

# GardenNOTES



NORTHWEST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

SPRING 2011

## THE TEN BEST EPIMEDIUM YOU CAN BUY

RICHIE STEFFEN

THE DELIGHTFUL EPIMEDIUM is a subtle, charming, and elegant addition to the garden. Not too many years ago there were less than a dozen different forms available. Today that has completely changed with over 330 cultivars and species coming into cultivation over the last couple of decades and an astonishing 200 or so of these being regularly available.

With so many choices how do you start without trying them all? This is a question I have asked myself and the only answer I could find was to try them all! Collecting them, both at home and at the Miller Garden, I have enjoyed measuring the successes and failures of any species or cultivar I could lay my hands on. After many years, here are my top ten most successful choices.

### FOR TOUGH CONDITIONS

These choices are the best for their ability to withstand drought and neglect. There are many gardens where these epimedium have thrived with little help and still look great.

#### *Epimedium* 'Black Sea'

Slowly spreading into a dense clump, this epimedium is known for its intensely colored winter foliage. Chilling autumn weather triggers the deep green foliage to take on darker hues until it finally reaches an inky purple-black. By mid-winter the foliage will look a little



*Epimedium x perralchicum* 'Fröhnleiten' (Richie Steffen)

worn and should be cut to the ground. Do not wait later than early February because this is one of the earliest epimedium to flower. New flower stems emerge coral-red eventually bursting into bloom with pale orange and primrose-yellow blossoms.

#### *Epimedium x perralchicum* 'Fröhnleiten'

One of the great workhorses for the garden, this old cultivar is still at the top of its class. The rich, dark-green, glossy foliage is fully evergreen. Cut the leaves to the ground in mid-winter to make room for the brilliant canary-yellow

flowers. When it is finished blooming red stained leaves unfurl, highlighted with chartreuse-green veins. This is one of the best epimedium for use as a ground cover. Once established, few weeds can push their way through the dense root system and thick foliage cover.

#### *Epimedium x rubrum* 'Sweetheart'

This relatively recent selection was bred by Darrell Probst for Garden Vision Nursery in Massachusetts. It has larger and more rounded leaflets than the typical form with robust and dense growth. The new leaves emerge apple-green ▶

## THE TEN BEST EPIMEDIUM YOU CAN BUY . . . continued from page 1



ABOVE: *Epimedium grandiflorum* var. *higoense* 'Bandit'

RIGHT: *Epimedium x versicolor* 'Sulphureum' (Richie Steffen)

with a thin, red edge delicately outlining a heart shape. The cherry-red and snow-white flowers are nestled among the fresh, green leaves contributing color without overpowering the lovely foliage.

#### *Epimedium x versicolor* 'Sulphureum'

A great groundcover epimedium, this old variety has proven its garden worthiness. In early spring butter and lemon-yellow flowers spring to life on short stems and are quickly overtaken by beautiful, red-flushed foliage that will mature to a dark green. The mature foliage is fully evergreen and will hold up well during the winter, but should be cut back by late February.

#### FLOWER POWER

Many newer cultivars and recently discovered species are much more floriferous than the older selections. Along with more flowers you can also find forms with much larger blooms and more brilliant colors.

#### *Epimedium* 'Lilac Cascade'

A recent clone selected by Darrell Probst, it is a tight, clumping form with loads of rich lavender and violet flowers. The flowers, larger than many cultivars, are borne just above the colorful red-orange flushed new growth.

#### *Epimedium grandiflorum* 'Red Queen'

This is a giant among epimedium. In full growth it can reach over two feet tall. The foliage is bright green and very upright.

Hidden underneath are some of the largest flowers of the genus. Dangling in clusters hang rich reddish-purple spidery blooms. An ideal spot would be in a raised bed or at the top of a slope to fully enjoy the floral display.

#### *Epimedium stellulatum* 'Wudang Star'

This perennial is well named. The delicate sprays of flowers are pure white and glow like a four-pointed star. This clone was introduced from China by the famed plantsman Roy Lancaster for its larger than typical flowers and its prolific flower stems.

#### *Epimedium* 'Yokihii'

The first time I saw this epimedium in bloom I knew I had to have it. The eye-catching combination of the creamy-white center and cherry-red spurs sparkles in the garden. The flowers are plentiful and held well above the foliage for maximum show. The rich, green foliage provides the perfect background.

#### FABULOUS FOLIAGE

Although the flowers can provide quite a show, even the amazingly diverse foliage should not be overlooked. Not only can the leaf shape be quite compelling, the color of newly emerging foliage can be just as showy as the blooms. Some of the newer selections also have the habit of sending up more than one flush of foliage, prolonging the season of interest.

#### *Epimedium grandiflorum* var. *higoense* 'Bandit'

This epimedium is a dense and compact form of *Epimedium grandiflorum* where the new leaves often have a red edge. This clone was chosen for its wide, deep maroon-red band edging each leaflet. The color holds longer than typical forms of this subspecies, and it will produce a second flush of colorful foliage just as the first flush is fading to green. The prolific flowers are pure white which complement the red and green leaves.

#### *Epimedium grandiflorum* 'Queen Esta'

A profusion of deep reddish-purple flowers appears in early spring with the intense coloring offset with each spur tip fading to white. As the flowers peak, dark chocolate-purple foliage provides a backdrop.

This list is a great group to start with but there are many more available that are well worth growing, so do not limit yourself! Enjoy the charm of epimedium and make them an essential part of your spring garden display.

[Editor's note: See page 10 for information about Richie Steffen's epimedium class on April 14.] 

Richie Steffen is an NHS board member and the curator of the Elisabeth C. Miller Botanical Garden.

# GREAT PLANT PICKS 2011

## DROUGHT-TOLERANT, SUN-LOVING COMBINATIONS USING GPPs

ALEX LAVILLA

2010! A RECORD-BREAKING, unseasonably cold, wet spring gave way to a virtually nonexistent summer. August temperatures in the high nineties stressed already weather-weary plants. Fledgling vegetable gardeners toughed out their first year struggling with snail-infested crops and no-show tomatoes. Even established “drought-tolerant” plants struggled from water stress when left on their own during the hot spell. The term “drought-tolerant” is often misleading, implying a “no maintenance” as opposed to a “low maintenance” approach. It is better to interpret it as sustaining the well-being and attractive appearance of a plant by monitoring moisture levels during times of extreme stress. This engenders, at the very least, a minimal commitment to care throughout the seasons. No matter what, plants should be established with regular, deep watering for at least two growing seasons before being considered “drought-tolerant.” Depending on soil type, this means slowly soaking the root zone of trees and large shrubs to a depth of at least two feet and one foot for perennials. Subsequently, in high heat or prolonged drought deep watering twice a month should be the rule as opposed to no watering at all.

Minimal water is often a necessity when screening along property lines. Reliable Great Plant Picks (GPPs) can provide structure and color and address the privacy issues of the urban landscape. Along an existing unsightly fence line or wall, Chilean potato vine *Solanum crispum* ‘Glasnevin’ is a fabu-

lous choice. Deep purple-blue, slightly scented flowers with contrasting yellow stamens bloom in large clusters all summer into fall. Yellowish-white, non-edible fruit makes a pleasing addition after a warm summer adding to the fall display. Happily grown on its own, it is also quite attractive scrambling into larger evergreen shrubs like *Elaeagnus pungens* ‘Maculata’ or *Elaeagnus x ebbingei* ‘Gilt Edge’. The flower color looks exquisite against the gold accents of the foliage. To keep plants tidy, prune flowering shoots from the previous year to two or three buds from the main stems in late February. For additional interest, plant several dwarf Russian sage, *Perovskia* ‘Little Spire’, along the base interspersed with generous clusters of our native bulbous perennial *Camassia quamash* or *Camassia cusickii*. In spring, the elegant spires of star-shaped blue flowers of *camassia* are a subtle foreshadowing of the lavender blue sprays of Russian sage that follow in midsummer. *Lonicera nitida* ‘Baggesen’s Gold’ when sheared into a dense, thick wall of golden foliage at five or six feet would also look great as a backdrop.

Carport, driveway, or entryway plantings often need year-round interest with minimal water. *Daphne x transatlantica* ‘Eternal Fragrance’ provides a continuous olfactory delight in these frequently used locations. Similar to the variegated *Daphne x transatlantica* ‘Summer Ice’, ‘Eternal Fragrance’ is a tight, semi-evergreen, mounding shrub two feet high by two feet wide produc-



TOP: *Daphne x transatlantica* ‘Summer Ice’  
BELOW: *Lonicera nitida*  
‘Baggesen’s Gold’ (Richie Steffen)

ing small but intensely fragrant clusters of pink buds opening to white flowers from mid-spring through fall. The small, green, boxwood-like leaves make a nice textural and architectural anchor at the base of an elegant specimen like *Pinus flexilis* ‘Vanderwolf’s Pyramid’ with its elongated, pinstriped, glaucous needles. The frothy, twisted, shimmering silver foliage of *Artemisia versicolor* ‘Sea Foam’, although sadly not evergreen, works really well to add a touch of dynamism and lighten the scene. *Sedum spurium* ‘Green Mantle’ or *Sedum spurium* ‘White Carpet’ will add a fresh wave of green at ground level with round, succulent leaves that burst forth with clusters of white flowers in mid to late summer.

There is always that perfect GPP that fits the bill for even the most difficult situations. No need to look too far afield when planning that perfect garden! 🌱

Alex LaVilla is the perennials buyer at Swanson’s Nursery and is the Great Plant Picks Perennials and Bulbs Committee chair.

# 2011 NHS TOURS

RENEE MONTGELAS

THE 2011 NHS TOUR SEASON kicks off this spring with a day tour to the Port Townsend area **May 12**. We will first visit a Marrowstone Island garden with an amazing plant collection. According to Dan Hinkley, they have the biggest podophylums he's ever seen. Next stop will be Far Reaches Farm in Port Townsend, recently featured in *Pacific Northwest* magazine. After a brief presentation by owners Kelly Dodson and Sue Milliken we will tour their display gardens, enjoy lunch in the garden, and have time to shop in the nursery. We also plan to visit one or two more gardens in the area.

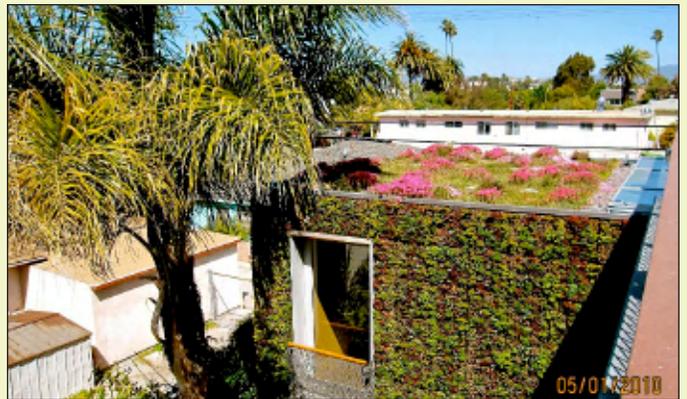
This year we are expanding our horizons and introducing two new NHS tours features. Daniel Mount will lead a day hike on **July 7** to experience the wildflowers of Tucquala Meadows in the North Cascades above Cle Elum. (See Daniel's accompanying article below.) We are also developing a "Meet the Designer" series of full and half-day tours featuring several local designers who will introduce us to their design process as we tour their signature gardens.

Each year we try to schedule a regional gardens tour. In past years, we have visited the Los Angeles area; Portland, Oregon; and Victoria, B.C. This year we're heading north to Vancouver, B.C. and Bellingham. Thomas Hobbs, a featured speaker at the

NHS symposium on March 26 has offered his help in our entry to several extraordinary private Vancouver gardens, as well as showing us his own new 20-acre farm in Langley, B.C. On the way home, we'll stop in Bellingham to visit a few more private gardens. The tour is **Friday, July 22 to Sunday, July 24**.

Please contact [nwhort@aol.com](mailto:nwhort@aol.com) or call 206-780-8172 for more information. 📧

*Renee Montgelas is an NHS board member who also co-chairs the Tours Committee.*



2010 NHS Tour to Los Angeles (Gillian Mathews)



*Jeffery's shooting star  
(Daniel Mount)*

## A DAY IN TUCQUALA MEADOWS

DANIEL MOUNT

THE CLE ELUM RIVER IS LAZY in its first miles filling with waters from creeks off the Wenatchee Mountains and the Cascades. The valley is narrow there and decidedly facing south, a factor making a superb micro-climate and some of the best wildflower viewing in the state according

to Arthur Kruckeberg, author of *Gardening with Plants of the Pacific Northwest*. Most notable are the sub-alpine meadows rich in herbaceous plants.

At 3,300 feet these meadows are not only contained by the walls of the surrounding mountains but also by a short growing season. Snow can linger into June and frost begins at the end of

August. The benefit to the flower viewer is that spring, summer, and autumn flowers can often be viewed in a single visit. The meadows themselves range from wet to dry hosting a wide variety of plants. Short hikes from the valley bottom head into old growth fir forest, serpentine, and alpine habitats each with different floras attracting a wide variety of resident and migratory birds.

But what dazzles me most is the sheer beauty of the place. The meadows are a colorful tapestry with Columbia monkshood, gilia, Columbia lily, Jeffery's shooting star, and stream violets. It is truly a garden without a gardener.

It's an easy place to wander. Under the majesty of Cathedral Rock to the north you'll find plenty of time for botanizing or photography, a place to have a creekside picnic with friends, and dip your toes in some really cold water. I will be leading a tour on **July 7** when the meadows will be floriferously poised between spring and summer. I hope you can join me. 📧

# HAWTHORN: THE MAYFLOWER AND MY HEART OF HEARTS

EAGLESONG EVANS GARDENER

THE VERDANT EXPLOSION OF GREEN is so filled with rapture the first of May, I can only step back and watch with glee—or perhaps terror—since I know, as a gardener, that I’ll never keep up with the weeds and mowing! But in the cacophony of bird song and brilliance, the final surge towards the zenith of summer solstice, a long-time friend annually bursts forth in full bloom. I’m thrilled to find hawthorn once again draping herself with dainty rose-like blossoms that appear to drip from her short, stout limbs and I, with picking basket in hand, set out to bring home another year of tasty tea.

Hawthorn trees are commonly found in hedge-rows surrounding old farmland around the globe in the temperate north. These sturdy remnants carry forth the memory of country use for this multi-functional and aesthetically pleasing tree. In fact, the word *haw* is an old term for hedge. Maude Grieve, founder of The Whins Medicinal and Commercial Herb School and Farm in England, described *Crataegus oxycantha* as: “from the Greek *kratos*, meaning hardness (of the wood), *oxus* (sharp), and *akantha* (a thorn).” A very dense wood bearing sharp thorns was used in wheel and chair manufacture in earlier times, hence the common name “whitethorn.” I prefer the common name “Mayflower,” due to its bloom season and the well-chosen name for the ship which carried the Pilgrims to their new world.

In the Northwest, many species of *crataegus* are found. The introduced hedgerow plants *C. oxycantha* and *C. monogyna* come from northern Europe, and the native *C. douglasii* is commonly found growing in the countryside. Hawthorn trees revel in the “sport” of the season, easily cross-pollinating with one another bringing untold variations to its progeny dutifully spread by eager birds filling hungry young mouths.

Many forms of hawthorn are found in city gardens as well. An easy-to-grow deciduous tree with a compact 20-30 foot

habit and year-round interest, hawthorn can be a good choice for small gardens. Unfortunately, the hybrid *C. x laevigata* ‘Paul’s Scarlet’, popular for its double pink bloom, is tremendously susceptible to leaf blight which causes summer defoliation. This blight has adversely affected hawthorn’s use in the horticulture industry but there are many species that display the virtuous qualities of *crataegus* while being resistant to pathogens.

For those desiring a pink flowering specimen tree Michael Dirr, in *Dirr’s Hardy Trees and Shrubs: An Illustrated Encyclopedia* reports that *C. laevigata* ‘Crimson Cloud’

is resistant to leaf blight. Always looking for plants with integrated functions,

I have introduced *C. monogyna*,

*C. x lavalleyi*, *C. douglasii*,

*C. pinnatifida*, and one

unusual *crataegus/sorbus* hybrid from Russia into my landscape to replace a row of alder on the southern edge of the garden.

Imagine: a beautiful tree and one of the finest tasting herbal teas in my cupboard come from the wild hawthorn. In herbal traditions around the world, the fruit and flowers are used to strengthen the heart, improve digestion, and restore depleted life force. Hawthorn’s mild, pleasing flavor is delivered in a golden hue that inspires one to remember the lengthening days and easy living quality of summer.

A strong heart is filled with courage, hope, and joy: the qualities anyone might need to begin a journey into new territory. The Pilgrims trusted the Mayflower to bring them safely to their new world. I still trust the cellular wisdom of this tree to carry me each day into my ever-changing world! Enjoy! 🌿

*EagleSong Evans Gardener is the director of natural beauty at Willows Lodge in Woodinville, Washington. She teaches about local food, slow gardening, and herbal medicine throughout the Northwest. She can be contacted at: eaglesong08@gmail.com.*



# VOLUNTEER PROFILE: DANIEL MOUNT

MELODY HOOPER

IT'S NOT EASY PULLING together an issue of *Garden Notes*, relying on the generosity of talented volunteers as we do. So it was a happy day when I met Daniel Mount several years ago in a writing workshop, and he offered to write about a favorite plant for *Garden Notes*. Even better, he has written a thoughtful article for each issue since. Somewhere along the way we realized we had a column going that deserved a special name—thus, *The Story of Plants*.

Daniel is many things: a writer, a garden designer, a vegetable farmer, a traveler—and newest of all—an NHS board member. But these descriptions don't reveal Daniel's true identity. More than anything else, he is a poet and an explorer of ideas. I love the way he notices and celebrates little subtleties, especially when they involve plants or gardens. Then he wraps these observations into a gift of words for the rest of us, in conversation and in print. I've



*Daniel cuddles a cabbage  
(Michael Boudreaux)*

been charmed by his use of language since the day we met.

But poets are often private people, and NHS board members are public. What, I wondered, made Daniel take on this new, potentially time-consuming role? I should have guessed: education.

Daniel comes from a long line of gardeners and farmers. He spent most of his childhood summers in a garden,

which led to a degree in botany, work at the Missouri Botanical Garden, and a career in garden design. In 1988 he moved to Seattle and formed Daniel Mount Gardens, a design, maintenance, and consulting business. Now in the Snoqualmie Valley, he continues to run his business while writing and teaching classes.

All this knowledge and experience needs an outlet, and as a board member Daniel has more opportunities to develop his passion for connecting people with plants. One of his activities will be teaching classes for NHS this year. I'm guessing they will fill quickly.

Let's just hope Daniel still has time to write. 📧

*Melody Hooper is a former editor of Garden Notes. Nowadays she is content to be out in the garden with her chickens and bees. Her new e-mail address is melody.hooper@frontier.com.*

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# MILLER LIBRARY NEWS

BRIAN THOMPSON

DO A SEED DANCE AND PLANT a seed to take home. Check out the hidden life in a scoop of compost.

Doesn't that sound like fun? These are just some of the activities you can try at the Miller Library this spring.

But there's a catch. You have to be from three to eight years old to participate.

If you don't qualify, and I suppose few NHS members do, there is another way. Bring your favorite budding young gardener to a Story Time family program at the Miller Library.

Miller Library staff member Laura Blumhagen will enchant you by reading her favorite stories from the library's children's book collection. Then she'll lead the group in activities that bring alive the stories just heard.

The once-a-month programs are held on Saturdays from 10:30-11:15 am. Coming up are:

- April 16: **The Magic of Seeds**—a program that starts small and grows into something amazing and includes dancing.
- May 14: **Fabulous Flowers**—after the stories tap your inner Monet by coloring.
- June 11: **City Gardeners**—three tales of city kids and their gardens, all who know the importance of compost.

After the program you can browse the children's collection for books to take home, including selections from the Parent/Teacher Resource Collection started by an NHS grant in 2007 and continuing to grow.

## 6th Annual Garden Lovers' Book Sale April 1-2, 2011

Thousands of used gardening, horticulture, botany, and landscape design books will be for sale at the Miller Library the first weekend of April. All proceeds are used to purchase the best and newest in horticultural books and journals.

Tickets are still available for the **Wine and Cheese Party** on **Friday, April 1**, from 5:00 to 8:00 pm for \$20 each. To purchase tickets and have first chance at the books, contact the Library at 206-543-0415. On **Saturday, April 2**, the Book Sale will run from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm and admittance is free.

An exhibit and sale of original artwork from the **American Association of Botanical Artists - Pacific Northwest Chapter** will coincide with the book sale and continue through May 7. If you miss the opening, stop by on Wednesday, April 13, before the NHS Lecture. 

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

## ~ THANKS TO OUR 2011 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!*

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# THE STORY OF PLANTS: JAPANESE CHERRY

DANIEL MOUNT

IN 1912 A SHIP ARRIVED in Seattle from Japan. It was carrying 3,000 flowering cherry trees, a gift from the mayor of Tokyo to the people of the United States. The trees were rigorously examined, loaded in climate-controlled railroad cars, and shipped to Washington, D.C. First Lady Helen Taft was waiting with plans to turn a swamp into a beautiful capital. Mrs. Taft and Viscountess

Chinda, the wife of the Japanese ambassador, planted the first two trees. These trees, still growing, are the cornerstone of the famous cherry allée around the Tidal Basin.

Mrs. Taft planted more than a tree. The ornamental cherry was very little known in the West. They were difficult to procure as well as to propagate. And they didn't produce fruit, a hard sell to the pragmatic Americans. A few existed in private collections in Europe and the U.S., but it was their debut on the banks of the Potomac that awoke the wary public's heart to what the Japanese had been celebrating for millennia.

Ornamental cherries probably arrived in Japan from China with Buddhism in the 5th century. Within a hundred years the cult of the cherry was well established; no Japanese garden was without cherry trees. At that time *Hanami*, or cherry viewing, began as a celebration of the ephemeralness of life, the beauty of the falling blossoms as revered as their opening. Poetry was written and hung



*Japanese flowering cherry*

on the branches. *Sake* was drunk under the blossom-laden trees as love affairs began and ended. Today *Hanami* is the chief event in the Japanese social calendar. TV stations track cherry blooming times like storm fronts. Millions crowd parks drinking, lovemaking, and of course taking pictures. The Cherry Blossom Festival in D.C. nearly rivals it, being one of the more heavily attended events there.

Though a wide variety of ornamental cherries are planted throughout D.C., the original 3,000 were Yoshino cherries (*Prunus x yedoensis*). As one of the most beautiful, vigorous, and easy to propagate of the ornamental cherries, it is also the most popular not only in Japan but worldwide. The simple pinkish blooms, appearing before the leaves, fade to white and create a stunning contrast against the dark smooth bark. The only complaint I have read is that it is short-lived, surviving only 80 years.

Compared to the record 1,800 year-old weeping Higan cherry (*Prunus x subhirtella*) in Japan, it is indeed short-lived.

Cherries are quite promiscuous and inter-specific hybrids are common and encouraged. They were the center of horticultural attention in Japan from the 16th through the 18th centuries, much like the rose in the West. Today, there are 196 *sato-sakura*, or "village-cherries," as

these cultivars are called. With nearly 350 names, even the experts are confused. There are much fewer available to us.

Finding room for a large Yoshino, or my favorite 'Mt. Fuji', with its wide spreading habit and large, double blossoms is difficult. Yet there are smaller cherries available. I love the wild-looking 'Okame' with early dainty reddish flowers. 'Akebono', an American cultivar, is an elegant choice, as is columnar 'Amanogawa' towering like a plume of smoke.

About 800 of the Yoshino cherries planted around the Tidal Basin in 1912 are still alive. Each year another one succumbs to age; they are already past their due date. In a sense they are as fleeting as spring, as history, as life.

So when our 'Mt. Fuji' drops its petals this spring I'm going to raise a cup of *sake* to their passing.

And to life. 🍀

*Read more of Daniel's thoughts on plants and gardening on his blog [www.danielmountgardens.blogspot.com](http://www.danielmountgardens.blogspot.com).*

# SPRING EPHEMERALS: MORE THAN A FLEETING AFFECTION

JASON KIBBEY

I AM UNSURE WHY some people are tenuous about using ephemeral plants. Perhaps it's the breathy, delicate-sounding name along with the fragile-looking foliage that many spring ephemerals have. What I am sure of is that they are an essential part of a well-thought-out garden, and when placed carefully, they play an integral role in filling both spatial and seasonal gaps. Upon closer inspection, and in stark contrast to their tender appearance, they do have a sturdy constitution.

There are three distinct types of ephemerals: spring, desert, and weedy. I am concentrating on spring ephemerals in this article, which are those plants that have a short cycle of growth sending up foliage, blooming, setting seed, and then quickly going dormant in six to eight weeks. They inhabit woodland floors, growing at the base of deciduous trees and shrubs where they could be considered opportunistic perennials quickly completing their growth, bloom, and reproduction cycle at a time of year when most other plants are just breaking dormancy. This is important because their growth cycle takes place before taller woodland plants send out their leaves shading the forest floor below. To help spring ephemerals survive their long period of dormancy, many have developed specialized water and food storage structures such as tubers, corms, or bulbs making them ideal for water-conscious gardens.

It is an especially good idea to plant ephemerals at the base of trees or shrubs in beds that are irrigated as the roots of



*Corydalis lutea* (Jason Kibbey)

their overlords will suck up the extra water in the summer when ephemerals would otherwise be dormant. For ephemerals, the low water requirements in the summer, short growth/bloom cycle, beautiful blooms, and attractive, low foliage that dies back towards the end of spring make them ideal for including in the garden.

One of my favorite ephemerals is *Corydalis lutea* (yellow corydalis), which has subtle, lacy, fern-like, blue-green leaves that grow to 9-12" tall, forming lush, meandering mounds. It grows best in part to full shade, slightly alkaline, well-drained soil, and produces small, spurred, tubular, yellow flowers in profusion. The plant seeds freely—some consider it a weed—but it is easily plucked from unwanted areas. I have found the buff-colored, exfoliating, papery bark on the branches of *Hydrangea quercifolia* to be a complementary backdrop for this beauty. For a wonderful seasonal transi-

tion of the yellow flowers to a big bang of yellow foliage, plant *C. lutea* below *H. quercifolia* 'Little Honey'.

Another ephemeral that is an absolute delight is *Sanguinaria canadensis* (bloodroot).

It produces precocious, milky-white, star-like flowers on short stems before the foliage emerges, growing to a height of about six inches. Bloodroot foliage is somewhat variable, unfurling from thick, stubby stems to round, gray-green, matte leaves that have from five to nine lobes. The flowers, however, are the real stars of the show, and look stunning when they mature into colonies. Bloodroot works great at the base of the taller growing *Helleborus x hybridus* (Lenten rose hellebore), particularly if you are using a darker flowering selection for contrast.

There are many more ephemerals that are a joy to behold in the garden like *Hepatica nobilis*, *Crocus tommasinianus*, and *Trillium grandiflorum*. Each of these plants offers its own unique foliage height, color, and texture, as well as beautiful flowers; all at a time of year when we are most hungry for the garden to come alive. Spring ephemerals satisfy that hunger by filling in those smaller spaces in the bed with a beauty, delicacy, and durability that few other plants can match. 🌸

*Jason Kibbey is a professional gardener and garden designer. He writes on his blog and for Bellevue Botanical Garden Society's newsletter. You can find more information at his website: [www.jasonkibbeydesign.com](http://www.jasonkibbeydesign.com).*

# NHS BULLETIN BOARD

## ~ SPRING CLASSES ~

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

### *Conifer ID with Walt Bubelis*

Join Walt Bubelis, retired head of the Edmonds C.C. horticulture program, for a walk through the grounds of Children's Hospital examining the key characteristics of conifers from pines to podocarps. You'll be able to distinguish a *Chamaecyparis* from a *Thuja* or a fir from a spruce with this class! Participants should bring a hand-lens.

LOCATION: CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL GROUNDS/SEATTLE  
FEE: MEMBERS: \$25.00 NON-MEMBERS: \$35.00 LIMIT: 14

THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

### *All to Know About Epimedium with Richie Steffen*

Richie Steffen, curator of the Elisabeth C. Miller Botanical Garden, will walk you through the best, brightest, and most fabulous of this diverse genus. The Miller Garden has collected and trialed nearly two hundred different forms and Richie will share tips about growing and using these plants in your garden.

LOCATION: MILLER BOTANICAL GARDEN/SEATTLE  
FEE: MEMBERS: \$25.00 NON-MEMBERS: \$35.00 LIMIT: 15

TUESDAY, MAY 3, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

### *Think Chickens with Kathy Fries*

Kathy will take our group on a tour of her unique chicken coop called the *Palais de Poulet* while she describes how, what kind, and where to keep chickens in a city garden. She will also take us on a tour of her amazing garden on the shores of Lake Washington.

LOCATION: FRIES GARDEN/KIRKLAND  
FEE: MEMBERS: \$25.00 NON-MEMBERS: \$35.00 LIMIT: 15

TUESDAY, MAY 24, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

### *Designing the Collector's Garden with Richie Steffen*

Are you the kind of person who needs all of everything? Do you plant in drifts or one? Join Richie Steffen to see how he makes his home garden a design success. This small, plant-packed garden built by Richie and Rick shows incredible creativity and a resourceful use of design concepts.

LOCATION: PETERSON-STEFFEN GARDEN/FEDERAL WAY  
FEE: MEMBERS: \$25.00 NON-MEMBERS: \$35.00 LIMIT: 12

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

### *Container Design with Lisa Freed*

Lisa Freed, co-owner of Wells Medina Nursery, is well-known for her outstanding container garden displays. Lisa will demonstrate how she creates her fabulous designs and teach how to select plants and maintain long-lasting containers.

LOCATION: WELLS MEDINA/MEDINA  
FEE: MEMBERS: \$25.00 NON-MEMBERS: \$35.00 LIMIT: 20

THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

### *Ferns for the Northwest Garden with Richie Steffen*

Foliage is "in" and ferns are hot! Join Richie Steffen for a look at this amazing and beautiful group of plants. We will stroll through the Miller Botanical Garden seeing some of the best ferns for the Northwest and learn how to use them effectively in the shade garden.

LOCATION: MILLER BOTANICAL GARDEN/SEATTLE  
FEE: MEMBERS: \$25.00 NON-MEMBERS: \$35.00 LIMIT: 15

FOR CLASS AND TOUR RESERVATIONS E-MAIL [NWHORT@AOL.COM](mailto:NWHORT@AOL.COM) OR CALL KARIN KRAVITZ AT 206-780-8172.

## ~ WEDNESDAY EVENING LECTURES ~

LECTURE 7:15 PM RECEPTION 6:45 PM  
NHS HALL, CENTER FOR URBAN HORTICULTURE

MEMBERS \$5.00 NON-MEMBERS \$10.00

**NO RESERVATIONS TAKEN**

APRIL 13, 2011

### *Landscape as Spirit: Creating a Contemplative Garden—Martin Mosko*

MAY 11, 2011

### *The High Line—Patrick Cullina*

JUNE 8, 2011

### *Work in Process: Insights into Evolving Designs—Sarah Price*

FULL SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND UPCOMING EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE: [WWW.NORTHWESTHORT.ORG](http://WWW.NORTHWESTHORT.ORG)

## ~ 2011 NHS GRANTS OFFERED ~

The NHS Board has made grant funds available for 2011 and is currently accepting grant applications for consideration. The award of 2011 grants will be made at the 2011 NHS Annual Meeting on November 9, 2011. Applications must be received by August 31, 2011, and should include the following:

- A narrative describing the project and the goals of the project (not to exceed two pages).
- A description of the applicant, i.e., individual, non-profit company or institution, or other. A list of key individuals involved in the project, and directors and officers, if applicable.
- The amount requested and the project budget. The applicant should note whether follow-on funding will be required, whether matching funds or other funding is available, and whether the applicant has received NHS funding in the past.
- A copy of the applicant's annual report (if any) and most recent financial statement.
- The project time line and schedule. Include the date by which NHS will receive a report on the success of the project and a copy of the completed work, if applicable.
- Name(s) of the person(s) to whom correspondence should be addressed, and who will report to the NHS Grant Committee.

## ~ PORT TOWNSEND TOUR ~

THURSDAY, MAY 12, 8:30 AM-6:00 PM

Enjoy an exciting day visiting several gardens in Port Townsend including the garden of Kelly Dodson and Sue Milliken at Far Reaches Farm featured in the current issue of *Pacific Horticulture* and in Valerie Easton's January 29 column in *Pacific Northwest*. In addition to a tour of their incredible display gardens, lunch, and a buying frenzy, Kelly and Sue will give a brief presentation. One of the other gardens on the tour has a mouth-watering plant collection where Dan Hinkley said he saw the biggest podophylums he had ever seen. The entire day will be a feast for the eyes and the senses.

LOCATION: PORT TOWNSEND

FEE: MEMBERS: \$48.00 NON-MEMBERS: \$68.00 LIMIT: 35



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

RAY LARSON

AH SPRING, WHEN “A YOUNG MAN’S FANCY turns lightly to thoughts of love.” Though with apologies to Alfred Lord Tennyson, for the rest of us, spring means a turn to gardening. For most of our members, it is a turn not lightly taken, but vigorously embarked upon.

Now that the annual Northwest Flower & Garden show has passed, and we’ve inventoried the casualties of another cruel winter for plants, we can get to the real business of gardening in the earth again. The soil has warmed a bit and the first flush of spring is upon us. Hopefully by the time you read this you’ve already enjoyed our annual spring sale and stocked up on reinforcements to reinvigorate bare, tired, or neglected areas of the garden. Of course, here on the cusp of spring, many more opportunities for learning, inspiration, and planting await.

The monthly lecture series for the coming season offers three inspirational speakers. They are detailed on our website [www.northwesthort.org](http://www.northwesthort.org), but one that I’ll be especially interested in hearing is **Patrick Cullina** on **May 11**. Mr. Cullina is vice president of horticulture and operations for Friends of the High Line in New York City, a spectacular new urban park in Lower Manhattan. I had the chance to visit the High Line late last summer and it was truly a revelation. The transformation of a derelict stretch of 1920s era elevated railway through the Lower West Side of Manhattan from an abandoned relic to a stunning example of urban reuse with an amazing horticultural backdrop was simply marvelous. The best parts of the structure were saved and the spurs and access points expanded upon. And plantings of tremendous texture and interest were woven seamlessly throughout, all with pleasant views of the surrounding metropolis and glimpses of the Hudson River. While our own crumbling elevated transportation line—the much larger and quite brutalist Highway 99 Viaduct—offers far less inherent charm to work with, it is intriguing to think that perhaps a small slice of it, thoughtfully selected, could be enhanced in a similar way. And the views of the Olympics and Elliot Bay would be superlative. One bit of fortune in achieving something like this is that both projects share the same lead design firm, James Corner Field Operations. I’m excited to hear what Mr. Cullina has to say about the High Line project, and hope that we can gain both horticultural as well as civic inspiration from the amazing work done there.

However you choose to celebrate the return of spring, we hope you will join us as we learn from and are inspired by our fellow gardeners, designers, and “plants people.” We always encourage you to bring a friend with whom to share your enthusiasm for gardening and plants. What better time than spring to turn again to gardening for renewal and reinvigoration? 🌱

*Ray Larson is the president of NHS.*

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## FUN IN SPITE OF THE WEATHER

IN THE MIDST OF BAD WEATHER throughout the region the Northwest Flower & Garden Show provided a very welcome glimpse of spring with exciting display gardens and a host of outstanding speakers. We’re glad so many of you came by to visit the NHS booth to see our new pop-up booth with the beautiful *Lewisia* backdrop photo by Richie Steffen and the container designed by Great Plant Picks.

Thank you to all of the NHS members who braved the elements to volunteer at our booth, the Pacific Horticulture booth, and the Seattle Children’s PlayGarden display garden. We hope you had a chance to stop by and see all of the fun the volunteers were having with Charlotte, Wilbur, Templeton, and the many future gardeners in the Children’s PlayGarden display designed by Wendy Welch.

The hard work of the volunteers in our booth produced many new members with the help of a discount coupon for new memberships provided by Swanson’s Nursery and many new subscribers for *Pacific Horticulture* magazine. Congratulations to **Mark Lyke** who won an annual NHS membership with *Pacific Horticulture* magazine for recruiting the most new members at the show. 🌱



*Future gardeners? (Valerie Easton)*



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RICHIE STEFFEN

*Erythronium revolutum*, *Anemone x lipsiensis*, and *Clematis koreana*—Photo taken in Richie Steffen's garden.

*"Spring makes its own statement, so loud and clear that the gardener seems to be only one of the instruments, not the composer."*

—Geoffrey B. Charlesworth, 1920-2008, garden writer and author

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