

# GardenNOTES



NORTHWEST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

WINTER 2010

## 2010 SPRING GARDENING SYMPOSIUM American Garden Design from Dumbarton Oaks to Living Roofs

HANS MANDT

AMERICAN GARDEN DESIGN has come a long way since the latter part of the 19th century. In Seattle we are well-acquainted with the work of the Olmsted brothers, but perhaps not so familiar with two great American women landscape designers, Beatrix Ferrand and Ellen Shipman. In fact, Ferrand, along with the Olmsteds, was a founding member of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) in 1899, the only woman of the eleven founding members. We are fortunate to have nationally recognized garden historian, Judith Tankard, coming to the spring gardening symposium. She will give us an insight into the influential work of these two pioneering women designers.

In the world of contemporary design, we move from the East Coast to the American heartland. Since 1982, Craig Bergmann has specialized in designing innovative modern interpretations of classic European garden features for Midwestern gardens. While best known for his herbaceous borders, potagers, woodlands, and formal gardens, the scope of his work ranges from estate master planning, public and private urban gardens, and restoration of historic properties.



### REGISTER NOW!

**DATE:** Saturday, March 20, 2010  
8:30 am to 4:00 pm

**LOCATION:** Bastyr University Auditorium  
14500 Juanita Drive NE, Kenmore, WA 98028

**FEE:** members \$60.00, non-members \$80.00  
(fee includes lunch)

**REGISTRATION:**  
E-mail [nwhort@aol.com](mailto:nwhort@aol.com) or  
phone 206-780-8172

As we continue on to the Pacific Coast, we find two non-traditional contemporary designers: Bernard Trainor and Paul Kephart. For Trainor, contextual design involves connecting to place, wherever it might be. He has discovered that people feel grounded with contextual gardens and landscapes because they are at one with the region, both visually and philosophically. In his work,

*The new "living roof" on the Academy of Sciences building in Golden Gate Park by Paul Kephart*

he observes the natural and cultural history of a place and explores what is already there and why. Then he asks how he can add a layer onto this landscape fabric.

Paul Kephart is one of the leading green roof consultants in the Western Hemisphere. He applies ecological design alternatives to conventional development through vegetative building systems. Paul is also recognized as one of the leading ►

## 2010 Spring Gardening Symposium ...continued

ecological horticulturists in California, designing "living roofs" dedicated to watershed management and corridors for migratory wildlife. Paul is a knowledgeable, committed, and optimistic innovator.

**Please join us for our 2010 spring gardening symposium: American Garden Design from Dumbarton Oaks to Living Roofs on March 20, 2010.**

### SPEAKERS

#### **JUDITH TANKARD** *Designing Women: Beatrix Farrand and Ellen Shipman*



**JUDITH TANKARD** is an art historian specializing in landscape history. For over 20 years she taught at the Landscape Institute at the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University. In 2000, she was awarded a Gold Medal by the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. She is the author or co-author of seven illustrated books on landscape history, including her most recent publication, *Beatrix Farrand: Private Gardens, Public Landscapes*. Her previous book, *The Gardens of Ellen Biddle Shipman* was the recipient of a 1998 book award from the American Horticultural Society.

Beatrix Farrand and Ellen Shipman were two of America's most influential garden designers of the early 20th century. Long after most of their gardens have vanished, their work continues to inspire today's garden designers. While both women were noted for their luxurious private gardens, their influences and design styles varied considerably. Farrand drew inspiration from her vast knowledge of European gardens, while Shipman was deeply influenced by traditional New England country gardens. Farrand's most visible garden today is Dumbarton

Oaks in Washington, D.C. Longue Vue in New Orleans is considered Shipman's masterpiece.

#### **CRAIG BERGMANN** *Contemporary Traditional Gardens*



**CRAIG BERGMANN** is a landscape architect, garden designer, and plantsman. His work has been featured in several books including Rosemary Verey's *The American Man's Garden* and Page Dickey's book *Inside Out: Relating Garden to House*. The 2007 January/February issue of *Garden Design* magazine featured his "Golden Trowel Award" winning garden for a residential landscape in Highland Park, Illinois.

Designing predominantly in the Midwestern U.S., which is very much based in a traditional architectural style, Craig tries to blur the lines between the site and the style of the landscape. "Appropriate" is a term often coined, but this is in the eyes of the beholder. This blurring is often a composite result of different people's inputs on the development of the home and the site. Craig collaboratively listens and then takes responsibility for the editing and the development of the site, ultimately placing the garden in its contemporary setting.

#### **BERNARD TRAINOR** *Contextual Design in California*



**BERNARD TRAINOR** is founding principal at Bernard Trainor + Associates. His early experiences in Australia and Europe have allowed him to see California with extremely inquisitive eyes. Bernard lives and works in the Monterey Bay Region of California, where the Pacific Ocean

and Monterey Bay converge with the Santa Lucia Mountains creating a twisting, folding landscape that presents many climatic, topographical, and geological variations.

The geographical diversity of his work has allowed him to appreciate the regional qualities and culture of a place. Bernard's favorite landscapes are deeply connected to the place from which they have grown. He has found that while the vernacular of each site varies, the same design principals apply: observe the genius of the place, connect with the architecture, and respond to the personality of each client. Ultimately, his aim is to design spaces that will inspire people to connect with a place in a deeper way.

#### **PAUL KEPHART** *An Integrative Approach to Living Architecture*



**PAUL KEPHART** is the Executive Director of Rana Creek Habitat Restoration and Living Architecture, whose mission is to restore biodiversity and preserve healthy ecosystems through an integrated design/build process. A trained biologist and ecologist, Paul has more than 20 years of experience in the field of ecological design.

Paul will give an overview of large-scale living systems. He will address the importance of sustainable design, planning, and construction, as well as the economic benefits. Paul will discuss how he is attempting to define a new vernacular and a design style that doesn't just look at green roofs or bio swales, gray water, or passive solar, but a style that integrates all of these in a design process that really makes it a part of the structure, not an amenity of the design. That's on the cutting edge and that's where Paul's design work is going. 🌱

*Hans Mandt is the president of NHS.*

## NORTHWEST FLOWER &amp; GARDEN SHOW

## PICTURE THIS!

NITA-JO ROUNTREE



Dan Hinkley  
(Nita-Jo Rountree)

SHOCK WAVES WENT through the horticultural community last February when the owner of the Northwest Flower & Garden Show announced that if he could not find a buyer for the show, he would close it down. Many people don't realize that he did reach a deal with a new owner, so the show will go on!

As a result, NHS will once again have a booth, number **2903**, to recruit new members. And, *picture this!*

People who sign up for membership will have the opportunity to have their picture taken with life-sized cut-outs of Dan Hinkley and Ciscoe Morris and e-mailed to them. For our current members who stop by our booth, we'll take your picture, too. How fun!

Better yet, members who volunteer to work a three hour shift in our booth will also get free admission to the show. AND, the member who signs up the most new members will win a cool plant. It's a fun way to meet and greet new and old friends, so contact Karin Kravitz ASAP to sign up for your preferred shift.

The show will once again be held at the Washington State Convention Center and will run from **Wednesday, February 3 through Sunday, February 7**. Show hours are 9 am to 8 pm except Sunday when it closes at 6 pm.

Karin can be reached at [nwhort@aol.com](mailto:nwhort@aol.com) or 206-780-8172. 

*Nita-Jo Rountree is the immediate past president of NHS.*



Ciscoe Morris  
(Nita-Jo Rountree)

## NHS MEMBERS TO SPEAK AT FLOWER SHOW

JANET ENDSLEY

OUR BELOVED FLOWER SHOW will be returning and it's better than ever! NHS members will be entertaining and educating attendees February 3 – 7 at the 22nd annual Northwest Flower & Garden Show in the Washington State Convention Center. Visit the show's website at [www.gardenshow.com](http://www.gardenshow.com) for the complete seminar schedule, plus speaker bios, the book signing schedule, and the weekly "Featured Speakers."

*Janet Endsley is an NHS member and the seminar manager for the Northwest Flower & Garden Show.*

## ~ WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3 ~

Lorene Edwards Forkner	"Ten Secrets to Great Veggie Gardens"
Lucy Hardiman	"Bodacious Borders"
Linda McDonald	"Beyond Beauty: Seeking Sustenance"

## ~ THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4 ~

Lorene Edwards Forkner	"A Good & Delicious Life"
Debra Prinzing	"Grow a High Performance Garden"
Lucy Hardiman	"Gardening in Place"

## ~ FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5 ~

Val Easton	"Simplify Your Gardening Life"
Lorene Edwards Forkner	"Ten Secrets to Great Veggie Gardens"
Ciscoe Morris	"Jardins & Giardinos"
Cass Turnbull	"My Favorite Plants"
Richie Steffen	"Focus on Foliage"
Marty Wingate	"Marty's Top 10"
Riz Reyes	"Easy & Exotic Summer Bulbs"

## ~ SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6 ~

Marianne Binetti	"How to Eat Your Front Yard"
Judith Jones	"Wormhole: The Musical"
Mary Robson	"Shrinking Your Water Bill"
Ciscoe Morris	"Hummingbird Madness"

## ~ SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7 ~

Marty Wingate	"Gardening Basics"
Judith Jones	"Wormhole: The Musical"
Marianne Binetti	"Chocolate in Your Garden"



# 2009 AUSTRALIA TOUR

GILLIAN MATHEWS

NOVEMBER 6, 2009—HOBART, TASMANIA

It's hard to believe 16 days ago we met in Sydney, Australia. We are 25 NHS members from Seattle, California, Canada, and England with our trusted leader Jo Connor from New Zealand. We have traveled by bus, ferry, and airplane from Sydney to Canberra; Melbourne; and Hobart, Tasmania. In between we have seen and learned from the gracious gardeners of Australia.

Garden touring is a great form of travel. Immediately we are immersed in the lives of the local people who open their gardens and share their stories with you. From Waterfall Cottage in Sydney, where Jeanne Villani lives in a remnant rainforest amid huge bird's nest ferns, *Asplenium australasicum*, to Cruden Farm, the historic estate of 100-year-old Dame Elisabeth Murdoch with its stunning avenue of lemon-scented gums, *Eucalyptus citriodora*, and the inspiring world of William Martin's "Wigandia," we have enjoyed a glimpse into the gardening life of Australians.

Everywhere there is discussion about water and climate change. For the past three years, Australia has been in a drought. One hour of hand watering is allowed twice a week. Nurseries are in the water tank selling business. Farmers sell truckloads of well water. Signs state homes have their own water systems, lest a neighbor turns them in for cheating! Gardening is changing dramatically here.

Sydney is an exciting, vibrant city. From our balcony we look over the purple flowering *Jacaranda* trees to the harbor. At Mount Tomah Botanic Garden we have our first taste of the Australian "bush" (eucalypts, tree ferns), and see waratahs (*Telopia*), wattles (*Acacia*), and

the almost extinct Wollemi pine discovered here in 1994.

In Canberra we visit the Australian National Botanic Gardens and journey through Australia's eastern coastline rainforests. We visit Parliament, where we sit in on the prime minister's question time and hear P.M. Kevin Rudd avoid answering questions on immigration.

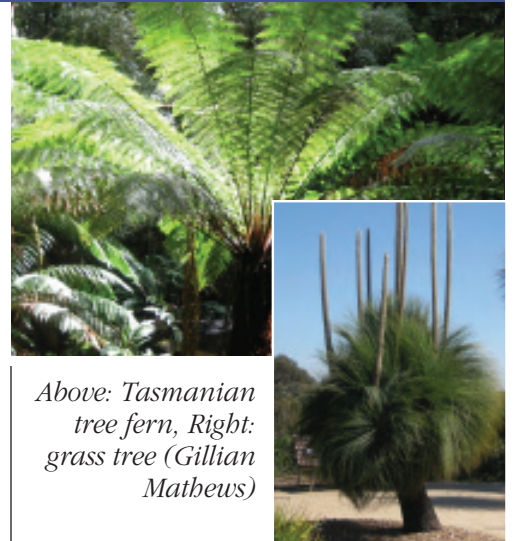
Melbourne is a cosmopolitan city on the Yarra River. We visit six gardens designed by the city's leading garden designers, from formal to natural to contemporary (great use of corten steel).

On the Mornington Peninsula outside Melbourne we are wowed by the Australian Garden, a radically different new botanic garden. Our tour begins with the Red Sand Garden, evocative of the vast landscapes of central Australia. The slow growing native grass tree, *Xanthorrhoea*, fascinates us.

A ferry takes us to the Bellarine Peninsula where the first garden, Strathbrae, has been in drought for 12 years. Consequently, it has drastically changed—no more water-loving, English-style garden plants, but more grasses and drought-tolerant plants.

A highlight of our tour is William Martin's "Wigandia." William visited Seattle a few years ago and left quite an impression. A self-confessed "murderer of good taste," he is very outspoken about Australia's "silly inherited Northern Hemisphere garden traditions." He uses found objects, rusty wire, and old galvanized sheet metal amidst superbly grown plants including *Echium* and *Aeonium arboreum*.

We fly south to Tasmania and a cooler climate. A favorite for many is Wychwood, the garden and nursery of Peter Cooper and Karen Hall, who are



Above: Tasmanian tree fern, Right: grass tree (Gillian Mathews)

delighted we know Ciscoe Morris whom they recently visited. Wychwood is a country garden with wonderful borrowed pastoral sheep-filled views, a medieval-design grass labyrinth, garden sculptures, and clipped box hedges. We could stay longer, but Cradle Mountain beckons us.

At Cradle Mountain it rains and rains. There are only 35 clear days a year here, and we are not in luck! Cradle Mountain hosts a multitude of wildlife; wombats and wallabies abound. Here we experience "The Melbourne Cup" a horserace that brings the country to a standstill.

We head south towards Hamilton and Hobart and encounter huge tree ferns, *Dicksonia antarctica*, during a forest walk. In Hobart, our last stop on the south coast, we visit Woodbank Garden. The 28-year-old garden of Ken and Lesley Gillanders is filled with plants grown from seed collected in Chile, including all the Chilean *Nothofagus* (southern beech), and their own introductions of *Eucryphia lucida*.

After 16 days, our tour sadly is ending. We have one final dinner, and Jo and I have written a song for the group. Luckily there are no video cameras! 📷

Gillian Mathews is an NHS board member and co-chairs the Tours Committee. More photographs and information can be found at [www.nhsaustralia2009.blogspot.com](http://www.nhsaustralia2009.blogspot.com).

# THE HYDE HERBARIUM: A (NOT SO) HIDDEN TREASURE OF CUH

RAY LARSON

MANY GARDENERS are at least somewhat acquainted with the idea of an herbarium, even if they may not be sure what it is exactly. Simply put, an herbarium is a library of dried plant specimens. They have several purposes, but chief among them is to serve as a permanent record of a collection of plants. Historically, they were used to document and classify newly discovered plants or the plants of a particular region or collection. They've been around for hundreds of years, but were often difficult to access and make use of. Before the age of photography, rapid communication, and easy travel, scientifically accurate drawings were often the only way one could ever see a particular plant species. Today, herbaria are much more valuable and accessible to scientists and gardeners alike.

We are fortunate that in the Seattle area we have a resource like the Hyde Herbarium at the UW Botanic Gardens Center for Urban Horticulture (CUH). Why does the UW Botanic Garden even have an herbarium? The main purpose is to voucher—that is collect, document, and preserve—the plant collection at the Washington Park Arboretum. It's a critical job, and any large botanical garden of scientific value has an active herbarium as part of its operation. Once a specimen has been “vouchered,” it is the scientific record of a particular plant's characteristics and defining traits in fruit, flower, and foliage. That record, properly preserved and stored, can then be studied again and again as it is essentially saved forever. For that reason alone the benefits of an herbarium are numerous, both for scientific research and for record keeping.

But what does this mean to those of us outside the world of academics? The Hyde Herbarium also has a larger role that sets it apart from other herbaria: public outreach. In addition to the Arboretum collection, the herbarium records the collections at CUH, keeps an extensive collection of our region's weeds, and has specimens from other public gardens. More pertinently, the Hyde Herbarium also focuses on cultivated plants growing in our area. For us it means that we have easy access to an unbeatable source of information for plant identification. So, if



*Historical herbarium specimens at the Hyde Herbarium*

you move to a new house and don't know what that odd looking shrub is in the corner of your yard, they can help you. This is because the Hyde Herbarium has nearly 20,000 vouchers of plants in their collection and all of the identification resources you can imagine in one spot. Also, the herbarium is easy to find and open to the public. It's right next to the Miller Library in Merrill Hall at CUH.

The Hyde Herbarium is the result of decades of work. First started by a group of Arboretum Foundation volunteers more than

40 years ago, the herbarium moved to its present location in 1984. Named after avid gardener Otis Douglas Hyde, who along with her husband Charles donated money for the construction of a proper herbarium at CUH, it is housed in climate controlled facilities. Dr. Sarah Reichard directs the herbarium, and a graduate research assistant serves as collections manager and volunteer coordinator. Katie Murphy recently succeeded longtime collections manager Wendy DesCamp. The herbarium relies on a core group of long-time volunteers, along with students and those active in special projects. Even with all of that history, the most common comment from visitors is “Wow, I didn't know this was here!”

Of course, even with all of these resources there are some limitations. You will still need to provide some information if you want your plant identified. Don't just bring in a leaf and expect a miracle! It is best if you can bring in at least a small branch, preferably in flower or fruit. A photograph of the plant is also good, along with information about the conditions it is growing in. Regrettably, the herbarium is only open 20 hours a week due to funding limitations. So it is best to check the website: [depts.washington.edu/hydeherb/](https://depts.washington.edu/hydeherb/) for the current hours.

In sum, there is now no excuse for not having that mystery plant identified. As Katie Murphy told me, “We like a challenge for plant ID.” Visit the Hyde Herbarium—you won't be disappointed. 🌱

*Ray Larson is the first vice president of NHS.*

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE: CINDY COMBS

NITA-JO ROUNTREE

A MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS professional specializing in the horticultural industry, Cindy is supremely organized and amazingly detail-oriented with a new idea about every three seconds. Just a few of her clients have included the Bellevue Botanical Garden Society, Hines Horticulture, and In Harmony Sustainable Landscapes.

Cindy joined NHS in the mid-1990s to learn how to make her Magnolia garden the sanctuary she envisioned. Since that time, she has volunteered to work shifts for nearly every NHS plant sale and flower show booth—wow! A few years ago, she held an NHS class at her home called “A Tattletale Garden” featuring some of her gardening successes and not so successes. Additionally, she brought Raymond Evison to NHS for a special lecture on his new clematis series. She also donated her time and professional expertise to help promote the NHS garden called “Eat Your Vegetables—Garden to Table” at the 2008 Northwest Flower & Garden Show.

Sustainability is a key word that Cindy applies to her garden. She uses neither pesticides nor chemicals, and she waters



*Cindy Combs in her Magnolia garden (Jim Combs)*

minimally. *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Sunset*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Seattle Homes and Lifestyles* are a few of the magazines that have featured her garden. In fact, upon returning around midnight from a vacation in Europe, Cindy was

informed by her house sitter that a *Better Homes and Gardens* photo crew was scheduled to arrive at 5 am the next morning! Her garden has also been used as the backdrop for photographing clients' new plant introductions.

Some of her favorite winter-interest plants include *Azara microphylla* ‘Variegata’, the “it” plant popularized by Dan Hinkley a few years ago. It is evergreen, can grow to 20 feet high in shade, and has a wonderful honey-like fragrance. *Hamamelis x intermedia* ‘Arnold’s Promise’ is favored for its mid-to late-winter large spidery yellow flowers and red fall foliage. And, Cindy’s winter garden features a formal low growing hedge of *Sarcococca hookeriana* var. *humilis*, a glossy evergreen shrub with powerfully fragrant white flowers.

The next time you go to an NHS plant sale or to the NHS flower show booth # 2903, look for Cindy. She is the one with the ever-present sparkling smile and warm, effervescent personality. 🌸

*Nita-Jo Rountree is the immediate past president of NHS.*

### ~ WELCOME NEW MEMBERS ~

Debbie Agee  
Toni Anderson  
Megan Aumiller  
Michelle Blakeslee  
Angie Bradbury  
Sally Brunette  
Nellie Butterfield  
Sharon J. Collman  
Cornelia Cross  
Emerald City Gardens  
Pam Eshelman  
Nancy & Charles Evans

Phoebe Fine  
Vickie Gibbs  
Ursula Haigh  
Alex Hamling  
Barbara Harris  
Janet Heineck  
Cathy Higgins  
Joan Horn  
Yolanda Houze  
Ross Hoyle  
Younghee Kim  
Ilse Kluge

Karen Laint  
Carrie Leath  
Cynthia M. Luksus  
Brett Marshall &  
Joanna Steele  
Naomi’s Organic  
Farm Supply  
Norma Martin  
April Mulcahy  
Jumanji Olina  
Jane Orvis  
Neris Palunas

Pamela Peterson  
Kathleen Petty  
Sylvia Portillo  
James Ratzliff  
Chris Rothschild  
Kathleen Sabo  
Kate Sackett  
Lyn Sauter  
Gary W. Scheider  
Jim Schmid &  
Cathy Nolan  
William Steele

Jennifer Stock  
Margaret Stoltz  
Christina Strasser  
Sarah Thomas  
Kathryn Van  
Wagenen  
Beverly vanHartesvelt  
Maggie Walters  
Lon-Marie Walton



## WATERCOLORS ON EXHIBIT AT THE MILLER LIBRARY

BRIAN THOMPSON

BILL TALLEY, retired landscape architect for the University of Washington, first studied painting in college. Later, he realized his best career choice was architecture, but he has returned to his first love now upon retirement.

From mid-January until the end of February, the Miller Library will display a collection of his vibrant and charming watercolors, featuring common garden flowers with an uncommon clarity of pure color. Many of these will be for sale and since they are small, you can buy several! All sales support the Miller Library.

A reception for the artist, open to the public, will be held from 5:00-7:00 pm on Friday, January 15, 2010.

At the beginning of January, you can still catch *Looking Back: A History Exhibit of the Washington Park Arboretum*. If you miss it in person, it

will become a permanent, virtual exhibit linked from the library's home page.

### ***Thank you, thank you, thank you!***

The Northwest Horticultural Society has been a real lifeline for the Miller Library this past year! Through special gifts and fundraising events, and the distribution from the NHS endowment, you have made up nearly half of the funds lost from University's endowment distributions to the library.

### ***Garden Lovers' Book Sale April 2-3***

Five years! Yes, the fifth annual Garden Lovers' Book Sale is coming up soon. Be sure to hold the dates, Friday-Saturday, April 2-3, 2010. As in past years, the best buying is at the wine and cheese party from 5:00-8:00 pm, Friday evening. Details are at [www.millerlibrary.org](http://www.millerlibrary.org).



*Bill Talley artwork coming soon  
to the Miller Library*

As part of your new year's house-cleaning, please go through your bookshelves and donate those gently used gardening books you no longer need. Your donations will make our book sale a big success! 📖

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

## 2010 NHS TOURS — RENEE MONTGELAS

### **TOUR LOS ANGELES GARDENS WITH DEBRA PRINZING APRIL 29 – MAY 2, 2010**

LATE SPRING in Southern California can be glorious, and so we begin our 2010 NHS tours program with a four-day trip to visit gardens in the Los Angeles area, from the beach cities of Santa Monica, Venice, and Malibu to the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains.

The itinerary for the tour is arranged by Debra Prinzing, former Seattle garden and design writer and NHS member, who now lives in Southern California. Debra's work has most recently appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Sunset*, and *Garden Design*, and she is the author of *Stylish Sheds and Elegant Hideaways*.

The tour is scheduled to coincide with the annual Venice Garden & Home Tour, which showcases 20+ unusual and delightful homes and gardens that exemplify the

creative and original style of their owners, as well as the talents of local designers. This is also the weekend of the LA Garden Show 2010, held at the Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden. The show features outdoor display gardens, an open-air marketplace, and a plant sale.

We'll take in both events as well as a visit to Descanso Gardens, the California Cactus Center, and private sustainable gardens in Santa Monica, Malibu, and more.

Look for more details about the tour on the NHS website and E-News alerts. For early sign up, e-mail [nwhort@aol.com](mailto:nwhort@aol.com) or call Karin Kravitz at 206-780-8172.

### **TIBETAN PLATEAU JUNE 27 – JULY 13, 2010**

THIS IS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY for plant enthusiasts to explore one of the world's most fascinating regions and observe its incredible plant diversity. Co-sponsored

by NHS and Pacific Horticulture, the tour will include Chengdu in Sichuan Province, China and Lhasa's sacred sites on the Tibetan Plateau. For additional information, see the Bulletin Board on page 10.

### **LOCAL AREA DAY TOURS – 2010**

IN 2009 NHS ORGANIZED day tours of gardens and farms in South Seattle, Whidbey Island, and Skagit Valley as well as an overnight trip to Portland, Oregon. We were pleased at the positive response to these tours and look forward to offering some interesting and informative day tours in 2010. Information will be available on the website and via E-News as plans develop. 📖

*Renee Montgelas is an NHS board member and co-chairs the Tours Committee with Gillian Mathews.*

# THE STORY OF PLANTS: SITKA SPRUCE

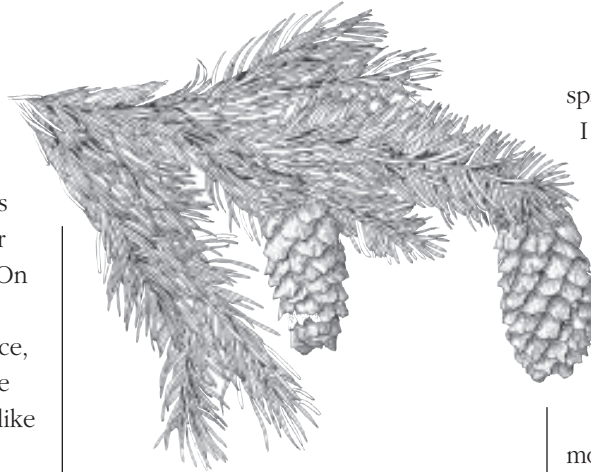
DANIEL MOUNT / ILLUSTRATION BY SYLVIA PORTILLO

## REMEMBER SUMMER?

Or, do you believe like Annie Dillard that "... summer itself were a mirage, a passive dream of pleasure, itself untrue." One hot, sleepless night last summer I walked down our dark country road, finding no relief. On that moonlit walk I looked up at the magnificent silhouette of a Sitka spruce, *Picea sitchensis*. The limbs, raised like victor's arms draped with branchlets like sheets of rain, made me realize how much I missed the rain.

Sitka spruce's range from Alaska to northern California never meanders far from the cool, foggy, and often rainy Pacific Coast. Snoqualmie Valley, where I live, hosts one of the few inland populations. Before moving here I had only known it as the homely, monstrously burlled coastal tree, or as a towering behemoth among the cedars, Douglas firs, and hemlocks in the Hoh Rain Forest. I saw no garden-worthy qualities in it. Yet the silhouetted tree was so graceful and majestic I felt I was seeing the species for the first time.

Sitka spruce is the tallest spruce of the 35 or so species of spruce around the Northern Hemisphere. Reaching up to 300 feet, it is also in the top five tallest trees in the world. It has the thin, scaly bark and prickly needles typical of spruces. At first overlooked by Northwest loggers, Sitka spruce, with its strong, lightweight, and flexible wood, was heavily logged in the last century to build planes for the U.S., Britain, and France during World Wars I and II. It has since played a large role in the Alaskan economy, and has also become the favorite plantation tree in the British Isles. Now it is grown for the superior quality pulp it produces, and the clear resonant wood



*Picea sitchensis*

used in sounding boards for musical instruments, among other things.

Northwest natives have a long history of medicinal, culinary, and utilitarian uses for it. Most famous are the beautiful Haida and Tlingit spruce root baskets and hats. They also believe the prickly foliage banishes negative thoughts. Masked dancers shaking limbs at the audience "scare" away negativity.

A week before my deadline for this publication I ran into Jim Fox at the Miller Library. I had yet to find a reason to recommend this tree to gardeners. I had hoped, coming from Alaska, where Sitka spruce is the state tree, he might have a wonderful story, like he often does, about it. Yet his quizzical look merely scratched my own thin scaly bark to reveal the prickly nervousness I was feeling about my choice.

## MORE ON SITKA SPRUCE

- ***The Golden Spruce: A True Story of Myth, Madness and Greed* by John Vaillant. This book is not only informative but also a good mystery. I highly recommend it.**
- **Coenosium Gardens ([www.cnos.biz](http://www.cnos.biz)) is a great source for *Picea sitchensis* cvs.**

I know most of you don't have the space to plant a fast growing Sitka spruce. I also know there are much better spruces for the garden like the gracefully narrow Serbian spruce (*P. omorika*), any of the innumerable cultivars of Norway spruce (*P. abies*), Caucasian spruce (*P. orientalis*), or the dramatically weeping Oregon native Brewer's spruce (*P. breweriana*), which Hillier calls "the most beautiful of spruces."

But with a great deal of genetic diversity within the species *P. sitchensis* also has some cultivars. About six are available. The most popular is 'Papoose' a silvery hedgehog of a shrub. 'Bentham's Sunlight', a cultivar of the legendary golden spruce of the Queen Charlotte Islands [see inset], is unique in preferring shade. The lesser known 'Thomas' and 'Strypemonde' are slow growing dwarves for the patient enthusiast.

While I was writing this in November I took a break from the keyboard and wandered down our rain polished road. It was another one of those days when I doubted I'd ever see the sun again. The clouds had begun to thin but not break. When I reached the Sitka spruce pearly with droplets, I stopped. Like Annie Dillard, "I saw the tree with the lights in it." Each droplet drew from a sun I could not see, banishing my negativity.

And I knew, eventually, it would be made visible again. 🌧️

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

Sylvia Portillo is a botanical illustrator and student at South Seattle Community College. She can be reached at [sportil@comcast.net](mailto:sportil@comcast.net).



# COAXING THE NEXT GENERATION OF GARDENERS

RIZANIÑO “RIZ” REYES



*Riz (right) and one of his many mentors, Sean Hogan of Cistus Nursery*

ONE QUESTION I'M constantly being asked is, "Why aren't there more young people interested in careers in horticulture or gardening?" For me, this is difficult to answer having always loved what I do for a living. But, as I got more involved with the industry, I realized that I was almost alone in my venture. Is there something not apparent about our horticultural community that's hindering future plant enthusiasts? I also began to ask another common question: how can we encourage the next generation to be more involved and more excited about gardening to ensure this continued enthusiasm? Is it even worth the effort within a community that is most set in its ways?

You might not see it directly, but a new generation of professional gardeners and landscapers exists here in the Pacific Northwest. These are young individuals who found out early in life that they enjoyed the outdoors, admired plants, and had a vision to create. In pursuit of their green ambitions, they often work minimum wage or under the table wrecking their backs hauling stone pavers and spreading yards of well rotted compost, jabbing plug after plug of annuals, weeding, lifting heavy nursery stock, and dealing with clients who can't seem to be pleased. They take a huge risk in their young lives to pursue a passion that's often a painful reminder of just how difficult it is to make a living solely growing and tending plants.

Then there's the general population who may have had some exposure to plants, flowers, and gardening at a young age, but to them, it's simply a potential hobby later in life. Most just see it as plain hard work for something that doesn't really give much in return besides something pretty to look at or eat. It's a generation of

convenience: a demand for quick information that coincides with instant gratification. Since the introduction of social networks and web search engines, instant information (as complete or misleading as it could potentially be) is just a click away.

It's remarkable what my generation will be capable of in the next few years. Some compelling statistics were brought to my attention at a recent Garden Writer's Association meeting in Raleigh, North Carolina. Horticulturist Kelly Norris presented a lecture on *Gardening with Generation Y*. Being 22 years old, he shared a few facts about those born in the late 1970s to the early 1990s.

- **Currently, 25% of the workforce falls between the ages of 18 and 31. This percentage is expected to double in the next five years in the U.S.**
- **Generation Y is 3.5 times larger than Generation X.**
- **Spending capability of Generation Y in the U.S. is estimated at over \$150 billion annually.**

From a business and marketing standpoint, we must capitalize and prepare for this surge of influence that will inundate and support our struggling economy. During Kelly's talk, I began to think about what society has done to cater to this demographic. The first idea is sustainability. This is an educated, well-informed generation that is more aware of the problems we are currently facing, and they are feeling more compelled to make a difference knowing what they do now impacts the rest of their lives and beyond. Injecting a strong, keen interest in horticulture, we can redefine what a garden really is to adapt to our ever-changing environmental and social climates.

Herein lies an argument the older generation will make: "Why fix what isn't really broken?"

Gardening relies on methods that have proven successful for centuries so anything new or "different" is seemingly frowned upon and deemed unnecessary by most experienced home gardeners. But, as with anything in life, when there's no growth or progress, you get left behind.

Upon my return home, I got some insight on broadening our horticultural community. And based on the handful of gardeners around my age, the message was clear: they felt like they don't belong. And here's one reason why: PNW horticulture is plant snobbery at its peak, it's heavily influenced by affluence, and those with time and resources pretty much run the show. But what we truly are is a community of adventurous gardeners who insatiably seek out something new and different.

Whether it's new plants or new approaches to common garden scenarios, I feel that this is the message we can easily instill at all levels. We want to be able to provide opportunities for young professionals to practice their craft, have a resource where they can continually expand their knowledge and experience, and have a network to seek out new work opportunities for themselves and their peers. For the casual young gardener who may just be starting out, there is a lot of potential to mentor these individuals, and bridge the generational gap to create a horticultural community any Gen Y would want to be a part of. 🌱

*Rizaniño "Riz" Reyes is 27 years old. He runs RHR Horticulture and Landwave Gardens in Shoreline, WA. He can be reached at [rhrplants@hotmail.com](mailto:rhrplants@hotmail.com).*

# NHS BULLETIN BOARD

## ~ 2010 WINTER CLASSES ~

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 26, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM**

### **Outdoor Lighting with Russ Haire**

RUSS IS BACK by popular demand and will discuss and demonstrate the different low voltage outdoor lighting fixtures and their uses. Learn how to brighten your winter evenings and create dramatic lighting effects in your garden year-round. You will also have an opportunity to see the lighting effects the Pembers have used throughout their garden in Medina.

**LOCATION: PEMBER GARDEN/MEDINA**

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

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

### **Newer and Lesser Known Ornamentals with Kelly Dodson**

KELLY DODSON, plant explorer and owner of Far Reaches Farm will give a PowerPoint presentation discussing the collection of these gems in the wild and how to use them in your garden. He will also be bringing a selection of ornamental plants for sale.

**LOCATION: ROUNTREE HOME/BELLEVUE**

**FEE: MEMBERS: \$25.00 NON-MEMBERS: \$35.00 LIMIT: 20**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 2, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

### **Growing Dwarf Conifers with Rod Parke**

ROD'S GARDEN has an amazing collection of 250 varieties of dwarf and miniature conifers. He will explain the growing requirements and the differences between these treasures. In addition, Rod will show how his conifer collector's garden was transformed into the overall garden design that also includes 55 types of ferns and some tropicals.

**LOCATION: PARKE GARDEN/NORTHGATE**

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

**THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 3:30 PM – 5:30 PM**

### **Botanical Latin with Daniel Sparler**

HAVE YOU EVER WANTED to have a better grasp on the use of botanical Latin? Join Daniel for a slide lecture on why plants are identified using this nomenclature developed in the 18th century and learn how you can use your knowledge of plant names to enhance your selection and use of plants.

**LOCATION: ROUNTREE HOME/BELLEVUE**

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

*For class reservations e-mail [mwbhort@aol.com](mailto:mwbhort@aol.com)  
or call [karin kravitz 206-780-8172](tel:206-780-8172)*

## **Third Annual Spring Ephemeral Sale**

**FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 9:00 AM TO 6:00 PM**

**NHS HALL, CENTER FOR URBAN HORTICULTURE**

FIFTEEN SPECIALTY GROWERS will be bringing an assortment of spring ephemerals and companion plants.

## ~ 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. Tibet Trip

**FEE:** \$4,395 per person twin share + air fare of approximately \$1,495 + fuel surcharge + tax San Francisco to Chengdu, China, RT, and in-tour flights \$695 per person.

*For a brochure e-mail [mwbhort@aol.com](mailto:mwbhort@aol.com) or  
call [Karin Kravitz 206-780-8172](tel:206-780-8172)*

## ~ 2010 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**

**JANUARY 13, 2010**

### **A Stumpery! What Is It?**

**PAT RIEHL**

**MARCH 10, 2010**

### **Blue Heaven: Poppies from the Roof of the World**

**BILL TERRY**

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

## ~ SPECIAL LECTURE ~

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2010**

### **Twelve Tuscan Gardens—Doug Bayley**

THE TWELVE TUSCAN GARDENS that Doug Bayley, former curator of the Dunn Garden, will discuss illustrate 500 years of Italian garden design covering gardening from the 15th through 20th centuries around Florence, Italy.

*Co-sponsored with the Dunn Garden, the Elisabeth C.  
Miller Botanical Garden, and the Pendleton &  
Elisabeth C. Miller Charitable Foundation*

**LECTURE 7:15 PM RECEPTION 6:45 PM**

**NHS HALL, CENTER FOR URBAN HORTICULTURE**

**FEE: \$10.00**

*To make reservations contact the Dunn Gardens  
Office [info@dumngardens.org](mailto:info@dumngardens.org) 206-362-0933*



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

HANS MANDT

I THINK WE CAN COUNT 2009 a success for NHS. Our lectures series continues to be very well attended, our symposium was sold out, as was a special lecture by Cliff Mass we sponsored jointly with the Dunn Garden in April. Our fall plant sale again did very well, through the efforts of our member volunteers and board members who worked hard to ensure its success. Also our one day spring plant sale in March resonates with the gardening community. Our classes and tours were popular and well attended, including our sold out tour to Australia. We also have a presence on Facebook, thanks to the efforts of Riz Reyes.

In September, Dan Hinkley and Robert Jones graciously hosted a fundraising event for NHS at Windcliff, which included a lecture by renowned plantsman, Roy Lancaster. This event was only possible through the dedication and hard work of Nita-Jo Rountree, Gillian Mathews, and Susan Latter and especially the generosity of Deborah Heg which allowed us to bring Roy and his wife to Seattle from England. Roy then delivered the Miller Lecture several weeks later, which was open to the gardening public.

NHS held two book launch parties this year to raise funds in support of the Miller Library. The first was held in May for Dan Hinkley's new book: *The Explorer's Garden: Shrubs and Vines from the Four Corners of the World* and the second in November for Val Easton's book: *The New Low-Maintenance Garden*. Supporting the Miller Library is one of our primary educational goals, and even though this has been a tough year for funding the library due to budget cuts at the UW, we have been able to donate approximately \$33,000 which can make us all feel good.

I want to thank the four board members who are leaving the board: Greg Graves, who has served as president and chaired the Education Committee; Lee Neff, who has been our recording secretary and a member of the Library Committee; Lois Pendeleton; and Nancy Strahle. We welcome new board members Jane Bray, Ciscoe Morris, Richie Steffen, and Marie Weiler and thank them for their willingness to serve.

NHS will have a booth at the 2010 Northwest Flower & Garden show, February 3-7. If you would like to help with setting up, taking down, and manning the booth during the show, please contact the NHS office.

Our first two lectures will be January 13 and March 10. In January, Pat Reihl will be showing us through her stumpery on Vashon Island, and in March, Bill Terry will give a lecture on Blue Himalayan Poppies and creating a lot of blue envy.

We will again have our Spring Ephemeral and Companion Plant Sale on Friday, March 12 at CUH from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm. This sale features a great group of local growers.

On Saturday, March 20, we will present our 2010 Spring Symposium: *American Garden Design from Dumbarton Oaks to Living Roofs* at Bastyr University. Our four speakers are: Judith Tankard, Craig Bergmann, Bernard Trainor, and Paul Kephart. Check the feature article on pages 1 and 2 and the NHS website [www.northwesthort.org](http://www.northwesthort.org) for complete information. There are only about 200 seats for this event. Last year we sold out, so be sure to book early so you won't be disappointed. 🌱

*Hans Mandt is the president of NHS.*

### EDITOR

Judy Redmond  
[judyredmond@verizon.net](mailto:judyredmond@verizon.net)

### DESIGNERS

Judy Redmond and  
Constance Bollen,  
cb graphics,  
[cbg@speakeasy.net](mailto:cbg@speakeasy.net)

### CONTRIBUTING TO THIS ISSUE:

Janet Endsley  
Karin Kravitz  
Ray Larson  
Hans Mandt  
Gillian Mathews  
Renee Montgelas  
Daniel Mount  
Sylvia Portillo  
Riz Reyes  
Nita-Jo Rountree  
Richie Steffen  
Brian Thompson

### PRINTER

Mike Klinke,  
Impression Printing

## ODDS 'N ENDS

**SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED**—NHS IS PLEASED TO announce that the 2009 Elisabeth Carey Miller Scholarship in Horticulture has been awarded to **Kathryn Murphy**, a graduate student at the UWBG Center for Urban Horticulture. Katie's \$2,000 scholarship will help to support her thesis research, which looks at whether or not urban parking strips in Seattle are suitable sites for vegetable and food gardening or are better used for other types of plantings. She is analyzing soil samples from various sites to study soil composition, compaction, nutrient levels, and the presence of environmental pollution. The goal of her research is to better inform gardeners, homeowners,

and policy makers by providing useful horticultural science as it relates to urban vegetable gardening practices. We look forward to the results of this study.

**FACEBOOK PRESENCE**—DID YOU KNOW THAT NHS is now on Facebook? Board member Riz Reyes started this group which allows NHS to stay in touch with its members and nonmembers alike. NHS events are posted and you can see what your horticultural friends are up to. See [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and type "Northwest Horticultural Society" in the search box. There are over 100 "friends" who have joined. Won't you join us?





*Helleborus x hybridus and Corydalis solida Photo taken in Hans and Tina Mandt's garden.*

**“Winter is in my head, but eternal spring is in my heart.”**

*Victor Hugo, 1802—1885, French poet, playwright, novelist, and essayist*

☼ Telephone: 206-527-1794 ☼ Web: [www.northwesthort.org](http://www.northwesthort.org) ☼ E-mail: [nwhort@aol.com](mailto: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