
GARDEN GAZETTE

April - May 2012

John Christianson, *Editor*

CHRISTIANSON'S Nursery & Greenhouse

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

The Comfort of Nature

As we came home from work Emma was near emotional meltdown from a very busy day at the nursery. For four-year old Emma these meltdowns are as intense as she is and very unpleasant for the rest of us. As is often the case, she went straight from the car to the garden. Her play was so interesting I sat and watched for awhile. She was climbing a large, well-branched tree behind our shed. When she started out she was fully dressed in overalls, a sweatshirt, high-top leather boots and heavy socks. As I watched her play I could see that the cares of the day - all the adult directions in the form of cans and cannots, shoulds and should nots - were melting away and she was becoming the playful, relaxed child we see in the morning. She climbed that tree from at least six different approaches. She would stand and survey each newly chosen part of the tree before she attempted to climb. Sometimes she would run and jump. One time she stood on a rock and jumped to an outstretched branch. One time she tried to shimmy up the highly-branched side of the tree and had to jump back to the ground when she did not have enough strength to make it to the first branch. And, when she was up in the tree's branches and exploring out toward the ends of the limbs, she would stand on the new branch below her and bounce up and down while hanging from the above branch to test the strength of the lower branch. Each time she came down out of the tree she would take off another piece of clothing until she was climbing in only her underwear. She must have decided that her bare feet gave her more information about what she was doing than her heavy boots. Or maybe the freedom of bare feet was the appeal...at any rate...she did not have me there telling her she should put her clothes back on.

As always, when she came in from playing alone outdoors, the balance of emotional strength had tipped back to her more joyful, enthusiastic state and the evening ended without a tantrum over what was for dinner or over getting ready for bed. This happens over and over again with Emma. The outdoor play varies but is always something of her choice: whether it is looking for snails, worms, grasshoppers, snakes, spiders, bees, ants, or ladybugs; watching for eagles, hawks, and blue herons; finding unusual rock shapes; exploring the vegetable garden; picking apples in the fall (to eat, by the way, without me telling her to wash them); or any of her many other forms of solitary outdoor play. I know that part of that emotional healing comes from being alone, part comes from freedom, but I think the greatest part comes from being outdoors. The same thing does not happen when she plays alone in her room, in fact her happiness seems even harder to reclaim after playing alone in her bedroom. Being alone in nature must nourish her spirit and fill her with an inner peace that helps her handle the ups and downs of a little girl's life.

Toni Christianson

Reprinted from the September-October 2001 issue of the Garden Gazette

Mother's Day at Christianson's

With nursery visits being a classic Mother's Day tradition, possibly since the first National Mother's Day in 1914, we are pleased to help families celebrate this time honored custom. We hope it will be a treat to wander Christianson's on this very special day. Many perennials, trees and shrubs will be in all their Spring glory and Primrose, our gift shop, will be filled with vintage items to provide personality to Mom's home or garden. Primrose also carries books, artwork, very fine chocolates and, in honor of the weekend, we will have seasonal, hand-tied flower bouquets for your gift giving. Of course flowers and chocolates would be the classic gift, as would a glorious hanging basket, a dogwood tree or a lilac bush. Gift certificates and gardening tools are also welcome gifts for moms who love to garden. There's so much from which to choose to make it a Mother's Day to remember. And, as always, we will be serving homemade chocolate chip cookies and coffee.

Primrose Expands

We are expanding Primrose, not with space but with weekly, sometimes daily, additions of one of a kind items for your home, front porch, or terrace. There will also be treasures to wear, such as clothing and jewelry. There will be items made from recycled French and English faded floral fabrics and French toiles; slubbed, textured one-hundred year old linen and hemp fabrics; and clothing restyled and updated from apparel made before 1950. My textile collection of almost fifty years is the source for these items. Being the textile addict I have been for all of my adult life (and it truly is an addiction) I cannot pass up a beautiful piece of fabric or an item of clothing needing to be saved from the dust bin. I love the romantic feel of Victorian, Edwardian, Roaring Twenties and Mid-Century clothing. I also love the handmade, handwoven and personally designed apparel that is so appealing today because it is such a nice change from the mass produced products of the last fifty years. It feels as though my life has come full circle with the luxury of time and space allowing me to again design and sew apparel and products from organic fabrics with a history. These items will be available in our newly appointed space in the back of Primrose in early April. *There! I've put it down in print so there's no turning back. Our new look will be ready the first week of April. See you then!*

Toni Christianson

Meet Richard Nash

Imagine you are a mustard plant, growing freely by the roadside somewhere in Skagit Valley. A truck approaches, slows, and comes to a stop. A man steps out of the truck, walks up to YOU (of all the plants in the world!) and selects you as the sole subject of his next painting. He takes you back to his art studio, places you in a vase, puts you near a window, and for the next few days he watches you, studying the light as it plays in your leaves and stems. By the end of your 'portrait sitting', he has captured the essence of you – your layers of color and texture, your depth and realness, your undeniable beauty.

Meet Richard Nash. Ten years ago, after a 30-year career as an art teacher in the Oak Harbor School District, he built a house and art studio, and became a full-time artist. He is an abstract painter (acrylics), sculptor (corten steel), and long-time gardener (dirt and plants). As an artist - and probably as a gardener - his concentration is on composition with color as an accent. Whether the subject matter is representational or non-representational, his paintings are nuanced with layers of depth and color.

It was through his love of gardening that we came to know Richard. He had been a regular customer at Hart's Nursery for many years and met John and Toni Christianson after they purchased the Nursery in 1990. He continued to be a familiar and friendly face at the nursery and then, much to our delight, about two-and-a-half years ago he started painting botanicals, blending his love of nature with his passion for abstract expressionism. Though there are some similarities to traditional botanical drawings, his acrylic paintings are infused with richness and depth, and just a touch of mystery.

The subjects for Richard's botanical drawings come from his home garden and from the roadside. He uses only real plants for his art subjects (not photographs) because they capture the light, which is continually changing and engaging. It is that play of light within the plants that brings his paintings to life. And, like a gardener who enjoys the variations in foliage as much as the flowers, he enjoys painting the stems in the water as much as the flowers themselves.

For the past two years we have carried Richard's botanical cards in Primrose, the Nursery's gift shop. Each card features a specific plant, is individually initialed on the back, and printed on high quality 60-80# cardstock paper. Though they are lovely to give as cards (assuming you can part with them), they are also suitable for framing.

To learn more about Richard Nash and see galleries of his sculptures and paintings, including his many cards and prints, visit his website at www.rjnashart.com. Richard will be making a special appearance at the Nursery on **Saturday, May 5**, from **noon - 4 pm**. He will be doing live art demonstrations and will be bringing larger sizes of signed, limited-edition botanical prints. We hope you can stop by and meet Richard Nash!

Eve Boe

Rhododendrons

A Springtime Extravaganza of Color and Frills

Rhododendrons put on one of the most eagerly awaited flower shows here in the Pacific Northwest. All winter the flower buds of rhodys large and small have been fattening, heightening our sense of anticipation with the promise of a long-awaited color burst. Right now at the nursery, we have our best and most exciting selection with more than 500 varieties to choose from including new varieties and some old favorites too.

One of our favorite rhododendrons is 'Anna Rose Whitney', a large-leaved variety that blooms from late May on into June with enormous trusses of large bright magenta pink. This rhododendron is not for the faint of heart, growing up to 7 feet tall and wide in sun or partial shade. Another exceptional variety is 'Lem's Cameo', which has large domed trusses of frilled peachy pink and cream flowers with a red blotch. Gorgeous! The new growth is an unusual bronze color that fades to green in summer. 'Lem's Cameo' grows to a bushy 3 to 4 feet. No room in the garden for a shrub so large? Try 'Carmen', a slow growing (to 1.5 feet) rhododendron that boasts stunning waxy rich red flowers held in small loose trusses in April.

Sun, shade, large or small - there's sure to be a rhododendron for you. Not only do rhodys provide a burst of fabulous springtime color and add year-round evergreen structure to your landscape, their bud and blossom cuttings make stunning spring bouquets. If you're craving more inspiration, be sure to check out the **Komo Kulshan Rhododendron Society's Flower Show**, held here in our Propagation House on Saturday, April 28, from 10 am to 4 pm.

Rachel Anderson, Certified Professional Horticulturist

Winter Gardens Photography Fills the Schoolhouse

This past February 24 - 26 we celebrated our Fifth Annual Winter Festival. As part of the festivities, we hosted our 'Fourth Annual Winter Gardens Photography Contest'. In total, there were 33 entries, all of which were proudly displayed in our Schoolhouse for the month of March. The photographs were professionally judged by Scott Terrell, Photography Editor for the Skagit Valley Herald. Here are the award winners in the two categories:

Category 1: In Camera image

- 1st Place: "Reflection of Winter" by Carol Worrell
- 2nd Place: "Ice Stairs" by John F. Parks
- 3rd Place: "After the Storm" by Keith Wiggers



Category 2: Computer Enhanced image

- 1st Place: "Awakening" by Kathryn Preszler
- 2nd Place: "Snow Angels" by John F. Parks
- 3rd Place: "Peek-a-Bore" by David S. Smith

Thank you to all who participated, and especially to Scott Terrell for doing the difficult task of judging all the entries. It is always such a joy to see so many beautiful images of winter gardens gracing the walls of our Schoolhouse. Although the exhibit has now been taken down, you can still see the winning photographs on our Facebook page and on our website (www.christiansonsnursery.com).

Stay in Touch with Garden Notes

Garden Notes is our online e-newsletter and it is sent out via email the first week of each month. **Garden Notes** features timely, practical 'how to' information, including a regular monthly article called 'In the Garden' by Ani Gurnee. In this article, Ani provides suggestions about gardening tasks to do that month and the information is specific to our region. **Garden Notes** also contains fun tidbits, historical stories about the Nursery, and information about our upcoming classes, events, and monthly specials. It also contains links to our website, Facebook page, and the current and recent issues of the Garden Gazette (which is published every two months). **Garden Notes** is free, paperless, easy to forward to others, and helps you stay connected with us more frequently.

To sign up for **Garden Notes** or see the current and past issues, please visit our website at www.christiansonsnursery.com, then go to the 'What's Happening' page and then to the 'Newsletter' page. You are also welcome to sign up in person the next time you're at the Nursery. Our Garden Store staff will be happy to assist you.

You can also stay in touch by visiting our new Facebook page, which features photo slideshows and timely reminders about upcoming events, classes, and other happenings at the Nursery. There's no need to have a personal Facebook account to visit our Facebook page. An easy way to get to our Facebook page is to go to our website, www.christiansonsnursery.com, then simply click on the Facebook icon in the lower right corner.

Tulip Season Highlights at the Nursery

Art at the Schoolhouse

Friday, April 6 – Sunday, April 29 Open daily from 10 am to 5 pm

The daffodils and tulips in Skagit Valley offer a seasonal display attracting people from far and wide. Paired with this annual event occurring each April is 'Art at the Schoolhouse' at our Nursery. Now in its fifth year, this show features many talented artists from the Stanwood Camano Arts Guild and is a tribute to the vibrant color display that nature provides right outside our door. Many new as well as returning artists will transform our 1888 Schoolhouse into a multi-media art gallery. Please join these artists in making this a special year in which we all support the arts. Attracting visitors from all over the country, this venue has grown over the past four years and will offer once again not only varied but quality renderings that reflect the growing involvement in the arts in our picturesque Valley.

Back by popular demand... Judy and Annie's Philly Sandwiches & Crepes

Starting Saturday, April 14, Judy and Annie will be back at the Nursery every weekend through April from 11 am to 6 pm. In addition to Philly Cheese Steak sandwiches and five kinds of crepes, they will also be offering their award-winning Crab-Shrimp Chowder, hot coffee and tea, and fresh-squeezed lemonade.

Future Events at the Nursery



A Rosy Day Out: Ninth Annual Rose Festival

June 23, 2012

with Guest Speakers **Ciscoe Morris** and **Marianne Binetti**

9 am – 6 pm:	Self-guided tour of Schoolhouse Rose Garden
9 am – 10:30 am:	Rose display entries can be submitted
10:30 am – 5 pm:	Tri-Valley Rose Society Rose Display
10:30 am – 1 pm:	Tri-Valley Rose Society Plant Clinic
1 pm – 2 pm:	Tri-Valley Rose Society presents 'Tips and Tricks of the Rosarians'
2:30 pm – whenever they are done:	Guest Speakers Ciscoe Morris and Marianne Binetti will be presenting 'My Plant is Better Than Your Plant' Join the fun as Marianne and Ciscoe compete to wow you with their favorite roses and companion plants.

Ready. Set. Grow!

It's early to talk about pumpkins but now is the time to plant your pumpkins if you want to grow the Great Pumpkin of 2012. Planting seeds indoors or in a greenhouse around the middle of April to be transplanted into the garden with some basic protection (cloche) by May 1 is the preferred practice. Seeds planted directly into the soil do not fare well and don't think you will be ahead of the game by planting out earlier than May 1 because the seedlings may just sit, sulk and never regain the vigor they might have had. Be sure to take the cloche off during the day unless we have very windy or very cold and wet days. It can be taken off permanently when temperatures stay above 50 degrees during the night.

Whether you grow a giant pumpkin or not, plan to visit the Nursery during our Giant Pumpkin Festival this October. In addition to the Giant Pumpkin Weigh-Off, there will be great food, live music, apple cider pressing, classes, and many other seasonal activities for the whole family. More details will be provided in future newsletters, as well as on our website. Until then, get growing on your pumpkins!

Christianson's Spring Calendar

Art at the Schoolhouse

April 6 - April 29 Daily from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
See article on previous page for more details.

American Rhododendron Society Flower Show

Saturday, April 28 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
complimentary

The Komo Kulshan Chapter of the ARS will be holding a Flower Show in our Propagation House. Don't miss this chance to speak with the experts and enjoy this colorful floral display!

Friday Night Workshops

Your Best Tomato Year Yet

Friday, April 20 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.
reservations required class fee: \$5

A homegrown tomato is the Holy Grail of the kitchen garden, yet it can be one of the most challenging hot-season crops to grow in our moderate Maritime summers. Help is on the way! Speaker **Bill Thorness** will share tips and techniques to help you have your best tomato year yet. You'll learn about season extension, pruning, trellising, pests, diseases and proper fertilizing and watering. Garden writer Bill Thorness, author of "**Edible Heirlooms: Heritage Vegetables for the Maritime Garden,**" has been growing edibles in Seattle since the mid-1980s.

Creating Color-Themed Containers

Friday, April 27 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
reservations required class limit: 12

In this first of three container classes, **Kathy Hirdler** of *Floribunda Designs*, and **Lily Hirdler** from *Christianson's Nursery*, will focus on color and how to most effectively use color themes to create a unique and personalized container planting. For example, the 'Echo' theme uses a single favorite color and includes a range from the palest tint to the richest shade. 'Hot Mama' uses the most brilliant hues of orange, red and pink to create an eye-popping display. 'It's a Beautiful Day' combines sky colors with white and adds a shot of golden sun. Bring your gloves and your creative ideas to create your own color-themed planting! You can purchase a basket or container at the nursery or bring your own (soil and fertilizer is provided).

Planning a Four-Season Veggie Garden

Friday, May 4 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
reservations required class fee: \$5

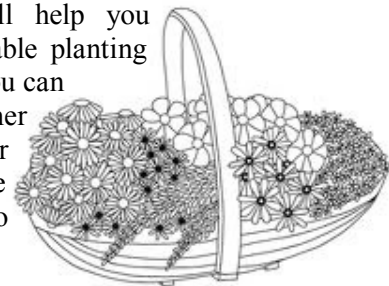
Using floating row covers, timely planting, and an appreciation of our Maritime Northwest climate, Guest Speaker **Peter Heffelfinger** will help you get a good start on summer crops and get you thinking about the long-season crops for winter harvest (ex. kales, leeks, root crops, and brassicas). With later sowings for fall and winter greens, your garden will become a year-round outdoor 'store' offering just what you like to eat, fresh-picked from your own garden. A long-time Master Gardener, Peter Heffelfinger is involved with the 'Eat Your Yard' group in Anacortes and has maintained a large four-season garden near Campbell Lake on Fidalgo Island for over 25 years.



Sun or Shade Basket Design

Friday, May 18 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
reservations required class limit: 12

Learn how to create sun or shade baskets using just the right combination of colors, textures, and shapes in this hanging basket design class. Our guest speakers, **Kathy Hirdler** of *Floribunda Designs*, and **Lily Hirdler** from *Christianson's Nursery*, will help you design and create a memorable planting to last through the season. You can purchase a basket or container at the nursery or bring your own. Soil and fertilizer are provided but remember to bring your gloves.



Creating 'Kitchen Garden' Containers

Friday, May 25 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
reservations required class limit: 12

Growing edible plantings is fun and rewarding, and this class will help you create a 'kitchen garden' in a container (a great option if a full veggie garden isn't practical). Christianson's carries many varieties of edible flowers, fruits, vegetables and herbs that can be grown successfully in containers, together or alone. In this fun new class, **Kathy Hirdler** of *Floribunda Designs*, and *Christianson's* **Lily Hirdler** will show you what edibles do well in containers and how to best combine them for both food and summer display. You can purchase a basket or container at the nursery or bring your own. Soil and fertilizer are provided but remember to bring your gloves.

Spring Specials

April 2 – 15

Magnolias

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

May 1 – 13

Basket Stuffers

dozens of different premium annuals for planters, baskets or flower beds growing in 2" pots
20% off

May 7 – 13

Geraniums

thousands of blooming zonal, ivy scented and fancy leaf geraniums growing in 4" pots
20% off

May 21 – 31

Fuchsias

hardy, upright and trailing fuchsias that bloom all summer
2, 4 and 6-inch sizes & baskets
20% off

April 16 – April 30

Rhododendrons and Azaleas

thousands to choose from in bud and bloom, including evergreen and deciduous azaleas
20% off

May 12 – 13

Mother's Day Weekend Special

Dogwood Trees
Eastern and Asiatic dogwoods in bloom (approximately 6' to 8' tall)
20% off

May 14 – 20

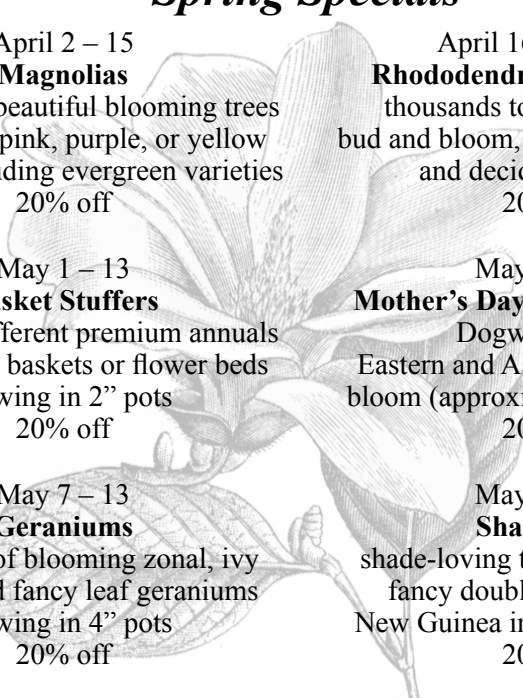
Shady Days

shade-loving tuberous begonias, fancy double impatiens and New Guinea impatiens in 4" pots
20% off

June 1 – 10

Vines

vigorous growing clematis, honeysuckle, jasmine, wisteria, akebia, kiwi, and more. 1 gallon to 5 gallon sizes
20% off



CLASSES & EVENTS

Art at the Schoolhouse

April 6 - April 29 Daily 10 am – 5 pm

Your Best Tomato Year Yet

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Creating Color-Themed Containers

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Komo Kulshan Rhododendron Society Flower Show

Saturday, April 28 10 am – 4 pm

Planning a Four-Season Veggie Garden

Friday, May 4 6:00 – 7:30 pm

'Meet the Artist' Richard Nash

Saturday, May 5 noon – 4 pm

Baskets for Sun and Shade

Friday, May 18 6:00 – 7:30 pm

Creating 'Kitchen Garden' Containers

Friday, May 25 6:00 – 7:30 pm

Weekly Radio Broadcast

The Garden Show

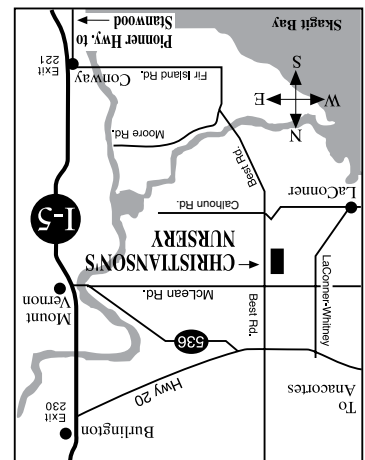
Sunday Mornings

With John & Mike

AM 660 KAPS • 9:30 am

Spring Hours
Daily 9:00 am to 6:00 pm
Open Fridays until 8:00 pm
April 20 - May 25

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.



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