
GARDEN GAZETTE

June - August 2012

John Christianson, *Editor*

CHRISTIANSON'S Nursery & Greenhouse

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

A Wish Come True

Hopefully I will no longer find cans of lost tuna fish rolling around with the toilet paper or a plate of 6-month-old brownies under the paper plates. I am in pantry heaven. Ever since I was a young wife and mother I have wanted a pantry. Not an elaborate room with mahogany shelving, glass doors and a crystal chandelier. Not a walk-through butler's pantry like I have seen on historic home tours. Not even a pantry with a sink for cleaning vegetables and arranging flowers. I just wanted a space to store food and to keep small kitchen appliances, pans and platters we seldom use and my extensive collection of flower vases within sight and organized.

Adequate storage has been a problem in all three of the homes in which we have lived but it has been even more of a challenge in the old farmhouse where we now live. The original part of this house was built in 1871 and the kitchen was assuredly the most humble part of an already very modest home. In fact, we are not even sure there was a kitchen in the home because the house was so small and the original family needed a place to feed seasonal farmhands, so the attached "summer kitchen" we have seen in old photographs may have served as the family's main kitchen year-round. Now, with a small kitchen in the house and 20 years of living in this home, we finally have a tiny pantry and it has made such a difference in my life. We pushed the kitchen wall out onto the porch and added a closet-like space with six continuous shelves. We take one step into this tiniest of rooms and retrieve whatever it is we need and then back out.

I am amazed how much storage space such a small room allows. The bread machine and stand mixer are no longer pushed to the back of our narrow kitchen counters. The 16-quart soup pot I use to make chicken broth for all my family's favorite soups is out of the pan cupboard in the kitchen and on a shelf in the pantry. This alone has saved me from the embarrassing crash of pans and lids and the inevitable bruised toes when I used to pull it out of a cramped space and just hope for the best. I no longer will find a forgotten quart of parsley flakes I so patiently dried in September to use in soup broths all winter long, stored with the light bulbs. I will now store our garden herbs in the pantry where I will not forget them. Since this pantry is on the tree-shaded north side of our house, it will always be cool and dark, so this fall we will use it to store potatoes, squash, apples and, for short periods of time, tomatoes, artichokes and brussels sprouts in baskets on the floor. I could not be happier with this small remodeling project. At the end of summer I will smile every time I go into the pantry and see the dried parsley, oregano, thyme, sage and my very favorite, sweet marjoram, all lined in a row alongside jars of oven-dried tomatoes stored in fresh basil-flavored olive oil. There will be no need to store our garden harvest in the linen closet or the utility closet or our bedroom closet.

The other best part of this is I will no longer lose track of anything chocolate! Actually, that was just crazy. I am shocked I ever lost track of a single piece of chocolate no matter how disorganized my storage arrangements had become over time. I can understand the tuna and dried parsley, but the brownies are in a whole different league. I would not have believed it if I had not seen it with my own eyes. After all, I never forgot the Bailey's Irish Cream was behind the silver polish and Windex. It just made sense.

Toni Christianson

A Rosy Day Out: Ninth Annual Rose Festival

Saturday, June 23



“*My Plant Is Better Than Your Plant*”: Guest speakers **Ciscoe Morris** and **Marianne Binetti** compete to wow you with their favorite roses and companion plants.

9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Self-guided tour of Schoolhouse Rose Garden
9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Rose Display entries can be submitted
10:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. **Tri-Valley Rose Society** Rose Display
10:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. **Tri-Valley Rose Society** Plant Clinic
1 p.m. - 2 p.m. **Tri-Valley Rose Society** presents “*Tips and Tricks of the Rosarians*”
2:30 p.m. **Ciscoe Morris** and **Marianne Binetti**, followed by a Rose Ice Cream Social

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** and **Marianne Binetti** will announce the winners in the afternoon and gift certificates will be awarded. Entries must be submitted between 9 - 10:30 a.m. on the day of the festival, June 23. For more information, please call Christianson’s at 360-466-3821 or 1-800-585-8200.

Delightful David Austins

English roses are gaining popularity as more and more people catch on to their charm and adaptability. Created by David Austin in England, they have the full, cupped and rosette forms of the old roses and repeat-flowering and wider color range of the modern roses from which they are bred. English roses are healthy, vigorous and forgiving if you’re new to pruning. Like all roses, they appreciate good sun, plenty of summer water and a balanced slow-release fertilizer. As cut flowers, they make stunning additions to mixed bouquets, or let them stand alone and fill the room with their perfume. We carry an excellent selection here at the Nursery, and if you’re interested in trying them for the first time but not sure where to start, here are a few of our favorites:

‘**Golden Celebration**’ has deeply cupped golden-yellow flowers with a strong tea rose fragrance. It has a rounded and slightly arching habit and grows 4 to 5 feet tall. This rose is reliable and easy to grow with good disease resistance and excellent repeat flowering.

‘**Gertrude Jekyll**’ has large rosettes of rich glowing pink with an amazingly strong old rose perfume. She has an upright habit and matte gray-green foliage. Be sure to place this rose near a pathway to enjoy the fragrance every time you pass by.

‘**Jude the Obscure**’ has very large and full chalice-shaped blossoms of medium yellow with pale yellow outer petals. There’s a delicious fruity fragrance. ‘Jude’ has a strong growth habit and good disease resistance.

David Austin Roses has awarded Christianson’s Nursery a membership in its Premier Partnership Program, which means we have access to more varieties of English roses than most other nurseries. If you haven’t yet fallen in love with these romantic roses, stop by and browse our amazing selection, or tour our Schoolhouse Garden where many English roses have been planted for your enjoyment and inspiration. Also, remember to join us for our Rose Festival on June 23 for a rosy day of celebration and fun.

Rachel Anderson, Certified Professional Horticulturalist

Featured Plant: Rose of Sharon

An easy way to get some “wow” factor when your garden is past its early color is to plant *Hibiscus syriacus*, known as the Rose of Sharon shrub, or shrub althea. Flamboyant flowers cover the shrub from late summer into October. Several new cultivars are available this year that are worth a sunny spot in your yard. **AZURRI SATIN** is a rich blue single bloom with the plant’s characteristic maroon veining at the center of the flower. **CHINA CHIFFON** is white with a lacy center tuft and peek-a-boo bits of red at the center. **SUGAR TIP** is profusely covered with clear pink double flowers, and has variegated creamy-white and bluish-green leaves.

Hibiscus syriacus grows best in a sunny site with good soil and good drainage. The stiff architectural branches have attractive grayish-white bark. With moderately fast growth, it will reach 8 to 12 feet tall by 4 to 6 feet wide. Late to leaf out in spring, it is hardy to -10° or -20°F. Tough, healthy and floriferous: Rose of Sharon is a winner for the summer garden.

Kris Moe

Gift Store: Antiques and Fancy Goods

Everything old is new again in **Primrose**. With scientists learning that scents made from chemicals and lotions made from petroleum products are not healthy for us to breathe or put on our skin, Linda and I are finding more and more companies making products with real fragrances and botanical oils with the same methods used by our ancestors. One of the newest brands is **Lucia**, with soap and candles made using only pure, organic essential fragrances and 100 percent natural and botanical hydrating oils. No mineral or petroleum byproducts are used: just vegetable-based colors. Also, all packaging is printed on recycled paper with vegetable-based inks. Some of the fresh, inviting scents are Thyme Flower and Coriander, Wild Ginger and Fresh Fig, Goat Milk and Linseed, and Damask Rose and Cypress. These fancy goods will be right at home with our antique garden tools, vintage clothing, shabby chic furniture and faded floral fabrics. Our grandmothers would be pleased!

Toni Christianson



Gardens of Note



Sunday, June 24 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Five private country gardens will be open for touring with live music performed at each location in the fifth annual Gardens of Note, presented as a fundraiser by the **Skagit Symphony**. This year’s gardens are south of Mount Vernon and include the vegetable garden of **Graham (“The Galloping Gourmet”)** and **Treena Kerr**. Graham Kerr is also author of “*Growing at the Speed of Life*,” a book about the first year of his kitchen garden, now in its fourth year. Tickets are \$25 and available through the Skagit Symphony’s website, www.SkagitSymphony.com, or online at www.brownpapertickets.com/event/243708. For more information, call 360-848-9336.

Skagit Artists Together: Preview Show

Saturday, July 14, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. and Sunday, July 15, 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

The historic Schoolhouse at Christianson’s Nursery will feature works by Skagit County artists participating in the **Open Studio Tour** of July 21-22. For more information, see www.SkagitArt.com.



2012 Giant Pumpkin Weigh Off



Keep watering and fertilizing those pumpkins in preparation for Christianson’s Second Annual Giant Pumpkin Weigh Off this fall! Stay tuned to our website (www.christiansonnursery.com) and Facebook for more details.

Christianson's Summer Calendar

Nursery Walk with Ani Gurnee

Saturday, June 2 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.
reservations required complimentary

Ani Gurnee from *Aulos Design* will lead you on a tour of our grounds and greenhouses, pointing out the hottest new arrivals and the plants that she has seen perform the best as time-tested winners. Bring your questions and be prepared to be informed and inspired for new ideas in the garden.

Great Garden Gatherings

Sunday, June 3 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.
reservations required complimentary

Perk up your patio and backyard with instant-impact plants and lots of little touches to dress up your summertime soirees. Our entertaining *Christianson's Nursery's* team of **Cheryl Bonsen** and **Andrew Pickens** will get you thinking outside the box for outdoor entertaining: scented geraniums wafting in the air ... mini-topiaries on the picnic table ... bold color combos to surprise and delight.

June Bloom Walk with John Christianson

Saturday, June 9 1 p.m.
reservations requested complimentary



Join us in the garden as **John Christianson** shows us the flowering trees, late-season rhododendrons and early roses at the 11-acre English Garden of La Conner Flats, adjacent to our Nursery. The walk begins in our Schoolhouse Garden; from there you will stroll with John to discover the highlights of the season.

Following the June Bloom Walk on June 9, plan to have **Tea at the Granary** at La Conner Flats. This tea features sandwiches, scones, fruit and dessert. Call 425-765-0046 for reservations (\$16 per person).

Kiwis and Figs for Western Washington

Sunday, June 10 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
reservations required class fee: \$5

Add to your homegrown harvest with kiwis and figs that do well in the maritime Northwest. Growing tips and help on choosing varieties will be discussed by “Kiwibob” **Bob Glanzman**, owner of *The Puget Sound Kiwi Co.*, and **Hildegard Hendrickson**, charter member of the Seattle chapter of the *Western Cascade Fruit Society*. How soon can you expect to pick fruit from a new plant? Which varieties need help with microclimate protection? And what’s with some of the bizarre botany (hint: males and females and wasps)?

Exquisite Japanese Maples

Saturday, June 16 11 a.m. – noon
reservations required class fee: \$5

Expert in Japanese maples and passionate collector **Charlie Morgan** is ready to help you choose and care for this spectacular group of trees. “Bring your questions!” he urges, and promises straight answers about the pros and cons of different selections, with an emphasis on how to keep your maples healthy. Charlie is owner of *Amazing Maples* of Mukilteo. And as a bonus, Christianson’s has its huge assortment of Japanese maples on sale through Father’s Day weekend!

Tough Jewels: Hardy Fuchsias

Saturday, June 30 11 a.m. – noon
reservations required class fee: \$5

Your perennial garden can sparkle with sprays of hot pinks, cool blues and romantic pastels from May or June until frost with hardy fuchsias. Just familiar with the “fuchsia-basket fuchsia” that appreciates a spot in the shade? Give your hardy fuchsia its glory in the sun! Fuchsia specialist **Kevin Jones**, owner of *Jordan Nursery Greenhouses* in Stanwood, will dazzle you with a slide show of varieties (there are more than 300 hardy in the Northwest) and information on growing these hummingbird magnets with ease.

Visit Us Online: Easy Ways to Stay in Touch.

Website (www.christiansonnursery.com): Our upcoming classes and events, plus links to current and past *Garden Gazette* and *Garden Notes* newsletters

Garden Notes: Our emailed newsletter sent at the beginning of each month

Facebook: Easy to find with the Facebook icon on our website

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

Christianson's Summer Calendar – continued

Hypertufa

Saturday, July 14 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
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 garden ornamentation. Make a hypertufa trough to take home for planting with alpine plants or sedums, while learning about hypertufa and other cement-based materials. Planters, water basins, stepping stones, leaves and sculptural pieces can be made using the techniques Kathy presents. All materials and supplies are provided, and students should wear gardening/work clothes or a sturdy apron and bring a trowel.

Chilled Soups for Summer

Saturday, July 21 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
reservations required class fee: \$10

Warm summer days and the appearance of tomatoes and cucumbers in the garden bring to mind gazpacho and alfresco dining. Join chef **Carol Roberge** as she shares new twists on a classic summer soup. Think strawberries and fennel paired with yellow heirloom tomatoes for a taste as lovely as its apricot hue. How about Cucumber and Mint Gazpacho with Preserved Lemon Cashew Sour Cream? As for the star summer fruit, watermelon, you'll learn to make an amazing chilled soup using some rather unlikely pairings. Carol, a graduate of Living Light Culinary Arts Institute, enjoys demonstrating that you need not sacrifice taste in the name of nutrition.

Better Blueberries!

Saturday, July 28 11 a.m. – noon
reservations required class fee: \$5

Keeping 350 acres of blueberry shrubs healthy and fruitful is the job of Skagit Valley's **Charlie Anderson**, organic farm manager for *Sakuma Brothers Farms*. With the voice of experience (he also has grown organic pinot noir grapes in Oregon), Charlie has plenty of organic strategies and home remedies for getting a big harvest from this nutritionally loaded fruit. Also find out which varieties are best for home gardens in the Northwest.

Bountiful Bouquets, Safe to Sniff

Saturday, August 4 11 a.m. – noon
reservations required class fee: \$5

Learn the secrets of a beautiful, organic cutting garden – with both perennials and annuals – from **Diane Szukovathy** of Mount Vernon flower growers *Jello Mold Farm*. The

farm embraces sustainable practices to grow more than 150 varieties of cut flowers, while nourishing a robust community of insects and wildlife that keeps the land in healthy balance.

Nursery Walk with Ani Gurnee

Saturday, August 4 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.
reservations required complimentary

New summer stunners and fall-planting must-haves are arriving at the Nursery all the time, and **Ani Gurnee** from *Aulos Design* reprises her popular tour of our grounds and greenhouses to acquaint you with the great options.

Standout Pots and Stunning Plants

Sunday, August 12 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.
reservations required complimentary

While our outdoor containers are on sale for 20 percent off, get help from *Christianson's Nursery's* **Andrew Pickens** to find the right pot among our huge selection: frost proof, glazed, terra cotta and more. Learn what shape and size will work best for you, and explore the dramatic effects you can get with year-round plantings.

Desserts with an Herbal Inspiration

Saturday, August 18 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
reservations required class fee: \$10

Chef **Suzanne Butler** will tempt your sweet tooth with treats enhanced by herb-garden snippets: anise hyssop ice cream ... orange and rosemary bread pudding ... mint chocolate mousse. Suzanne, a culinary arts instructor at *Skagit Valley College*, was Graham Kerr's cooking assistant for many years and manager of the Mount Vernon Farmers Market. You'll get fresh ideas for enjoying summer's fragrant herbs.

A Way with Weeds!

Saturday, August 25 11 a.m. – noon
reservations required class fee: \$5

Eradicating weeds may be impossible, but you can find a new way of dealing with them in **Ani Gurnee's** insightful look at how weeds work and what we can do to minimize their aggravation. Ani, of *Aulos Design*, will help you devise a weed-management strategy for different garden situations: Which are the worst of the worst? How do they get so out-of-control? Will composting kill weed seeds? And even, could weeds have beauty or value?

**To make your reservations for classes and events,
please visit the Nursery or call us at
360-466-3821 or 1-800-585-8200.**

Summer Specials

June 1-10
Vines
 vigorous akebia, clematis, honeysuckle,
 jasmine, wisteria, kiwi, grapes
 and much more
 20% off

June 11-24
Perennials
 our best selection of perennials ever:
 thousands of plants for sun or shade
 4-inch, quarts and 1-gallon sizes
 20% off

June 29 - July 4
Annuals: 40% off Sale
 hanging baskets, geraniums, impatiens,
 petunias, fuchsias, lobelia and more;
 annuals in packs, 2-inch and 4-inch pots
 40% off

July 16-31
Summer Herbs
 basil, lavender, oregano, parsley, sage,
 rosemary and thyme ... and much more
 20% off

August 17-31
Summer Heather
 hardy blooming plants
 in a variety of colors
 20% off

June 11-17
Japanese Maples
 upright and laceleaf varieties
 from 1 gallon to 7' tall
 20% off

June 25 - July 1
"Lemon" Sale
 ugly plants with beautiful futures:
 nursery seconds at greatly reduced prices,
 includes perennials, shrubs and trees
 priced to sell - 50% to 70% off

July 5-15
Hydrangeas
 our huge selection of summer-blooming
 favorites includes "hortensias," lacecaps,
 oak-leaf and Peegee tree hydrangeas
 20% off

August 1-16
Outdoor Containers
 our huge selection of small to very large
 glazed and terra-cotta outdoor containers
 20% off

August 17-31
Water Plants
 water lilies, floating plants, iris and more
 30% off

CLASSES & EVENTS

Saturday, June 2
 Nursery Walk with Ani Gurnee 1 p.m.

Sunday, June 3
 Great Garden Gatherings 1 p.m.

Saturday, June 9
 June Bloom Walk 1 p.m.
 (followed by optional Tea at the Granary)

Sunday, June 10
 Kiwis and Figs for Western Washington 1 p.m.

Saturday, June 16
 Exquisite Japanese Maples 11 a.m.

Saturday, June 23
 Ninth Annual Rose Festival 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Saturday, June 30
 Tough Jewels: Hardy Fuchsias 11 a.m.

Saturday, July 14
 Hypertufa 10 a.m.

Saturday, July 21
 Chilled Soups for Summer 11 a.m.

Saturday, July 28
 Better Blueberries! 11 a.m.

Saturday, August 4
 Bountiful Bouquets, Safe to Sniff 11 a.m.
 Nursery Walk with Ani Gurnee 1 p.m.

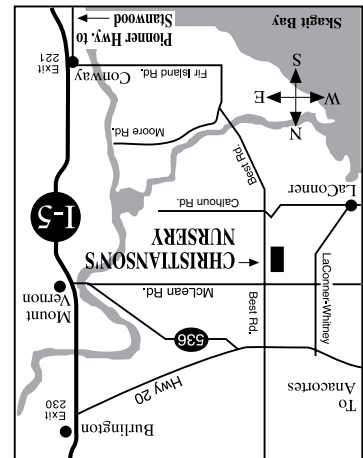
Sunday, August 12
 Standout Pots and Stunning Plants 1 p.m.

Saturday, August 18
 Desserts with an Herbal Inspiration 11 a.m.

Saturday, August 25
 A Way with Weeds! 11 a.m.

Summer Hours
 Daily 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
 (July 4th till 3 p.m.)

From Bellingham: Take Exit 230. Go 5 miles west on Hwy. 20 to Best Road. Turn south, go 2 miles on Best Road.
 From Everett: Take Exit 221. Go 8.5 miles west on Fir Island Road to Best Road. Go 1 mile north on Best Road past Chillyberg/Calhoun Road.



360-466-3821 • 1-800-585-8200

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

PRRST STD
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 SAM INC