

# GARDEN GAZETTE

June - August 2011

John Christianson, *Editor*

## CHRISTIANSON'S Nursery & Greenhouse

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

### *Working Together*

As I sit down to write this, John and I have just come in from our garden. It is so energizing to have his help. He has many good ideas and chores are done so much faster than when I work alone. He can prune, dig, fertilize and collect dead smelly things faster than anyone else I know. Collecting dead smelly things makes up for the fact he does not weed because smelly things are a big issue for me. I cannot stand bad smells and dead things really gross me out. He has a much more practical approach than I in ridding the garden of any unsavory deposits. He gets rid of it as fast as he can. He grabs it with his bare hands (yuck!) and away it goes over the bank, into the garbage can or into a burial site. I, on the other hand, tiptoe way around any bad smell in the garden for days until I finally decide it has to go. Then I need to find the right kind of gloves, preferably gauntlet leather, a thick plastic bag or two, a shovel or a trowel depending on the size of the smell, and I need a garbage can right by my side. I then tie my hair back and plug my nose. I slowly creep up on the offending smell because whatever it is, if I move too quickly the sudden sight of it will make me shudder and scream and then I might lose the lock on my nose. So, given my extreme aversion to such things, today I asked John to find whatever had died on our back porch. I had noticed the smell for a few weeks and it was only getting worse. After going into the house to supervise through the kitchen window so I would not have to see the offending smell, John looked into and under things on the porch until he found the cause. He smiled at me as he held up two rotten Easter eggs. I am not certain whether they went over the bank or into the garbage. But I am certain I will take this skill over weeding any day.

- Toni Christianson

### *Gardens of Note*

Sunday, June 26, 2011 10 am to 5 pm

Tour seven Anacortes town and country gardens and listen to live music. Enjoy sweeping views of the San Juan Islands as you drive around Fidalgo Island. Bring a picnic lunch or eat in one of Anacortes' restaurants. Tickets are \$25 and are available online from [www.brownpapertickets.com/event/167844](http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/167844) or from the Skagit Symphony's website [www.SkagitSymphony.com](http://www.SkagitSymphony.com). A limited number of tickets will be available at the start of the tour at *How It Works*, 1014 - 4th Street in Anacortes. This event is a fundraiser for the Symphony. For further information call 360-848-9336.

# *Eighth Annual Rose Festival - A Rosy Day Out*

Saturday, June 18, 2011 9 am – 6 pm

## **Keynote Speaker: Ciscoe Morris**

9 am – 6 pm: Tour of Schoolhouse Rose Garden

10 am – 5 pm: **Tri-Valley Rose Society** Rose Display

10 am – 1 pm: **Tri-Valley Rose Society** Plant Clinic

1 pm – 2 pm: ‘Growing Great Roses’ with **Robyn Sweeney** and **Larry Sawyer**

2:30: ‘Roses and Rose Companions’ with **Ciscoe Morris**

*followed by a Rose Ice Cream Social in the Schoolhouse Garden*

## *Calling All Rosarians...*

As part of Christianson’s Annual Rose Festival, the Tri-Valley Rose Society is once again hosting its Rose Display in our Schoolhouse and is extending an invitation to amateurs and experts alike to submit their roses to be voted on in the following categories: (1) Best in Show, (2) Best Fragrant Rose and (3) Best Floral Display incorporating perennials with roses. Ciscoe Morris will announce the winners in the afternoon and gift certificates will be awarded. Entries must be submitted between 8:00 am - 9:45 am on the day of the festival, June 18. For more information, please call 466-3821.

## *Pumpkin Festival - October 1 and 2*

Don't forget! Our Giant Pumpkin party coincides with the Skagit Festival of Family Farms weekend and should be great fun for all. Remember, the pumpkin grower with the largest pumpkin wins \$500.00. We will also have cider pressing, food vendors, music, and possibly even dancing. We know it is hard to think of fall with summer still just around the corner but it will be here before we know it. More details to follow in the September/October Garden Gazette and in our new e-newsletter, Garden Notes. You can sign up for Garden Notes in our Garden Store or on our new website set to launch in mid-June.

## *The Potted Herb: Elegant and Edible*

Growing your own culinary herbs rewards you with plants whose leaves enhance every type of cuisine. The Bay tree (*Laurus nobilis*) is ideal for classical urns flanking an entryway. Its leaves that combine scents of balsam, clove and mint are an integral part of a Bouquet garni adding a rich aroma to long-simmering dishes. Rosemary is an excellent choice for a tabletop herb. Two upright selections include 'Blue Spire' and 'Tuscan Blue,' the latter considered hands down the best rosemary to use in cooking, enriching stews and hearty peasant breads. 'Prostratus' and 'Irene' are trailing varieties that can be trained around a wire to produce a spiral or circular form. Both are good choices for spilling over a pot with an herb such as Lemongrass as a backdrop. Add to the container chives, a hot pepper and an exotic basil and you have the makings for fresh Thai dishes. Another herb to consider for a container is Lavender. While associated with perfuming bath salts and sachets, lavender has made its way into the kitchen. English lavender is the most commonly used culinary lavender. One of the choice varieties is 'Melissa,' admired for its pink flowers. The French Lavender 'Provence' is sweet-tasting lavender that doesn't contain the strong camphor smell that other French lavenders do. Other herbs that are suited to containers and will perform well in the kitchen include 'Boxwood' basil with its natural mounding habit of small aromatic leaves, variegated 'Greek basil' that forms a dense upright pillar and 'African Blue' basil with its clove-like scent that is indispensable for its color and fragrance. And finally, don't forget the scented geraniums. Lemon-scented geraniums can be easily fashioned into standards. This summer use its leaves to flavor a pound cake or your homemade ice cream. Bon appétit!

- Joanne Romann

## *Events in June*

**Christianson's Eighth Annual Rose Festival**, Saturday, June 18, from 9 am - 6 pm

**Happy Father's Day!** Sunday, June 19

**Skagit Artists Together Studio Tour: Preview Show at Christianson's Schoolhouse**

Opening Reception: Friday, June 24, 3 pm - 6 pm

Open Art Show: Saturday, June 25, 10 am - 6 pm

Sunday, June 26, 10 am - 4:30 pm

**Gardens of Note** in Anacortes, Sunday, June 26, from 10 am to 5 pm

# *Christianson's Summer Calendar*

## *Invincible Vines*

Saturday, June 4      11 am - noon  
reservations required      class fee: \$5

Join **Sally Isaiou** from *T&L Nursery* in Woodinville as she showcases a wide array of flowering vines, focusing on shade-loving akebias, fragrant lonicera and clematis, dramatic climbing hydrangeas, and vines that attract hummingbirds.

## *Nursery Walk with Ani Gurnee*

Saturday, June 11      11 am - noon  
complimentary but reservations required      class limit: 20

**Ani Gurnee** from *Aulos Design* will lead you on a tour of our greenhouses, gardens and nursery grounds, answering any questions you may have about the selection and care of perennials, annuals, grasses, trees, shrubs, and any other plant you are interested in learning more about. Ani will provide design tips, offer new insights, and spark your imagination during this informative and interactive walking tour through the nursery.

## *Hypertufa*

Saturday, July 9      10 am to 12:30 pm  
reservations required      class fee: \$35

Local landscape designer and garden artist, **Kathy Hirdler** of *Floribunda Designs*, returns to Christianson's to share her knowledge of making hypertufa containers and ornamentation for your garden. Make a traditional hypertufa trough to take home for planting with alpines or sedums, while learning all about hypertufa and other cement-based materials. Planters, water basins, stepping stones, leaves and sculptural pieces can all be made using the techniques Kathy will be presenting. All materials and supplies are provided but students should wear gardening/work clothes or a sturdy apron, and bring a trowel.

## *Using & Preserving Herbs with Suzanne Butler*

Saturday, July 16      11 am to noon  
reservations required      class fee: \$5

Awaken your senses as you look at, smell, and taste a variety of fresh seasonal herbs. **Suzanne Butler**, *Graham Kerr's Cooking Assistant since 1993, former Manager of the Mount Vernon Farmer's Market, and a Chef Instructor*, will lead you through this engaging and interactive session as she reviews the variety of ways to preserve herbs for the winter and demonstrates how to use both fresh and dried herbs in recipes.

## *It's Blueberry Time*

Saturday, July 30      11 am to noon  
reservations required      class fee: \$5

**Matt Groff**, a longtime blueberry farmer and Christianson's staff member, will share his years of experience raising blueberries in Skagit Valley. Matt will review which varieties are best suited for this region and answer all your questions about how to grow great blueberries.

## *Growing Winter Vegetables with Bill Thorness*

Saturday, August 6      11 am to noon  
reservations required      class fee: \$5

Want to serve your own salad on Thanksgiving, Swiss chard at the winter solstice, collards for Christmas, and purple sprouting broccoli for Valentine's Day? You can do it if you start your fall and winter garden now. This class will talk about winter gardening techniques, succession planting, soil building and the right timing to grow food throughout the year. Instructor **Bill Thorness**, author of '*Edible Heirlooms: Heritage Vegetables for the Maritime Garden*', has been growing food in his Seattle garden for more than two decades.



## *Hypertufa*

Saturday, August 27      10 am to 12:30 pm  
reservations required      class fee: \$35

Local landscape designer and garden artist, **Kathy Hirdler** of *Floribunda Designs*, returns to Christianson's to share her knowledge of making hypertufa containers and ornamentation for your garden. Make a traditional hypertufa trough to take home for planting with alpines or sedums, while learning all about hypertufa and other cement-based materials. Planters, water basins, stepping stones, leaves and sculptural pieces can all be made using the techniques Kathy will be presenting. All materials and supplies are provided but students should wear gardening/work clothes or a sturdy apron, and bring a trowel.

## *Stay in Touch with Garden Notes*

We have a new addition to our family ~ Garden Notes! This online monthly newsletter is a fun and paperless way to receive seasonal information, intriguing tidbits, and reminders of our upcoming classes and events. To sign up for Garden Notes, you can visit our Garden Store or go to our new website (set to launch in mid-June).

