

GARDEN GAZETTE

February - March 2013

John Christianson, Editor

CHRISTIANSON'S Nursery & Greenhouse

An Enticing Selection of Common and Uncommon Plants . . . Friendly Service . . . Expert Advice

A Life Well Spent

In March of 1984, Toni and I enjoyed a visit to Skagit Valley for the new, annual Tulip Festival. Driving down Best Road we noticed a "Hart's Nursery" sign and, never ones to pass by a nursery without stopping, we pulled into the dirt parking lot. Touring around the Nursery, we admired the plants, but mostly we saw an overwhelming quantity of rhododendrons. Eventually we found our way to the old tractor barn and there we met Hart, The Rhody King, warming himself by the old barrel stove.

Bob Hart was born in 1947, the year after his father, Ranville, had started Hart's Nursery. He was a nursery boy from the start. Bob's early working years at the Nursery also included florist work at his uncle's flower shop, Hart's Floral in Mount Vernon. As a nurseryman, Bob took over the nursery in 1974. His enthusiasm for propagating and growing rhododendrons earned him the moniker of Rhody King. He propagated not only the easily propagated rhododendrons but also the rarest of the genera. Over the years he propagated hundreds of thousands of plants.

The next time we visited Hart's Nursery it had been transformed and Head Gardener was Bob's new title. The King had expanded his domain to include an 11-acre country garden named La Conner Flats. This garden showcased his rhododendrons as well as his collection of other plants, roses, conifers, hollies and his famous vegetable display gardens. In 1989, to our unending benefit and appreciation, he offered to sell us the Nursery. With the added responsibility of La Conner Flats and his desire to become a garden writer and speaker, he wrote to us saying, "I know that I have followed impossible dreams, and made them come true. I feel that you have the good sense to achieve your goals too."

How lucky we were to have pulled off the road back in 1984. The tulips brought us to Skagit Valley and Bob made it possible for us to achieve our dream of owning a Nursery and living and working in one of the most beautiful places in the world.

Bob passed away November 4th, 2012. He accomplished much in his life. He was Skagit County Commissioner 1992 to 2000, President of Washington State Nursery and Landscape Association 1993, President of Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland 2012, and a lifelong teacher of all things horticultural: all while continuing to tend his family's 232 acres of Skagit farmland and maintain La Conner Flats. And, while driving through the Valley, you will see thousands of mature rhododendrons that were started from Bob's small cuttings, plants that reflect the passion of a man whose life was very well spent.

John Christianson



**Robert "Bob"
Ranville Hart**

January 23, 1947 -
November 4, 2012

Flower Buses to the Northwest Flower & Garden Show

It's time for the **Northwest Flower & Garden Show**, to be held in Seattle February 20 - 24. We are happy once again to offer our "Flower Buses" so you can enjoy the show without the stress of driving. Buses leave the Nursery at 8:30 a.m. and return at approximately 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, February 20, 21 and 22. The cost of a combination show ticket and bus ride is \$52. Call the Nursery today (360-466-3821) to reserve your space. The Nursery also has early bird tickets for just the show (\$16 per person, compared with \$20 during the show). While at the show, check out the cool plants we have for sale at Booth 2518.

A Fascination for Hellebores

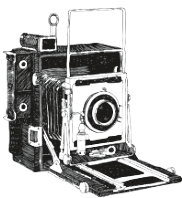
Christianson's Seventh Annual Winter Festival: March 2 – 3

On Saturday, March 2nd at 1 p.m., Guest Speaker **Marianne Binetti** will be presenting "*Hot Hellebores and Other Cool Plants for Early Color.*"

A glorious profusion of the newest hellebores will turn our vintage 1946 greenhouse into a tapestry of jewel tones. Helping us celebrate this winter flower will be noted writer **Marianne Binetti**, author of "Best Garden Plants for Washington and Oregon" and other books, and recognized for her television and radio appearances. Her talk is complimentary, but reservations are required: Call early for your spot! (Reservations: 360-466-3821 or 1-800-585-8200)



Winter Gardens Photography Contest



Keep your camera handy as you go out and about – Christianson's is sponsoring its **Fifth Annual Winter Gardens Photography Contest**. Amateurs and professionals alike are encouraged to submit up to two photographs of previously *unpublished* images of a winter garden scene or a single plant. Entry forms are available at our Garden Store or website, www.christiansonnursery.com. The deadline for entries is Monday, February 25, at 4:30 p.m. All entries will be exhibited in Christianson's Schoolhouse during our Winter Festival, March 2 – 3. Entries will be professionally judged and the winners announced on March 2.

Christianson's Spring Calendar

Point-and-Shoot Garden Photography

Saturday, February 2 11 a.m. – noon
reservations required class fee: \$5

John & Kathy Willson of Whidbey Island return to provide inspiration and demonstrate techniques for using a point-and-shoot camera to create stunning garden photography. The Willsons are award-winning photographers formerly with the Museum of Flight. Five randomly selected attendees will receive a copy of John and Kathy's ebook, "The Point and Shoot Camera, Every Gardener's Best Friend."

Choosing Your Apple Trees

Saturday, February 9 11 a.m. – noon
reservations requested complimentary

This is the time of year when Christianson's has a mouth-watering variety of apple trees available in bare-root form at bargain prices. **John Christianson** will help you understand the differences among varieties: disease resistance, growth habits, pollination, and eating and keeping qualities.

Pruning & Training Young Fruit Trees

Saturday, February 16 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
reservations required class fee: \$5

Young fruit trees can benefit tremendously from pruning in their first year or two in your garden. **Ani Gurnee** of *Aulos Design* will talk about how judicious pruning and training can help your tree grow with more vigor, fruit production and beauty.

Problem Trees in Your Garden?

Saturday, February 16 1 – 2 p.m.
reservations required class fee: \$5

Rescheduled from November: Wind, soggy soils and snow loads can test just how sturdy are your trees. Come hear what a certified consulting arborist has to say about evaluating hazardous trees and how to keep them safe and healthy. **Jim Barborinas** of *Urban Forestry Services* in Mount Vernon will begin his talk in the Schoolhouse, then guide a walking tour around the mature trees outside.

**To make your reservations for classes and events, please visit the Nursery
or call us at 360-466-3821 or 1-800-585-8200**

Christianson's Spring Calendar – continued

Growing Giant Pumpkins

Sunday, February 17 1 – 2 p.m.
reservations required class fee: \$5

Learn from a champion about starting and growing giant pumpkins, then plan to enter our weigh-off this fall during our Skagit Valley Giant Pumpkin Festival! **Phillip Renninger**, our 2011 weigh-off winner, will talk about early season protection, pruning, fertilizing, watering and more. Seeds will be available.

Marianne Binetti: Hot Hellebores

Saturday, March 2 1 p.m.
reservations required complimentary

See preceding page: “A Fascination for Hellebores.”

Cass Turnbull: The Overgrown Garden

Saturday, March 9 11 a.m. – noon
reservations required class fee: \$10

The founder of *Plant Amnesty*, **Cass Turnbull**, brings her hugely popular talk to help those of us with gardens of tangled shrubs and bulging borders. Cass will introduce the concept of a “pruning budget” and describe techniques for three categories of growth habits (canes, mounds and tree-like). She’ll also provide strategies for renovation, in which pruning is but one tool to restore a garden.

Rose Pruning with John Christianson

Sunday, March 10 1 – 2 p.m.
reservations requested complimentary

Your roses can be healthier and more bountiful with pruning. Join **John Christianson** as we learn about pruning different roses – hybrid tea, climbers, groundcover and more. John will start in the Schoolhouse, then take you into the garden for hands-on demonstrations.

Yoga for Gardeners

Saturday, March 16 11 a.m. – noon
reservations required class fee: \$5

Be kind to your body as you get ready to bend, stretch and lift in the garden this spring. Yoga instructor **Ricky Knue** will guide you through introductory movements that can ready you for garden action and attune you to nature. Ricky, a former staffer at Christianson’s, teaches yoga and floral design at Mount Vernon High School, and is a Yoga Alliance Registered teacher. Mats will be provided. Breathe well!

Spring Walk with John Christianson

Sunday, March 17 1 – 2 p.m.
reservations requested complimentary

Flowering trees, viburnums and early rhododendrons will be popping out with fresh colors and scents, so learn and enjoy with **John Christianson** on a walk around our Schoolhouse Garden and the English Garden at La Conner Flats next door.

Following the Spring Walk on March 17, plan to have **Tea at the Granary** at La Conner Flats. This delightful tea features sandwiches, scones, fruit and dessert. Call 425-765-0046 for reservations (\$21.95 per person).

Grafting Tomatoes

Saturday, March 23 11 a.m. – noon
reservations required class fee: \$5

Super Plants? You’ve probably seen grafted tomato plants for sale at Christianson’s and may have tested them yourself to see if the disease resistance and fruit crop is better. Some of the experts in grafted tomatoes are right here at the *Mount Vernon Research Center of Washington State University*. Hear scientist **Carol Miles** discuss this trend and show how to graft vegetables yourself using simple materials.

Landscape Staging for Selling or Living

Sunday, March 24 1 – 2 p.m.
reservations required class fee: \$5

If you’re thinking of putting your home up for sale – or you want to enjoy your own garden more – you’ll want to hear this talk! How can you make a great first impression by boosting your curb appeal? You may have heard about “staging” the interior of homes to help sellers get faster and better offers; learn how to do the same with your outdoor spaces. Our speaker, **Karri Street**, is an Accredited Staging Professional in Bellingham; her garden was featured in the 2011 Whatcom Horticultural Society tour and she was winner of Best Backyard – Whatcom in Bloom 2008.

Veggie Gardens from Scratch, Part 2

Saturday, March 30 11 a.m. – noon
reservations required class fee: \$5

In Part 1 last October, **Ani Gurnee** of *Aulos Design* showed how to turn a patch of weeds into a raised bed for vegetables this spring. What’s the next step? Learn about soil amendments that help your edible garden sustain rapid growth; understand the role of pH levels; get help in deciding between seeds and vegetable starts for various crops. This class is open for all; you needn’t have attended Part 1.

Early Spring Specials

February 1 – 14

Blooming Witch Hazel

our winter favorites

Heather

winter- and spring-flowering plants
20% off

March 2 and 3

Hellebores

hundreds of our favorite
winter-flowering perennial
20% off (2 days only)

March 15 – 31

Camelias

winter and spring flowering beauties –
many in bloom!
20% off

February 15 – 28

Roses

our biggest Rose Sale of the year!
includes antique, English, climbing and
drought-tolerant rugosa roses
20% off

March 1 – 14

Bare Root

the best selection of the year
fruit, flowering and shade trees, berries,
lilacs and hydrangeas
20% off already low bare-root prices

Weekly Radio Broadcast

The Garden Show

Sunday Mornings

With John & Mike

AM 660 KAPS • 9:30 am

Stay in Touch

Website: www.christiansonsnursery.com

Garden Notes: Our monthly emailed newsletter (sign up on our website)

Facebook: Look for the Facebook icon on our website

CLASSES & EVENTS

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Point-and-Shoot Garden Photography 11 a.m.

Saturday, February 9

Choosing Your Apple Trees 11 a.m.

Saturday, February 16

Pruning & Training Young Fruit Trees 11 a.m.

Problem Trees in Your Garden? 1 p.m.

Sunday, February 17

Growing Giant Pumpkins 1 p.m.

Saturday, March 2

Marianne Binetti: Hot Hellebores 1 p.m.

Saturday, March 9

Cass Turnbull: The Overgrown Garden 11 a.m.

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Rose Pruning with John Christianson 1 p.m.

Saturday, March 16

Yoga for Gardeners 11 a.m.

Sunday, March 17

Spring Walk with John Christianson 1 p.m.

(followed by optional Tea at the Granary)

Saturday, March 23

Grafting Tomatoes 11 a.m.

Sunday, March 24

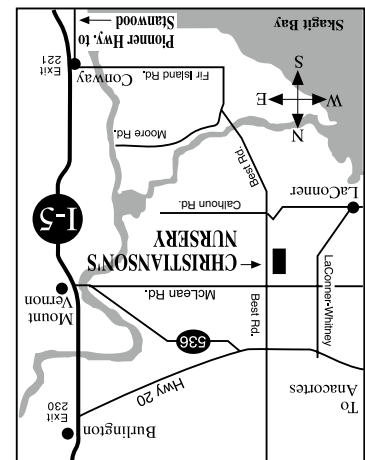
Landscape Staging for Selling or Living 1 p.m.

Saturday, March 30

Veggie Gardens from Scratch, Part 2 11 a.m.

Winter Hours
Daily 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Spring Hours beginning March 1
Daily 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
(Open Easter Sunday)

From Bellingham: Take Exit 230. Go 5 miles west on Hwy. 20 to Best Road. Turn south, go 2 miles on Best Road.
From Everett: Take Exit 221. Go 8.5 miles west on Fir Island Road to Best Road. Go 1 mile north on Best Road past Chillyberg/Calhoun Road.



360-466-3821 • 1-800-585-8200

CHRISTIANSON'S
Nursery & Greenhouse
15806 Best Road • Mount Vernon, WA 98273
www.christiansonsnursery.com

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