
GARDEN GAZETTE

February - March 2012

John Christianson, *Editor*

CHRISTIANSON'S Nursery & Greenhouse

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

Springtime

In Spring a seasoned, organic gardener's fancy turns to thoughts of manure. And this Spring will be no exception. What will be different is I no longer ask for a truckload of manure for Valentine's Day because we have two llamas, twelve sheep and numerous chickens to supply plentiful amounts of fertilizer for our veggie gardens. I became intimate with manure as a third grader when we moved from a residential street to the countryside. Wanting to be friends with the two girls who seemed the most fun in school, I was put through the tough farm girl initiation. I had to make my handprint in a semi dried cowpie and walk the top of the fence surrounding Susie's cow pasture. This pasture contained an assortment of friendly animals so losing one's balance and falling into the pasture was not critical unless you fell into a pie of fresh manure. However, hopping back up on the fence and continuing on was key to becoming a member of the club. After passing the test an assortment of recreational activities became available to me. There were three of us in this little club and Susie just happened to have three animals large enough to ride...a horse, a donkey and a cow. The donkey came to live with her when our other friend Karen entered a Seattle Times contest to name and win a donkey. The contest was run to promote conservation of woodlands in Washington State. I think the point was that donkeys tread more lightly on hiking trails than horses. Karen entered the contest without talking with her parents and when she won, with the name 'Paddy-Go-Lightly', she was forced to tell her parents they needed to drive into the big city to pick up...a donkey. Arrangements were soon made with Susie's parents and Paddy-Go-Lightly traveled directly from his interview and photo shoot with Karen and her parents, which appeared in the next day's Seattle Times, to live with the horse and cow whose names I do not remember. Since the three of us loved the thought of riding horses and there was only one horse, we would trade riding animals from day to day. We preferred riding the horse of course and the cow was our next favorite even though her back was broad and we could not get her to move unless she was ready to mosey to a different spot to graze. The donkey was our last choice. Paddy-Go-Lightly, smarter than either of the other two, spent his time bolting through a narrow passage between the pastures and trying to knock us off against the gate post. I remember hanging on while being dragged through the mostly dried cow pies in the grass but sometimes through fresher samples. My Mother would have been horrified but she was content knowing I was under the watchful eyes of Susie's Grandmother who had come from Italy a few years earlier to live with her son and his family after her husband had died. She could understand us but spoke little English and she did not seem to notice the manure business in the pasture even when we came in to wash up. I think she thought it was harmless because it was clear manure was her friend. In the Spring we would collect dried pies for her. We went around with the wheelbarrow and pitchforks to collect the manure and she broke it up around her plants with her bare hands. She had an amazing vegetable garden and over the years I learned to appreciate Italian gardening and cooking at its best. It was at her table I learned to love artichokes, figs and brussel sprouts. We often played in Susie's pasture after dinner with the days growing longer until the evenings reached that soft twilight tipping point that meant Spring was finally here. My whole being was filled with that incredible awareness of life that to this day is so elusive and indescribable. That same unbelievable feeling comes to me every year on a few certain evenings in Spring and only when I am in the garden. And sometimes I do just happen to be spreading manure.

Toni Christianson

A Fascination for Hellebores

Christianson's Sixth Annual Winter Festival ~ February 24 – 26

On Saturday, February 25 at 1:00 pm, Guest Speaker **Marty Wingate** will be presenting
'Hellebores and Beyond – Decorating Your Garden with Color, Texture and Scent'



No longer considered the "off" season, winter is a time when the garden is alive and well. One of the most beautiful winter flowers, the hellebore, comes in colors from pure white to deep purple, and makes the perfect companion to the many other winter ornamentals that can fill our landscapes with colorful flowers, foliage, stems, and bark. Come and see what's possible in your garden. Marty Wingate is a Seattle-based writer and speaker on the subjects of gardening and travel. She lives in Seattle and leads garden tours to European and North American destinations.

Fourth Annual Photography Contest

As part of our Winter Festival, we will once again be sponsoring a Winter Gardens Photography Contest. Amateurs and professionals alike are encouraged to participate by submitting up to two digital images of a winter garden scene or a single plant. Entries may be entered in one of two categories: (1) In-Camera Image and/or (2) Computer-Enhanced Image. Complete details are provided on the entry form, available in our Garden Store and on our website. Deadline for submissions is February 17. Entries will be exhibited in our Schoolhouse during our Winter Festival, February 24 – 26. Entries will be professionally judged and the winning entries will be announced on Saturday, February 25, at 1 pm.

And The Winner Is ...

While countless cinemaphiles await to hear the nominees for the coveted Oscar, rose enthusiasts everywhere similarly anticipate the announcement by the AARS of the yearly winner(s) of the Rose of the Year. The 2012 winner was awarded to the grandiflora Sunshine Daydream, recognized for its cuplike blooms of light yellow fading to a delicate cream. Not unlike a pageant contestant, Sunshine Daydream is not merely judged by its looks—it is recognized as a prolific bloomer performing continuously from early spring to early frost. This honoree is highly disease-resistant, an important factor for NW gardeners ever challenged by black spot. Its dark green glossy foliage is packaged in a round, bushy shape and is the perfect backdrop for its showy blooms. Hybridized by Meiland International, it thrived through 2 years of testing in 21 gardens nationwide, including the Norfolk Botanical Garden.

Joanne Romann

Flower Buses to the 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'. 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. Our 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 to make your Flower Bus reservations (360-466-3821).

Gift Shop

Primrose has gone from Winter to Spring in a few short weeks. We have treasures for your sweetheart for Valentine's Day. We also have grass, toys, candy and eggs to fill your little ones' Easter baskets, plus an assortment of new books, linens, soaps, and candles to help ease into spring cleaning. We will also be adding many vintage and antique one-of-a-kind items to bring a renewed look to your home and garden. We do promise the unexpected.

Christianson's Spring Calendar

Basic Fruit Tree Pruning

This class will be offered twice: Saturday, February 4 and Saturday, March 3
11 am – 12:30 pm reservations required class fee: \$5

This class will familiarize you with the basics of pruning and training. Fruit trees, unlike most other trees, require annual attention in order to perform their best. Learning enough to do it yourself is very fun and rewarding. If you are planning to take either of the specialty classes ('Espalier Pruning' or 'Renovating Old Fruit Trees') it would be well worth your while to start with this class as there will be more time spent covering the basic concepts common to all. Guest Speaker: **Ani Gurnee** from *Aulos Design*.

Christianson's Spring Calendar (continued)

Growing the Great Pumpkin

Saturday, February 11 11 am – 12:30 pm
reservations required class fee: \$5

Interested in growing a 1,000-pound pumpkin for our Giant Pumpkin Weigh Off this coming October? Come learn the basics including seed germination, early season protection, vine and pruning strategies, protecting the fruit, fertilizing and watering, as well as the first place to start - a soil test. Seeds will be available. Guest Speaker **Phillip Renninger**, the first place winner in Christianson's 2011 Giant Pumpkin Weigh Off, is a local gardener who has been growing giant pumpkins for 10 years.

Espalier Pruning

Saturday, February 18 11 am – 12:30 pm
reservations required class fee: \$5

Espalier is the art of training a three-dimensional tree into a two-dimensional plane, usually with the aid of a support system. It is a wonderful way to accommodate fruit trees in even the smallest garden or courtyard. Though espalier is not complicated, there are definitely things to know that often make the difference between success and failure. Guest Speaker: **Ani Gurnee** from *Aulos Design*.

Renovating Old Fruit Trees

Sunday, March 4 1 pm – 2:30 pm
reservations required class fee: \$5

Does your garden or property have some older fruit trees that need some TLC? There can be great satisfaction in bringing these trees back into good form and productivity. This class will give you the ability to assess what these trees need and how to proceed, as well as some clues to evaluate whether a tree is worth saving or not. Guest Speaker: **Ani Gurnee** from *Aulos Design*.

Rose Pruning with John Christianson

Saturday, March 10 11 am – noon
reservations requested (complimentary)

If you have been wondering why your roses do not have the health, form or flowers you would like, you might be interesting in knowing how to prune them properly. John's class will give you all the information you need to grow healthy, beautiful roses. Instruction in the classroom will be followed by hands on pruning in the Schoolhouse Garden.

Pruning Ornamental Trees and Shrubs

Saturday, March 17 11 am – 12:30 pm
reservations required class fee: \$5

This class will cover the pruning of ornamental trees, as well as a broad spectrum of shrub species. Learn how to

recognize the different growth patterns. Many species can be treated more than one way depending on the form you desire. Guest Speaker: **Ani Gurnee** from *Aulos Design*.

Hedging Techniques

Sunday, March 18 1 pm – 2:30 pm
reservations required class fee: \$5

Hedging is an ancient European art and plays an essential role in the garden. We will explore the function and uses of hedges and the selection of plants for different kinds and sizes of hedges. Timing, tools and techniques for their development will also be discussed. Guest Speaker: **Ani Gurnee** from *Aulos Design*.

Pretty Enough To Eat

Saturday, March 24 11 am – noon
reservations required class fee: \$5

You don't need to till up a square of soil to grow food in your garden. Many edible plants from blueberries to lettuce are both lovely and productive. Let us show you how to incorporate annual and perennial edible plants into your landscape. Why not let your garden give you both visual delight and hors d'oeuvres? Guest Speakers: **Kathy Hirdler** from *Floribunda Designs* and **Lily Hirdler** from *Christianson's Nursery*.

Decorating with Spring Botanicals

Saturday, March 31 10 am – 11:00 am
reservations required class fee: \$5

Bring the outdoors inside this spring! This demonstration-style session will spark your creativity for creating beautiful displays and arrangements using natural spring botanicals, such as forsythia, budding quince, spirea, and cherry blossom branches, forced spring bulbs, moss, and a wide array of spring-blooming flowers. Guest Speakers: **Karin Kempers** from *Christianson's Nursery* and **Mindy McCabe**.

Spring Walk with John Christianson

Saturday, March 31 1 pm
reservations requested (complimentary)

Join us for the first garden tour of 2012. **John Christianson** will lead you through the 11-acre English Garden at La Conner Flats. This walk will begin in our Schoolhouse Garden and from there you will stroll with John as he points out trees and shrubs and emerging bulbs that await you on this fun and informative tour.

Following the Spring Walk on March 31, plan to have Tea at the Granary at La Conner Flats. This tea features sandwiches, scones, fruit, and dessert. Call 466-3190 for reservations (\$14 per person).

Early Spring Specials

February 1 - 12

Blooming Witch Hazel

our winter favorites

Heather

hundreds of winter and spring flowering plants

20% off

March 1 - 11

Bare Root

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

February 13 - 29

Roses

our biggest Rose Sale of the year!
includes the new 2012 All-
America Rose selections, antique,
English, climbing, and drought
tolerant rugosa roses
20% off

March 12 - 31

Camellias

Winter and Spring flowering
beauties ~ many in bloom!
20% off

April 1 - 15

Magnolia Trees

hundreds of beautiful blooming trees with white,
pink, purple or yellow flowers
20% off

Weekly Radio Broadcast

The Garden Show

Sunday Mornings

With John & Mike

AM 660 KAPS • 9:30 am

CLASSES & EVENTS

Saturday, February 4

Basic Fruit Tree Pruning 11 - 12:30 pm

Saturday, February 11

Growing the Great Pumpkin 11 - noon

Saturday, February 18

Espalier Pruning 11 - 12:30 pm

Friday, Saturday, Sunday: February 24-26

6th Annual Winter Festival

A Fascination for Hellebores

Saturday, February 25

Hellebores with Marty Wingate 1:00 pm

Saturday, March 3

Basic Fruit Tree Pruning 11 - 12:30 pm

Sunday, March 4

Renovating Old Fruit Trees 11 - 12:30 pm

Saturday, March 10

Rose Pruning 11 - noon

Saturday, March 17

Pruning Ornamental Trees & Shrubs
11 - 12:30 pm

Sunday, March 18

Hedging Techniques 1 - 2:30 pm

Saturday, March 24

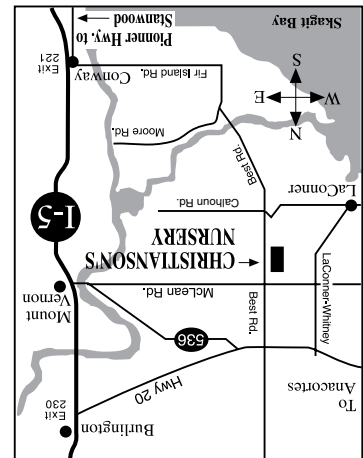
Pretty Enough to Eat 11 - noon

Saturday, March 31

Decorating with Spring Botanicals 10 - 11 am

Spring Walk with John Christianson 1:00 pm

Winter Hours
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
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