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# GARDEN GAZETTE

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November - December 2010

John Christianson, Editor

## CHRISTIANSON'S Nursery & Greenhouse

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

### *A Winter Adventure*



We awoke this morning to a spectacular day with mist in the valley, frost on the ground and beautiful sunshine. Last year on just such a day I bundled our then eighteen-month-old granddaughter Maeve into her cozy jacket, hat and mittens, and we went on an adventure to find tiny seed cones from alder trees in her back yard. Our daughter Allyson had just had Maeve's baby sister Nora a few months before and I was at their home to help Allyson and hopefully make memories for Maeve. She was just starting to talk but had a very good understanding of language, and so I showed her a large fir cone and explained that we were looking for very tiny cones . . . not big cones. We trudged around their five wooded acres and looked everywhere for tiny cones. I was certain we would find them toward the back of their woods where all the alders grew but there were none to be found. Very odd. Our lovely summer must have been stressful for alder trees? All the while I talked about the beauty of the day, our frosted breath, the crunchiness of frozen puddles and the wonder of the wooded landscape with the glistening leaves and branches in the under story plants near the edge of the woods. As we were walking back without a single cone in our paper bag Maeve bent over to pick up a small dark cone and offered it to me along with the word "tiny." She could tell I was surprised when I hastily looked for more down by our feet. How odd that only one was to be found! She then bent over and picked up another one. Before she was done my hands were full of tinys (as she called them) and it occurred to me that I had left my glasses in my pocket. With my reading glasses on I could see hundreds of cones and wondered what she must have thought as we walked along and I occasionally commented "no little cones, where are the tiny cones?" I knew she realized how happy I was that she had found them as she was dancing and hopping around in the sunshine so very excited to help, or so I thought, as she gingerly placed one cone at a time in the bag. It was not until I bent over to look closer that I was shocked to see what must have been thousands of teeming, small black spiders running in circles all over the soft forest floor. Instead of dancing for joy she was trying to avoid stepping on curious little spiders or picking them up and putting them in the bag along with the cones. The spiders seemed so distressed and reminded me of ants protecting an assaulted ant hill. As we hastily ran away leaving many tinys on the ground I was frantically brushing and shaking both of us as we stumbled out of the woods and into a clearing. I checked us over for any stowaways before we went into her house with our treasure. Those cones are now in a bowl with other items from nature that elicit fond memories. There are feathers from gardens and parks in England and France, dried flower petals from fresh flower arrangements, chestnuts from a lovely day at Volunteer Park in Seattle, and cones, lichens and seed pods from camping and travels in Washington, Oregon and Canada. My favorites will always be the tinys. They bring back memories of a very special walk with a new little being who is finding her way through this life. At two years old her language is developing with amazing speed and her vocabulary is enormous but I think the two of us will always call pine cones "tinys." She used the word while camping this summer and I did not correct her. I am happy to call them tinys. We still call a hose nozzle a snizzle even though it was at least twelve years ago when our now fourteen-year-old daughter Emma insisted on calling them snizzles. Many years later everyone in our family knows what a snizzle is and they will undoubtedly know what a tiny is as time goes by. However after rereading what I just wrote about Maeve's little adventure I am wondering if I don't need stronger reading glasses and that she might always call big black ants little black spiders. Surely that is one misunderstanding we will need to correct.

Toni Christianson

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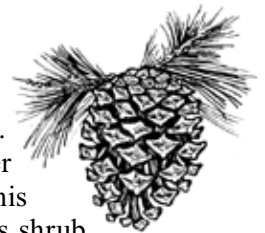
## *Primrose for the Holidays*



As always Linda and I have had a wonderful time shopping for antiques and fancy goods for the holidays. As good friends for over forty years there is no tip-toeing around each other's feelings as we decide what to purchase for our gift shop. We agree right away on most items and do not purchase if one of us is hesitant. Our favorites for this holiday season include placemats and recipe folders by Cake. The placemats come on a placemat sized paper tablet. These disposable, biodegradable placemats made from recycled paper are torn out of the tablet and placed on the table for use. One style of tablet has a plate and flatware set out just as our mothers taught us to set the table – fork on the left of the plate, knife with spoon next to it on the right and the plate in the center of the placemat. This could be a subtle way to teach our children and/or husbands how to properly set a table. There are other tablets with more sophisticated images and all would be fun to give or receive as a gift. We also have our array of fabulous recipe books and some of our favorite olive oils, pickled raisins, figs and plums, along with uncommon pastas that make fun hostess gifts. Our new greeting card line from Caskata has a very high quality, beautiful look with botanical images wrapping around to the back of the card. Musical choices will include last year's favorite 'Music in the Heart' by Bob Dylan along with other new holiday CDs. As always our shop will be decorated from floor to ceiling with nature's wonders capturing the spirit of the holidays to help inspire you to find your own special decorating style. We also have recently purchased antiques to add personality to your home and garden as well as vintage one-of-a-kind gifts for family and friends who prefer the unusual. As before, *Primrose for the Holidays* will be ready for **Arts Alive** weekend and we hope to see you then.

## *Architectural Wonders*

While the winter landscape may often lack interest and appear bleak there are certain trees and shrubs whose contorted forms, dwarf habit or definitive bark make them noteworthy in an otherwise silent garden. The first to come to mind is **Corylus avellana** 'Contorta' or Harry Lauder's Walking Stick named after the famed Scottish singer and comedian whose crooked walking stick served as a prop to complete his Celtic attire. This European filbert cultivar was discovered in the mid 1800's. One takes notice of this shrub once it has shed its leaves in the fall spotlighting twisted, spiraling branches and twigs. Growing up to 10' in the landscape, *Corylus* can be grown in a container and serve as backdrop for seasonal annuals. **Sciadopitys verticillata** is better recognized by its common name Umbrella pine. It is thought that it was named by the famous American historian Francis Parkman in the mid-1800's. An avid gardener he was the first to grow the Umbrella pine outside of Japan. One might claim that Umbrella pine is a misnomer since it is not really a pine at all but a slow-growing coniferous evergreen relic predating the age of dinosaurs. This slow-growing pine rarely exceeds 35' adding only 6" of growth annually. The Umbrella pine is easily recognized by its unbranched cinnamon trunk and showy topknot consisting of a whorl of stiff, plastic-like evergreen needles at the ends of each shoot that radiate out resembling the spokes of a Japanese umbrella. **Cupressus arizonica** is another specimen that stands out in the landscape with its bluish-gray needles and glaucous one-inch cones which remain on the branches for several years. Of particular note is its attractive shreddy bark that peels in long strips to expose gray and reddish brown patches. *Cupressus* grows straight and upright up to 60' with a conical crown and branches low to the ground. Another favorite is **Acer griseum** 'Paper Bark Maple.' This is a beautiful small tree recognized for its year-round color and textural interest. It has an excellent form in the landscape and can be grown as a single or multi-trunk specimen. Its name is derived from its curling, cinnamon-colored bark that peels off in thin, papery pieces much like the river birch. The bark begins to peel when the trees are quite young. Birds love these trees, attracted to the trunks and with trepidation perch themselves on the peeled back bark. **Cryptomeria japonica** 'Cristata' was introduced in this country in 1901 by the renowned Yokohama Nursery. The cockscomb Japanese Cedar or Crested Cedar is a highly ornamental conifer that may attain a height of 14' in ten years. It presents a slender pyramidal shape in the landscape with green needles and reddish peeling bark. Its most notable characteristic is the flat cockscombs found all over the plant. For a gardener seeking a tree that is sure to attract attention Crested cedar is the perfect candidate. **Malus 'Weepcenzam'** or Weeping Candied Apple is another excellent choice if you are looking for an ornamental tree whose spring time pink blooms give way to cherry-sized fruit on pendulous branches. Its serpentine, twisting trunk adds interest to the winter landscape and birds will enjoy its persistent fruit. Finally, don't overlook **Abies koreana** 'Silberlocke' Korean Fir. This showy evergreen conifer reaches only 8' in ten years. This small, pyramidal tree has needles that are recurved displaying the silver-white undersides. It is this characteristic that gives it a gleaming color and unusual texture. Of particular interest are the abundant cones that display a dark purple-blue coloring before they mature.



– Joanne Romann

## *Arts Alive 2010*



Christianson's Nursery will once again celebrate *Arts Alive* during its *Holiday Open House* Friday, Saturday & Sunday November 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>

### **This year's activities include:**

**Original Tile Paintings** by **Jack & AJ Ferrell** – Friday, Saturday & Sunday, 11 am – 4 pm – Artist Demonstration daily 1 – 3 pm

Artist **Bobbie Samples** – **Exhibiting and Demonstrating Water Color Techniques** Saturday 10 am – 1 pm & Sunday 2 – 4 pm

**Northwest Fine artist, Jack Dorsey**, exhibiting Saturday & Sunday from noon to 4 pm

**Food Sampler** featuring local organic cheeses by **Samish Bay Cheese** in Bow, olive oil by **Verde Specialty Foods** in Bellingham and **Boat Street Pickles** made in Seattle – November 6, 11 am – 2 pm

**Photography Slide show:** “*The Traveling Garden Photographer: Focus on Holland and Belgium*” with **John & Kathy Willson** – Saturday 11:00 am

**Apple Cider Demonstration** by **John Christianson** on Antique Press – November 6, 11 am – 2 pm. Stop by to sample fresh apple cider and our traditional molasses cookies!

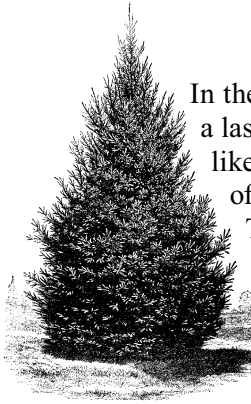
## *In Bloom at the Nursery—*

Bergenia cordifolia ‘Winterglut’; Camellia sasanqua; Chimonanthus praecox (Wintersweet); Cyclamen hederifolium (hardy cyclamen); Daphne odora and Daphne ‘Summer Ice’; Erica carnea and Erica x darleyensis; Erysimum ‘Bowles Mauve’; Euphorbia ‘Rudolph’; Garrya elliptica; Hamamelis mollis (Witchhazel); Jasminum nudiflorum (Winter Jasmine); Lonicera fragrantissima (Winter Honeysuckle); Mahonia media ‘Charity’ and M. eurybractea ‘Soft Caress’; Sarcococca; and Viburnum tinus.



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## Living Christmas Trees



In the mid-eighties many families began adopting the tradition of investing in *living Christmas trees* to have a lasting reminder of the holiday. As this tradition has grown over the years, the varieties of living trees have likewise expanded and Christianson's offers an excellent selection of conifers destined to be the focal point of your Yuletide season. In mid-November trucks arrive at the Nursery carrying an assortment of firs: Turkish, Grand, Cork Bark, Nordman and Noble along with Serbian and Colorado Blue Spruce. Austrian and Scotch Pines help round out this selection of fragrant conifers that for a brief period bring the forest home. To care for your living Christmas tree do not leave indoors longer than 10 days. Keep them away from heating vents, fireplaces and stoves to prevent them from breaking dormancy and be sure not to let them dry out. With a little effort you can make a memory last long after the holidays have past. Enjoy!

## Christianson's Winter Calendar



### Tablescaping

Saturday, November 13 11:00 am  
\$5 reservations required

**Carla Freund**, from *Egg & Dart* in La Conner, will present this program on tablescaping providing you with innovative ideas for creating festive vignettes for your tabletops. Her main focus will be on centerpieces which feature natural elements including fruits, berries and pods to create seasonal designs suitable for your mantel, sideboard or dining table. Just in time for the holidays plan to attend and learn imaginative yet inexpensive ways to make your home a holiday showpiece.

### Conifer Tour

Saturday, November 13 1:00 pm  
complimentary

This is the third in the series of fall garden tours hosted by **John Christianson**. Conifers show off their vibrant greens and yellows and display their varied cones that decorate their branches. Walk with John as he leads you through the Nursery and then to La Conner Flats to highlight the wonderful array of conifers that define this 11-acre English garden. Following the walk Margie Hart will offer tea and other delights (\$12 per person) at the Granary. Call 466-3190 to make your reservation. Sign up early as the tea always fills up fast!

### The Art of Making Floorcloths

Saturday, November 20 11:30 am – 3:30 pm  
\$40 (Includes all materials) reservations required

Artist **Debbie Pigman** returns to Christianson's to teach how to make canvas floorcloths, an age-old art that can be traced back to the 1400's in France. Later in the 1700's floorcloths became popular in the American colonies where they were created using recycled ships' sails. Join us for the exciting class that makes use of freehand, stamping and stenciling techniques to create a one-of-a-kind motif. Participants are encouraged to bring in designs and additional stencils

or rubber stamps to complete their project. Class size is limited so register early.

### Independent Wreath Making

November 26 – December 24 reservations required

Our South Greenhouse will once again be the venue for wreath making beginning the Friday after Thanksgiving. Two wreath-making machines will be available for use daily from 9 am to 4:30 pm. Wire rings and greenery (yew, bay laurel, juniper, umbrella pine and Boulevard cypress) are available for purchase, or you may bring your own. Invite your garden club or bring a friend to enjoy a creative morning or afternoon fashioning your wreath reflecting traditional or contemporary styles.

### Arrival of Father Christmas

Saturday, November 27 10:00 am – 3:00 pm



**Father Christmas** anxiously awaits your arrival and will be in his bright red sleigh nestled among the trees in our South Greenhouse. He is excited to greet children of all ages and listen to their Christmas Wishes. Come in your holiday finest and have your picture taken by photographer Barb Roberson who will capture this memorable occasion. Don't keep Santa waiting!

### Holiday Wreath Making

Saturday, November 27 11:00 – 3:00 pm  
\$5 (cost of wreath form) reservations required

Traditionally the Saturday following Thanksgiving is the start of our wreath-making classes and once again we are fortunate to have **Karen Harper** return to demonstrate the construction of holiday wreaths. From mastery of the wreath machine to selection of greenery and composition you will receive all the fundamentals to create your one-of-a-kind wreath. Bring your own greens or select from our wide array of specialty boughs (sold by the pound).

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## Christianson's Winter Calendar – continued

### *Fifteenth Annual Holiday Tea*

Saturday, November 27 1:00 – 5:00 pm  
complimentary reservations required

For a over a decade **John and Toni Christianson** have hosted this Holiday Tea to show appreciation to their customers and officially usher in the holiday season. The 1888 Schoolhouse is the perfect setting for this gathering with a forest theme, candlelight and music performed by autoharpist Bob Harper and violinist Dennis Burkhardt. Enjoy tea sandwiches and assorted delicacies accompanied by tea and coffee and apple cider. Take part in what has become a Valley tradition by making your reservation today. **Donations will be collected to benefit the La Conner Boys and Girls Club. Your contributions over the years have helped keep this program viable.**

### *Wreath Magic!*

Thursday, December 2 10:00am – 2:00 pm  
\$5 (cost of wire form) reservations required

Bring your friends and enjoy this new mid-week addition to our wreath making classes. **Karen Harper** will instruct you on the basics of wreath making and assist you in creating this traditional holiday decoration to welcome both family and friends.

### *Holiday Appetizers*

Saturday, December 4 11:00 am  
\$5 reservations required

It's that time of year when both home and office parties often tax our repertoire of appetizers. We are excited to have well-known author **Mary Ellen Carter** from *Verde Foods* visit the Nursery to delight you with her twist on savory hors d'oeuvres. Recently back from her trip to Vietnam, Mary Ellen will share her culinary experiences and merge East with West in preparing exciting appetizers for the holidays ahead.

### *Holiday Plants*

#### *for Decorating and Gift-Giving*

Sunday, December 12 1:00 pm  
\$5 reservations required

Designer **Andrew Pickens** will be your host for this informative look at plants suitable for gifting to provide that gardener or special friend months or even years of pleasure. In addition to their role in fulfilling holiday wish lists, plants play a major role in decorating for Christmas. Paper white narcissus, amaryllis, cyclamen, kalanchoe

and the ever-popular poinsettia are just a few of plants that will adorn people's mantels and sideboards throughout the season. Learn how to decorate with these as well as other non-traditional plants that will add a new twist to your holiday decorating.

### *Digital Point and Shoot Cameras:*

#### *A Gardener's Best Friend*

Saturday, January 15 11:00 am  
\$5 reservations required

There was a time when nothing was as important to a gardener as his record keeping journal. From seed starting information to garden layouts and growth cycles everything was meticulously recorded. But times have changed and now digital point and shoot cameras have become this century's "journal." **Kathy and John Willson**, former award-winning photographers with the *Museum of Flight*, will give practical instructions on how to make your camera your newest garden tool to capture the stunning color and design of gardens and plantings.

### *Chocolate, Chocolate, Chocolate!*

Saturday, January 22 11:00 am  
\$5 reservations required

Blueberry and dark chocolate truffles? Rich chocolates infused with herbs? Silky, dark chocolate ganache laced with lemon zest and thyme? For anyone who has ever wanted to make their own confections but hesitated to try let **Robyn Graves**, owner of *Cascade Candy Company* in La Conner, demonstrate the basic steps of making truffles and share recipes that will appeal to chocolate lovers and herb growers alike. Valentine's Day is not that far away so register now for this *tasty* and informative program on the art of making truffles.

### *Why Buy Bareroot?*

Saturday, January 29 11:00 am  
complimentary

January has arrived and this is the time to begin thinking about bareroot fruit trees and ornamental shrubs. **John Christianson** will walk you through the many advantages of buying bareroot (cost savings, ease of planting and faster root growth among others) and answer all your questions about the varieties that are arriving daily. Sign up today for this free class!

# November - January Specials

November 1 - 30

### Roses

end of season sale  
hundreds of bushes from which to choose  
50% off

November 1 - 14

### Ground Covers

cotoneaster, kinnickinnick, ivy, juniper,  
vinca, pachysandra, salal and euonymous  
4" and 1 gallon sizes  
25% off

November 15 - 30

### Camellias

winter and spring flowering  
camellias in bud or bloom  
1 gallon to 5 gallon sizes  
20% off

December 1 - 31

### Christmas Holly

traditional English Holly  
plus many rare and uncommon varieties  
1 gallon to 6' sizes  
20% off

January 1 - 31

### House / Conservatory Plants

tropical plants for home or greenhouse  
(free repotting with plant and pot purchase)  
25% off

Through January 9

### Pre-Order Rose Special

order your selection of roses and receive a  
prepay discount of 25%  
pick up by March 1



NORTHWEST  
**FLOWER & GARDEN**  
SHOW

Plan to visit our display garden  
February 23-27, 2011

# CLASSES & EVENTS

### Open House & Arts Alive

November 5, 6 & 7

### Tablescaping

November 13 11:00 am

### Conifer Tour & Tea at the Granary

November 13 1:00 pm

### The Art of Making Floorcloths

November 20 11:30 am - 3:30 pm

### Arrival of Father Christmas

November 27 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

### Holiday Wreath Making

November 27 11:00 am - 3:00 pm

### Fifteenth Annual Holiday Tea

November 27 1:00 - 5:00 pm

### Wreath Magic

December 2 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

### Holiday Appetizers

December 4 11:00 am

### Holiday Plants for Decorating & Giving

December 12 1:00 pm

### Digital Cameras - A Gardener's Best Friend

January 15 11:00 am

### Chocolate, Chocolate, Chocolate!

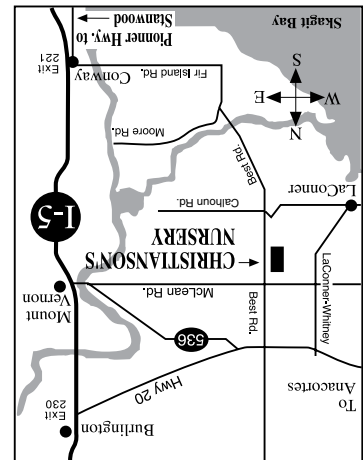
January 22 11:00 am

### Why Buy Bareroot?

January 29 11:00 am

Weekly Radio Broadcast  
**The Garden Show**  
Sunday Mornings  
With John & Mike  
AM 660 KAPS • 9:30 am

From Bellingham: Take exit #230, 5 miles West on Hwy 20 to Best Road, 2 miles South on Best Road. From Everett: Take exit #221, 8.5 miles West on Fir Island Road to Best Road, 1 mile North on Best Road past Chilberg/Cathoun Road.



360-466-3821 • 1-800-585-8200

Winter Hours  
Beginning November 7  
Daily 9:00 to 5:00 pm

**CHRISTIANSON'S**  
Nursery & Greenhouse  
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