Club



THE STORY OF PLANTS: CRABAPPLE

DANIEL MOUNT

THREE CRIPPLED, OLD, EASY-TO-CLIMB CRABAPPLES huddled beneath the statuesque oaks in Luther Burbank Park. They were loaded with ammunition for the wars we'd wage on the way home from grade school. They supplied fruit each fall for ruby-red, tart jelly. But it is when they bloomed like billowy low slung clouds each spring droning with thousands of honey bees that I loved them the best.

Arriving in Seattle 20 years ago I was distressed to find the leading flowering tree in the U.S. was snubbed by Northwest gardeners. Arthur Lee Jacobson barely mentioned crabapples in the first edition of *Trees of Seattle*. I don't think of myself as a chameleon, but I quickly adopted this prejudice adding crabapples, along with thunderstorms and fireflies, to the list of things I would miss.

When I talk of crabapples I am referring to the 30 or so ornamental and culinary species in the genus *Malus*. Crabapples are any member of this genus with fruits less than two inches in diameter whether a species, a cultivar, or a multibrid (a plant with many species in its makeup). I will waste no time on their confusing nomenclature which befuddles even the hybridizers. The common name is so old as to have left no trace of its origin, though it probably comes from the Old English "crabbed" meaning disagreeable, contrary, or crooked. Whether this meaning was indicating the rather twisted branching habit of the tree or the unpleasant flavor of the fruit is unclear.

Consider the evidence of Neolithic man's drying and storing of these sour vitamin C rich fruits. Just as Northwest tribes dried and stored the fruits of our native wetland-loving *Malus fusca* for winter use, it is hard to believe these miniature apples once used extensively in cider and jelly production would have a bad reputation. Now the fruits seem as out of date as the 1960s supper clubs that garnished steaks with crabapples pickled and dyed red.

Being in Rosaceae, or the rose family, crabapples can be as problematic as their kindred roses, apples, and cherries. I would say they have been rightly overlooked. But this prejudice is based on older cultivars. Since the 1950s, ornamental crabapple hybridizers have given up on finding the prettiest trees and have made disease resistance and size their highest priority. There are now small, upright, disease-resistant, and pretty trees suitable for urban gardens. Surprisingly, it is hard to find many of the nearly 900 crabapples in existence for sale, especially the newer commendable cultivars.

It is difficult to maintain my learned prejudice standing in the blousy grace of a flowering crab. They make lovely companions to the garish rhodies of May. So I have planted trees like the time tested *M. x zumi* 'Calocarpa' and admired the Seattle City Light recommendation, the pert *M.* 'Adirondack'. I ordered *M.* 'Satin Cloud' (available from Song Sparrow Nursery, www.songsparrow.com) one of the star new cultivars, with cinnamon scented flowers, red fall foliage, and a height of only six feet to plant in a large container this fall. And because I have the space I am also growing the edible and disease-free *M.* 'Chestnut' for its use as a pollenizer and for the nutty tasting fruits.

Thunderstorms have increased here in the past 20 years. In the second edition of *Trees of Seattle* Arthur Lee Jacobson has expanded his entry on crabapples, noting more than 140 different kinds. I, myself, am following the advice of Luther Burbank, who said, "For those who do not think, it is best to rearrange their prejudices once in a while." 🌱

Read more of Daniel's thoughts on plants and gardening on his blog www.danielmountgardens.blogspot.com.

WONDERFUL WILLOW

Debra Prinzing

THERE'S SOMETHING MAGICAL about a plant that keeps growing even after you think it's a goner. My textile background and my love for any material that can be woven like fabric, combined with my penchant for gardening, has drawn me to supple ingredients like willow.

Willow Animals

On a pleasant June evening in 2002, I was invited to join members of the Woodinville Garden Club for a willow workshop in Carol Ager's garden. The class was led by two British artisans, Pat Hutchinson and Jacky Barber. Known as "The Willow Weavers," the duo's artistic efforts in 2001 won them the coveted Gold Medal at the Chelsea Flower Show.

We used fresh willow twigs from Judy Zugish of Marysville's Bouquet Banque Nursery. Cut when dormant, the five-foot and seven-foot lengths of *Salix alba* 'Polish Purple' soaked in water for five days to make them workable.

We teamed up to create a larger-than-life goose, heron, or swan (my partner was Gary Waller). The instructors showed us how to manipulate willows into animal shapes using tools and four to six inch wire fasteners, the type with a loop at each end, used for securing rebar (available at home centers).

Called the "twisler" or "twister," the hand-held tool tightens wire around the twig bunch. Pruners, wire cutters, string, and measuring tape are also essential tools.

After making the head, neck, body, and legs, we connected the pieces



Wonderment and mystery are woven together in "Childhood Dreams," a Patrick Dougherty installation that the author viewed at Phoenix's Desert Botanical Garden in December 2007. (Prinzing)

with more wire. Playful and perfect for the flower bed, my completed willow goose stood around five feet tall. I planted her twig "legs" into the soil and enjoyed watching the garden grow in and around her body.

Willow as Architecture

Inevitably, willow creations are short-lived. Subject to exposure and the vagaries of time, there is a temporal nature to anything fabricated from twigs and stems. That's why I was blown away when I saw Patrick Dougherty's woven twig sculptures. (See www.stickwork.net).

Dougherty's playful piece called "Toad Hall" resembled a whimsical, storybook abode (perhaps an ambitious version of the first Little Pig's house of sticks). He created it for the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden in 2005.

Along with fellow NHS members on the Los Angeles-Santa Barbara tour, I was mesmerized by how the fanciful, turret-shaped roofline looked beautiful against the blue September sky.

Twisted branches formed walls more than four inches thick. We walked inside and peered through "windows" to notice the landscape beyond. At the time, Toad Hall was more than a year old, yet the willow rooted in the field and began sprouting leaves.

Patrick Dougherty is based in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, but he has a worldwide reputation for creating on-site twig sculptures. Commissions have taken him to Japan, England, Denmark, and countless American cities. Some of his projects look like tornado-blown tumbleweed, slightly askew, oddly tilted as if

they survived the "big one." Others take advantage of permanent architecture, climbing up the face of a building or weaving in and out of columns.

In 2007, I visited Phoenix's Desert Botanical Garden. As I walked through the grounds, a willow shape emerged on the horizon. WOW! Of course, it was another Patrick Dougherty installation. Called "Childhood Dreams," the spherical piece was woven as a series of interconnecting rooms. Dougherty said the form of the garden's gold barrel cacti inspired his design.

It's so easy to be drawn to these willow sculptures because they are living and organic. It's quite humbling to see how something so simple, so ordinary (otherwise destined for the compost heap) can be reinterpreted as architecture. 🌿

Debra Prinzing is a Southern California-based garden and design writer. You can read her design blog at www.shedstyle.com.

NHS BULLETIN BOARD

~ 2009 FALL CLASSES ~

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM **Great Plant Picks with Lynne Thompson**

TOUR THE ELISABETH C. MILLER BOTANICAL GARDEN with GPP Program Manager Lynne Thompson. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn about the Great Plant Picks educational program. Lynne will show you the Great Plant Picks plants in the landscape in ideal conditions and combined beautifully with other plants and give you tips on how to use them in your garden.

LOCATION: MILLER GARDEN/SEATTLE

FEE: MEMBERS: \$25.00 NON-MEMBERS: \$35.00 LIMIT: 15

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM **Containers for Fall and Winter** **with Lisa Freed**

MANY OF YOU HAVE USED the containers at Wells-Medina Nursery as ideas for container plantings as well as plant combinations for your garden beds. Join Lisa Freed, co-owner of Wells-Medina, for a demonstration of how these wonderful containers are created. You will come away with ideas for your containers and gardens that will extend your enjoyment into the winter season.

LOCATION: WELLS-MEDINA NURSERY/MEDINA

FEE: MEMBERS: \$25.00 NON-MEMBERS: \$35.00 LIMIT: 18

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM **Christmas at the Old Goat Farm**

JOIN FLORAL DESIGNER GARY WALLER at the Old Goat Farm and learn how he decorates multiple Christmas trees to create a spectacular Christmas display. Christmas at the Old Goat Farm was featured in Val Easton's column last December. After Gary shows how these beautiful trees are decorated you will join Gary and Greg for a splendid Christmas tea party.

LOCATION: OLD GOAT FARM/ORTING

FEE: MEMBERS: \$25.00 NON-MEMBERS: \$35.00 LIMIT: 15

DIRECTIONS TO THE NHS PLANT SALE **AT MAGNUSON PARK**

FROM I-5 NORTHBOUND

- Exit at NE 65th St. (Exit #170).
- At the stop sign, go straight (across Ravenna Blvd.) onto 8th Ave. NE to NE 65th St.
- Turn right at NE 65th St.
- Go east on NE 65th St. for about 2 miles. At NE 49th St. the arterial bears right onto Princeton Way NE and curves back around to the left and onto NE 65th St. Continue on to Sand Point Way NE.
- Turn left onto Sand Point Way NE and go about 2-3 blocks.
- The park is on your right.
- Turn right into the park at the main gate. Look for signs to the plant sale. The sale will be in a large hangar on your left. There is a large parking lot just beyond it on the right.

FROM I-5 SOUTHBOUND

- Take exit #171 for NE 71st/NE 65th Streets.
- At the stop sign at the end of the exit ramp turn left onto NE 71st St. and cross over I-5.
- You are now on NE 70th St. Go to Roosevelt Way NE (one way street going south).
- Turn right onto Roosevelt Way NE and go five blocks to NE 65th St.
- Turn left (east) onto NE 65th St. and follow directions above to Magnuson Park.

WESTBOUND ON SR 520 FROM THE EASTSIDE

- As you approach I-5, get in the right lane and take the exit for I-5 Northbound.
- From I-5 Northbound, exit at NE 65th St.
- Follow directions above for I-5 Northbound to Magnuson Park.

FOR CLASS RESERVATIONS E-MAIL NWHORT@AOL.COM
OR CALL KARIN KRAVITZ AT 206-780-8172

~ 2010 TOUR ~

Tour the Tibetan Plateau with NHS and Pacific Horticulture **A Journey in Western Sichuan & Tibet for Plant Enthusiasts**

JUNE 27-JULY 13, 2010

RICHARD TURNER, EDITOR OF *Pacific Horticulture* and Greg Graves of the Miller Botanical Garden will conduct this tour with special emphasis on the flora of Tibet. The tour will visit Chengdu, including the giant panda breeding center and the spectacular Jiuzhaigou National Park. On the Tibetan Plateau you will visit Lhasa and its many sacred sites. See some of the most diverse alpine flora on earth—many of these species will be in flower at this time of year. The region crossed is the center of diversity for genera such as *Primula*, *Pedicularis*, and *Mecanopsis*. Hill slopes of the eastern river valleys support many rhododendron species, and smaller alpine rhododendron are in the high meadows.

FOR A BROCHURE E-MAIL NWHORT@AOL.COM OR CALL KARIN KRAVITZ 206-780-8172

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



HANS MANDT

IN MID MAY, WE WERE DEALING with extended cool, wet weather that had lasted for more than two months. Now we're in the longest heat wave in Seattle, with record high temperatures and no rain. This has become a really tough gardening year. As to winter damage in our garden, two tree ferns (*Dicksonia antarctica* and *D. squarrosa*) survived and have both put out new fronds, while *Cyathea cooperi* bit the dust. Our *Arisaema taiwanense* have failed to make an appearance. We have about six of them and they may just be cantankerous enough to take a season off, which occurs occasionally with *Arisaema*. I'm glad I gave Greg Graves the seeds they produced the last two seasons so he could propagate them. I'm looking forward to the **NHS Fall Plant Sale** to restock some losses. One benefit of going to a plant sale featuring small local growers is that they raise their own plants. This means you can get cultivation advice for dealing with difficult weather, based on their actual growing experience. An invaluable resource, I think.

I recall June last year, working feverishly to get the garden ready for visitors. We had a request from a group of New Zealand gardeners wanting to visit our small patch. The front garden, designed by my friend Richard Hartlage, always shows well, but what about the rest of the garden? The woodland shows best in late winter and spring, the hillside garden is designed for late summer, so what would be of interest in early July? Since Tina and I had visited these women's gardens in New Zealand, we could hardly decline. These were some of the finest gardeners in that country who had gardens measured in acres not square feet. What saved the day was a collection of Japanese mountain hydrangeas (*Hydrangea serrata*) planted throughout the woodland that I had acquired from Heronswood and a collection of species lilies, especially *Lilium nepalense*, which were in full bloom. Everything worked out, our visitors took lots of photos of hydrangeas and lilies, and wrote lots of notes. I think the fact that Tina set out a beautiful brunch was the real reason everyone left happy.

The launch party for Dan Hinkley's new book *The Explorer's Garden: Shrubs and Vines from the Four Corners of the World* was a wonderful event at CUH. Dan's lecture took us around the Pacific Rim on his collecting trips to find the plants he writes about in the book. Thanks to the efforts of the library committee, the volunteers, and a large number of generous donors, we raised over \$13,000 for the Miller Library. My personal thanks to all.

If you missed that event, we are planning another new book party featuring Val Easton's new book, *The New Low-Maintenance Garden: How to Have a Beautiful, Productive Garden and the Time to Enjoy It*. The party and lecture will be on Monday evening, November 16. 📺

Hans Mandt is the president of NHS.

EDITOR

Judy Redmond
judyredmond@verizon.net

DESIGNERS

Judy Redmond and
Constance Bollen,
cb graphics,
cbg@speakeasy.net

CONTRIBUTING TO THIS ISSUE:

Sue Dickson
Sue Goetz
Lisa Irwin
Karin Kravitz
Ann LeVasseur
Hans Mandt
Cisocoe Morris
Daniel Mount
Debra Prinzing
Nita-Jo Rountree
Daniel Sparler
Richie Steffen
Brian Thompson
Marty Wingate

PRINTER

Mike Klinke,
Impression Printing

2009 NHS EVENTS



ABOVE: *Lee Neff class* (LEVASSEUR)

TOP LEFT: *Spring ephemerals sale* (LEVASSEUR)

BOTTOM LEFT: *Whidbey Island gardens tour*
(MATHEWS)

CENTER: *Dan Hinkley book signing* (LEVASSEUR)



Ophiopogon planiscapus 'Nigrescens' and autumn leaves

"Autumn is a second spring where every leaf is a flower."

Albert Camus, 1913–1960, French novelist, essayist, and playwright.

🌹 Telephone: 206-527-1794 🌹 Web: www.northwesthort.org 🌹 E-mail: nwhort@aol.com



NORTHWEST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 4597
ROLLING BAY, WA 98061-4597

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Seattle, WA
Permit No. 4842