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# GARDEN GAZETTE

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November - January 2012

John Christianson, *Editor*

## CHRISTIANSON'S Nursery & Greenhouse

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

### *Holiday Traditions*



And so it comes down to the humble pumpkin pie versus a warm spicy gingerbread cake topped with caramelized pears and homemade pumpkin ice cream. Every year, about this time, I start to think of making a change in our time-honored Thanksgiving and Christmas menus. I pull my thick file of recipe clippings from the cupboard and look for just the one that may be a hit with our family not only for this holiday season but for years to come. Usually our menu rarely varies, which is part of its appeal, but sometimes I am ready to shake it up a bit. I would never trifle with our turkey stuffing or mashed potato recipes and, truth be told, only two changes have ever upended a classic family favorite. One is a sweet potato and apple casserole with bourbon that has replaced the sweet potato with miniature marshmallows dish we loved for so many years and the other is a Christmas roast to replace our traditional Christmas turkey. We decided turkey for Thanksgiving and Christmas was a bit much and, although we love turkey and the succession of hot and cold turkey sandwiches plus having the turkey noodle soup with biscuits and honey, so delicious on cold winter nights; we could also do the same with a large roast..sandwiches for lunch and beef barley soup, also delicious on cold winter nights. A third change is not really a change but a reappearance on our long established holiday menu lists. We had stopped serving Christmas pudding after my Mother passed away because no one would eat it except me but now we serve it again since all five of our grandchildren love it. And I mean love it. At first I thought it was the presentation as we turn out all the lights, have only soft candlelight and sing a rousing rendition of 'We Wish You a Merry Christmas' as the flaming pudding, embellished with holly sprigs is carried to the table. In fact, because of the song, the kids call it a 'figgy pudding' which it actually is, because, depending on where you live in the British Isles it is called Christmas pudding, figgy pudding or plum pudding, even though most recipes have neither figs nor plums. I could not imagine why a whole generation of my fifteen cousins did not like the pudding but next generations did. I thought it was the addition of flames and melody, but even as I tried to put aside the leftovers for my own enjoyment (something my Mom and I always did since no one else liked it) I discovered it was not just the flames or the song. Our five year old grandson Ian would ask for it every time he walked through the front door until I served him the second to the last portion one cold January morning and he asked if he could take the very last serving home because he was worried someone else would eat it. He then sadly declared his disappointment that there would be no more figgy pudding until next Christmas. Well next Christmas is almost here and since we have Christmas dessert covered I have decided to try this new Thanksgiving dessert in hopes it will be just as popular. The recipe comes from a 2005 Country Living Magazine along with the declaration 'no one will miss the pumpkin pie - guaranteed'. Warm gingerbread cake with caramelized pears and homemade pumpkin ice cream just seems so much more festive and glamorous than the unassuming, old favorite, pumpkin pie. I might guess the ice cream will not be homemade and I think in the best interest of family harmony we will have a backup pumpkin pie just in case. May not be good to go cold turkey with a favorite dessert. Our family traditions run deep.

Toni Christianson

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## *Dance of the Snowflakes*



Gather your friends and ring in the Holidays with a special visit to our gift shop where you will find many wonderful ideas for entertaining, gift giving and decorating during this magical season. Our team of buyers, display artists and florists will stage a sublime Winter Wonderland and Audrey will be dressed in her finest winter frock as we hope to inspire your creativity and jump start your enthusiasm for the celebrations of Winter.

For those of us looking for the ultimate in girly gifts for our mothers, daughters, sisters and granddaughters we are carrying gifts from Lisbeth, a recently discovered designer from Denmark. She designs everything from jewelry, holiday ornaments, scarves and gloves to picture frames and frilly, feminine umbrellas. We also found a perfume that has different blends of real flower fragrances. These perfumes come in interesting blends of pure botanicals and would be welcomed by many devoted gardeners. The scents are also carried in candles, soaps, lotions and solid perfumes. For a simple and timeless gift for a daughter or granddaughter we have vintage inspired initial charm necklaces, a gift for the ages.

Our selection of books for holiday gift giving will again be a wonderful array of coffee table books, recipe books, gardening books and, as always, our children's books that combine classics along with new award winners. If you are still looking for that perfect gift, remember that gift certificates and plants from the nursery are always a delightful gift for everyone on your holiday list.



## *Feeding the Birds*



Two or three years ago, during a prolonged cold spell and with 22 inches of snow on the ground, for the first time in my 60 years I wondered if I ought to put out seed for the birds. When it was again possible to get into town, I made acquaintance with the 'Skagit Wild Bird Supply' store on Memorial Highway west of Mount Vernon and bought a feeder and a bag of birdseed. In no time at all a lively coterie of finches and sparrows, chickadees, grosbeaks, flickers, and others made the giant elderberry just outside my window their hangout, taking their turns darting to the feeder. Here, on the other side of the window-glass, a foot from my face as I sat at the desk working, suddenly I was intimately privy to the interactions of a hundred little beings that had obviously been a part of the neighborhood all along but of whom I had

known almost nothing. Never had I imagined having such a vantage point on their daily lives. From having been a person who for all my love of the natural world had never really gone beyond the most rudimentary, peripheral observation that birds flitted here to there in the bushes around my cabin, now I was witness to an ongoing succession of little dramas that began to reveal them in much more detail. These observations began to generate an endless stream of questions in my mind. And I began seeing every bird as an individual being, moving through its days engaged in very purposeful acts. I began to be excruciatingly aware of the tenuous nature of their lives. Of hawks, of cats, of the eye disease afflicting the finches that I could see gradually stole the sight of obviously otherwise healthy birds. Indeed it finally seemed a miracle to me that any of them managed to survive at all.

One night I lay in bed and watched as a big garden spider, six inches from my face on the other side of the glass, worked repairing its web. What a miracle. Eight legs, working in total independence, but meticulously coordinated in the most complex set of tasks. The spider, for all the world, appeared to be making the rounds of the web and consciously assessing what repairs needed to be made. How does a spider 'think'? The question itself brings me delighted laughter. How does a spider perceive the world? I became mesmerized watching the fly on my desk stopping to carefully clean its face and brush off its wings with tiny legs. The slug making its way across the path in the morning dew was also obviously moving purposefully towards some destination.

A billion billion lives amongst whom I dwell. In common we pick our ways through the hours of the day, intent on satisfying our basic needs. Each of us, alone and together, sharing the miracle of this one infinitesimal moment in all eternity, to gaze outward into the light.

My foot treads more carefully now, conscious that the little being in the grass might enjoy its own life for a tiny while longer if I take the time to care. Whether or not the birds have gained a thing from my offer of seed, I have gained immeasurably from them. My own experience of the world has changed forever and that change in me constitutes my true offering to the little birds at my window.

Ani Gurnee



## *Holiday Open House and Art's Alive! 2011*

**Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, November 4, 5, and 6**



Christianson's will be celebrating *Art's Alive* during our *Holiday Open House*. As always, the Nursery will be dressed up in its holiday finery and Primrose will be filled with wonderful one-of-a-kind treasures. This year we are excited to be featuring four local artists: **Tim Chomiak, Jack Dorsey, Kristy Gjesme, and Andy Gladish**. You can meet the artists, watch live art demonstrations, and enjoy fresh apple cider and molasses cookies while you tour the Nursery. Please join us for this festive event!

### **Featured Artists Schedule at Christianson's Nursery**

#### **Friday, November 4**

noon – 4 pm Jack Dorsey, Northwest Fine Artist  
11 am – 5 pm Andy Gladish, artistic metalwork

#### **Saturday, November 5**

noon – 4 pm Steve Small, Classical Guitar  
noon – 4 pm Kristy Gjesme, Northwest Fine Artist,  
noon – 4 pm Jack Dorsey, Northwest Fine Artist  
1 pm – 4 pm Tim Chomiak, handcrafted 'works of art' chicken coops  
11 am – 5 pm Andy Gladish, artistic metalwork

#### **Sunday, November 6**

1 pm – 4 pm Jack Dorsey, Northwest Fine Artist  
1 pm – 4 pm Tim Chomiak, handcrafted 'works of art' chicken coops

*Also in November ~ Father Christmas, Wreath Making, and Holiday Tea*



#### **Saturday, November 26**

Arrival of Father Christmas: 10 am – 3 pm  
Holiday Wreath Making: 11 am – 3 pm  
16th Annual Holiday Tea: noon – 5 pm

*Details for these events can be found on Page 4*

### *Northwest Flower and Garden Show*



The Northwest Flower & Garden Show will be held in Seattle on February 8 – 12, 2012 with the theme '**A Floral Symphony: Gardens Take Note**'. Tickets for the show will be available for purchase at our Garden Store starting December 15 (ticket prices are \$16 for early bird tickets and \$20 during the dates of the show).

As always, we will be offering 'Flower Buses' so you can gather your friends and enjoy going to the show without the stress of driving and parking. The Flower Buses will be going to the show on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, February 8, 9, and 10, leaving the nursery at 8:30 am and returning at approximately 6:00 pm. The cost of a combination show ticket and bus ride is \$51. Call the nursery today to make your Flower Bus reservations (360-466-3821).

*Tickets to the Northwest Flower and Garden Show make perfect holiday gifts and stocking stuffers for all the gardeners on your list!*

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# Christianson's Winter Calendar

## Art in the Garden

Saturday, November 12      11 am – noon  
reservations required      class fee: \$5

The northwest gardener has a seemingly unlimited number of choices; not just fantastic plants but also many decorative "objects d'art" found at shops, antique stores, galleries, and nurseries. Whether your interest is in garden gnomes or bronze sculpture, creating a successful display follows the same simple design principles. **Kathy Hirdler** of *Floribunda Designs* will lead the way as we take a visual tour to explore the myriad forms of art seen in local gardens. Learn which materials work well year-round and how to use 'art in the garden' to enhance your outside spaces.

## Conifer Walk with John Christianson

Saturday, November 12      1 pm  
reservations requested      complimentary

This is the third in the series of fall garden tours hosted by **John Christianson**. This walk starts in the Schoolhouse Garden and continues on to the 11-acre English garden at La Conner Flats adjacent to the nursery. Along the way John will highlight the wonderful array of conifers that are showing off in their vibrant greens and yellows and decorated with varied cones on their branches.

Following the Conifer Walk, plan to have **Tea at the Granary** served by **Margie Hart**. This tea features sandwiches, scones, fruit, and dessert and is the perfect ending to an afternoon stroll. Call 466-3190 for reservations and prepayment for this popular event (\$14 per person).

## Festive Holiday Cooking

Saturday, November 19      11 am – 12:30 pm  
reservations required      class fee: \$10

Our Schoolhouse classroom will once again be filled with warmth and mouth-watering aromas as **Suzanne Butler** prepares three of her favorite holiday dishes that are as flavorful as they are beautiful. If you would like to serve something new and festive this holiday season, join us in the Schoolhouse 'kitchen' and be prepared to be inspired.

*Suzanne Butler has been Graham Kerr's Cooking Assistant since 1993 and she's also a Chef Instructor in the Culinary Arts Program at Skagit Valley College.*

## Feeding the Birds for the Holidays

Saturday, November 19      1:30 - 3 pm  
reservations required      class fee: \$5

Many of us enjoy feeding the birds especially in the wintertime. As with many things, there is more to feeding the birds than first meets the eye. We will talk about feeder design, providing water, birdbaths, feed products, and fun projects and products for holiday bird feeding. Guest Speaker: **Ani Gurnee** from *Aulos Design*.

## Sixteenth Annual Holiday Tea

Saturday, November 26      noon – 5 pm  
reservations required      complimentary

For over a decade **John and Toni Christianson** have hosted this Holiday Tea to show appreciation to their customers and celebrate the start of the holiday season. Our 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, coffee, and apple cider. Take part in what has become a valley tradition and make 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.*

## Arrival of Father Christmas

Saturday, November 26      10 am – 3 pm

**Father Christmas** 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 professional photographer **Barb Roberson** who will capture this memorable occasion.

## Holiday Wreath Making

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

The Saturday following Thanksgiving is filled with one of our favorite traditions – wreath making classes! From mastery of the wreath machine to selection of greenery and composition, staff member and designer **Andrew Pickens** will be your guide as you create your one-of-a-kind wreath. Bring your own greens or select from our wide array of specialty boughs (sold by the pound). This one-hour class repeats each hour (classes start at 11 am, noon, 1 pm, and 2 pm). Wear warm clothing and bring your pruners and gardening gloves.

# Christianson's Winter Calendar - continued

## Independent Wreath-Making

November 28 – December 24 9 am to 4 pm  
reservations required



Beginning the Sunday after Thanksgiving, our South Greenhouse will once again be the venue for independent wreath-making. Two wreath-making machines will be available for use every day from 9 am to 4 pm. Wire rings and greenery (yew, laurel, juniper, pine, and cypress) are available for purchase, or you may bring your own. Invite your garden club, work mates, or family and

friends to enjoy a creative morning or afternoon together making wreaths and spreading holiday cheer.

## Decorating with Botanicals

Thursday, December 1 1 pm – 3 pm  
reservations requested complimentary

Staff members and designers, **Andrew and Cheryl**, will spark your imagination as they demonstrate simple and creative ways to bring the outdoors inside, not just during the holidays but into the coming winter months. Learn how to create centerpieces and displays using the rich selection of greenery and botanicals that Mother Nature provides, including holiday greens such as pine and cedar combinations, sword ferns, paperwhites, berries, moss, bark, and branches. No hot glue guns needed!

## Bellevue Botanical Gardens -

### Holiday Lights Tour

Saturday, December 10 12:30 pm – 8:30 pm  
reservations required \$40

**John Christianson** will be your host on this memorable adventure that is the perfect start to the holiday season. The 'Garden d'Lights' festival at the **Bellevue Botanical Garden** features over 500,000 lights, transforming the garden into a blossoming, magical Winter Wonderland. On the way we will make a stop at **Molbak's Nursery** to attend the *Poinsettia Festival* and sample the delicious *Kringle*. You are welcome to bring a sack lunch or you can treat yourself to the assorted soups and sandwiches at the Garden Café before boarding the bus destined to the botanical gardens. Price includes transportation, admission to the Garden d'Lights, and all the Kringle you can eat!

## Orchids

Saturday, January 14 noon – 1 pm  
reservations required class fee: \$5

If you love orchids, come enjoy a fun and informative seminar taught by orchid specialists **Joe Griener** and **Spencer Lane** from *Emerald City Orchids* in Seattle. A beautiful array of live flowering orchid plants will be displayed and discussed, as well as the history of orchids and fun facts. Information regarding growth and cultivation of orchids, such as watering, fertilizing, and repotting, will also be discussed. A large selection of orchids, including plants from the display, will be available for purchase.

## There's a Deer in my Garden

Saturday, January 21 11 - noon  
reservations required class fee: \$5

In every class we offer at the nursery one question comes up most consistently: "What can I do about the deer? They are eating everything in my garden!" There are as many answers to this question as there are variables that contribute to the 'problem.' WSU Master Gardener **Diana Wisen** will offer a range of strategies for managing our deer visitors, including effective 'deer proofing' techniques, recommendations on successful deer-resistant plants for our region, and how to create soil chemistry that discourages deer from grazing.



## The Virtues of Bareroot

Sunday, January 29 11 – 12:30 pm  
reservations required class fee: \$5

Join **John Christianson** and **Ani Gurnee** as they sing the praises of bareroot trees and shrubs. John will start by reviewing the many advantages of buying bareroot (such as cost savings, ease of planting, and faster root growth) and he will answer all your questions about the varieties that are arriving daily. Ani will review what to do after bringing your bareroot home, such as how to choose a location where it will thrive, how to plant it properly, and how to prune your new bareroot tree or shrub to get it off to a good start. This promises to be a lively and informative session. What a perfect way to spend a Sunday afternoon in January.

Please call the nursery at 360-466-3821 to make your reservations for our classes, events and tours.

## November - January Specials

November 1 - 30

### Roses

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

November 14 - 30

### Camellias

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

January 1 - 31

### House & Conservatory Plants

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

November 1 - 13

### Ground Covers

kinnickinnick, ivy, juniper, salal,  
Cotoneaster, Vinca, Pachysandra,  
and Euonymous  
25% off

December 1 - 31

### Christmas Holly

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

*Mark your calendars!*

 NORTHWEST  
**FLOWER & GARDEN**  
SHOW  
February 8-12, 2012

Tickets will be available for purchase at our Garden Store starting December 15 (\$16 for early bird tickets, \$20 during the show). Call today to reserve your spot on our Flower Buses, heading to the show on February 8, 9, and 10 (\$51 per person).

## CLASSES & EVENTS

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Holiday Open House & Art's Alive! 2011

**Saturday, November 12**

Art in the Garden 11:00 am  
Confer Tour & Tea at the Granary 1:00 pm

**Saturday, November 19**

Festive Holiday Cooking 11:00 am - 12:30 pm  
Feeding the Birds 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm

**Saturday, November 26**

Arrival of Father Christmas 10:00 am - 3:00 pm  
Holiday Wreath Making 11:00 am - 3:00 pm  
16th Annual Holiday Tea noon - 5 pm

**November 28 - December 24**

Independent Wreath Making 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

**Thursday, December 1**

Decorating with Botanicals 1:00 - 3:00 pm

**Saturday, December 10**

Holiday Lights Tour 12:30 pm - 8:30 pm

**Saturday, January 14**

Orchids noon - 1:00 pm

**Saturday, January 21**

There's a Deer in My Garden 11:00 am

**Sunday, January 29**

The Virtues of Bareroot 11:00 am - 12:30 pm

### Weekly Radio Broadcast

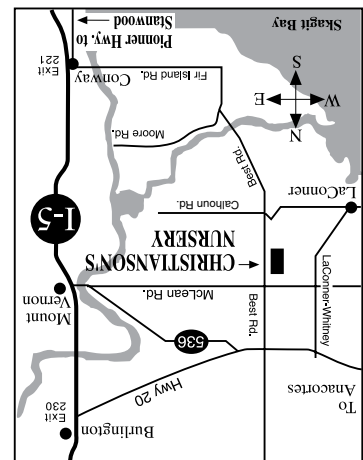
*The Garden Show*

Sunday Mornings

With John & Mike

AM 660 KAPS • 9:30 am

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



360-466-3821 • 1-800-585-8200

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.

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

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