

# GARDEN GAZETTE

April - June 2013

John Christianson, Editor

## CHRISTIANSON'S Nursery & Greenhouse

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

### *Colleen Marie (Peth) Thulen: 1939 – 2013*

Many years ago a shy little girl waited by a classroom door to give her friend a valentine. He took the card and watched as the pigtailed girl ran away down the hall. She was in the third grade and he was in the fourth. Many years later she was crowned the first “Queen of the Tulips” during the 1957 Tulip Show . . . the beginning of what is now Skagit Valley’s Tulip Festival. Her escort at the coronation ball was the fourth grader who had received that valentine so many years before and the man who was soon to be her husband, Gail Thulen. After sharing 55 years of marriage and a wonderful life together, Colleen passed away in late January from a rare brain tumor.

John and I met Colleen and Gail when we purchased Hart’s Nursery in 1990 (later renamed Christianson’s). Colleen had been working for Bob Hart and, much to our delight and relief, she decided to stay and work with us as we took on a new chapter in our lives. Many of our longtime customers will remember her dedication to customer service and her eagerness to share her extensive plant knowledge. Her family had homesteaded in Skagit Valley and it seemed she knew and introduced us to just about every person who came into the garden store in those early years. She lived what she taught – not only getting her hands in the soil but designing wonderful gardens around the farmhouse in which she and Gail lived most of their married life. Early spring is when her children remember her sterilizing soil in a big pan in her oven and starting seeds in recycled milk cartons filled with the “cooked” soil. Her oldest daughter, Kelly, remembers that her Mom “always had a system, she always looked forward, and she always had faith and hope.”

Colleen was a remarkable woman who accomplished much in her lifetime. She was a farmer, equestrian, lifelong member of the La Conner Civic Garden Club, a member of the Nitty Gritty Garden Club and Whatcom Horticultural Society, as well as a founding member of the Skagit County Genealogical Society. But her greatest legacy is her family. A few springtimes ago I remember watching her four oldest grandsons as they waited to practice baseball for La Conner High. It was like watching a “coming of age” movie as girls appeared out of nowhere to flirt with the team as the boys waited for the younger kids to come off the field. I would be waiting in our car for our daughter to finish soccer practice and, being the devoted people watcher I have always been, I would watch Colleen’s grandsons as they leaned against cars or sat on the lawn under the ancient maple trees in front of the high school and visited with their friends. They were gentleman all and had a wholesome, easygoing manner that reflected a loving and secure upbringing.

During the magical springtime evenings to come, when the sun just starts to set across our beloved farmland, I will be thinking about Colleen and those fond memories I have of her grandsons, who are now carrying Colleen’s spirit with them as they enter their adult lives. In the end, her family was her greatest treasure. And her husband Gail, the love of her life, still has the valentine to prove it.

Toni Christianson



*“Queen of the Tulips,” 1957*



## *Tulip Season Highlights*

### *Art at the Schoolhouse*

Friday, April 5 – Sunday, April 28    Open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

While visiting the picturesque daffodil and tulip fields of the Skagit Valley, come by our historic 1888 Schoolhouse for an outstanding show of local artists from the **Stanwood Camano Arts Guild**. The show is now in its sixth season, and with new and returning artists you'll find a multimedia celebration of styles: outdoor metal garden art, stained-glass garden stakes, paintings, tiles, jewelry, cards, photography and more.

### *Judy and Annie's Philly Sandwiches & Crepes - plus Iversen's Espresso*

Back by popular demand, **Judy and Annie** will be offering their warming lunch fare on weekends and some weekdays during April, weather permitting. In addition to Philly cheesesteak sandwiches and five kinds of crepes, they will also be offering their award-winning Crab-Shrimp Chowder and fresh-squeezed lemonade. New this year – and oh-so-welcome to this coffee-crazed community! – is **Iversen's Espresso**, setting up their stand at the Nursery on April weekends.

### *Fourth Annual Historic Homes Tour*

Saturday, April 6    10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Visit some of Skagit Valley's loveliest vintage homes, this year featuring homes and buildings in the Bow-Blanchard-Edison area, north of our Nursery. Tickets for this **Skagit County Historical Museum** event are available for sale at our Garden Store (\$15 advance; \$20 day of tour).

## *Mother's Day at Christianson's*

We aim to delight all of your senses when you come to Christianson's during Mother's Day weekend, May 11-12. The brilliant colors of blooms everywhere and sweet scents in the air invite you to join in this cheerful tradition. This year, in addition to our spectacular hanging baskets, we are creating darling tabletop baskets with blooming bulbs, ferns and spring flowers tucked in for an instant centerpiece or porch adornment. (These tabletop baskets will be available all April through Mother's Day.) And you'll never go wrong with a gift certificate, perhaps packaged with some of our tasty chocolates or a gift or antique from our gift shop or a vintage-looking watering can from our selection of fine gardening accessories. Bring a picnic if the weather is warm and enjoy our Schoolhouse Garden and the amusing antics of our llamas and lambs. As always, we will be serving homemade chocolate chip cookies and coffee.

On Friday evening, May 10, we're hosting a special Mother's Day Festive Cooking demonstration that makes for a fun outing with Mom or provides inspiration for your own kitchen efforts later in the weekend (see Page 3 for class details).

## *Gifts for Mother at Primrose*

The trend in flower arranging is for a grouping of clear glass vases (all the same or all different) with a single bloom in each (all the same flower or all different) arranged on a tray, platter or cutting board and set on a table, window sill or nightstand. This is such an easy way to bring a touch of nature into our Mothers' homes and it allows the beauty of each flower to stand on its own. Plus it is so easy to keep up through the year; the look can transition quickly with the use of spring to summer to fall to winter flowers. We have small glass vases that are connected as well as a grand assortment of large and small vases to mix and match. We have seasonal examples of this look in Primrose during the year so stop by and see what you think ...

## *It's Time to Plant Pumpkins!*

April is when you need to start germinating your seeds of giant pumpkins indoors for transplanting outdoors later – and you'll want to be part of the fun this year, since Christianson's is planning its biggest and best pumpkin festival ever! The **Third Annual Skagit Valley Giant Pumpkin Festival** is set for Saturday, September 28. We'll have prizes for the pumpkin weigh-off, games, food, music ... you won't want to miss this day!

# Christianson's Spring Calendar

Be sure to check out our Friday evening classes from mid-April through May!

## *Plant a Chair!*

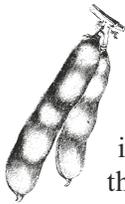
Saturday, April 6 1 – 2:30 p.m.  
reservations required class fee: \$40

In previous workshops, you may have seen the botanical artistry of the woven wreaths and picture frames of our talented staffer, **Laura Campbell**. Now she will guide you through making a living chair for your porch, fairy garden or – with houseplants – indoors. Bring pruners, gloves and your own chair, wood or metal, preferably with an open back and seat. Laura will guide you through the weaving of vines around the back and seat, creating structure to support your plants. We will provide the materials needed to create the bones of your “plant chair,” and you can stroll through the nursery to purchase your plantings.

## *Vegetables:*

### *The New, The Best, The Organic*

Friday, April 19 6 – 7 p.m.  
reservations required class fee: \$5



Get ready to perk up your plates with some terrific varieties of vegetables this year! **Nicolette Thornton** of *Skagit Gardens* will show us a mouth-watering assortment of veggie starts – including their new line of organics. What makes these new varieties better? What’s the timing for planting them out for a good succession crop? Nicolette digs right in to provide tips for an abundant harvest.

### *Uncommon Edible Plants for the Northwest*

Friday, April 26 6 – 7 p.m.  
reservations required class fee: \$5

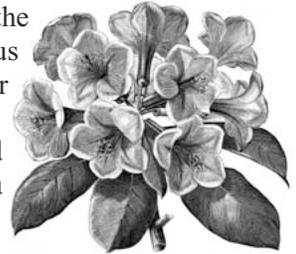
From mulberries and seaberries to shipovas and pawpaws, you’ll hear **Casey Schoenberger** focus on some unusual food plants (tree fruits, nuts and berries) that work well in our area, including specific varieties. He will cover soil, water and space requirements for his favorites as well as common disease and pest issues. He’ll also go over their culinary value – some may be edible but not that palatable, while others are delicious! Casey is a certified permaculturist and owns *Happy Little Farm* in Conway.

## *American Rhododendron Society*

### *Flower Show*

Saturday, April 27 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

The **Komo Kulshan Chapter** of the ARS will be holding its glorious show of rhododendron trusses in our Propagation House. Don’t miss this chance to speak with the experts and see more amazing blooms than you can imagine!



## *Make Your Own Photo Book*

Friday, May 3 6 – 7 p.m.  
reservations required class fee: \$5

Learn how to use free online tools to create and self-publish a photo book; it's easier than you might think! After the class you should be able to take your own photos and create a book from them – for a garden journal, special family event, recipes, you name it! Our speaker, **John Holtman**, is a local photographer who has self-published several photo books and often can be seen lugging his eclectic collection of photo gear around Christianson’s (see his website at [johnholtmanphotography.com](http://johnholtmanphotography.com)). If you have a book that you would like to use as a pattern, feel free to bring it to class.

## *Mother's Day Festive Cooking*

Friday, May 10 6 – 7:30 p.m.  
reservations required class fee: \$10



Fresh tastes of springtime will delight you at this lively cooking demonstration in our Schoolhouse by **Jackie Davison**, cooking instructor and owner of *Potluck Kitchen Studio*, the new cooking school and center for fun food events in Anacortes. Bring Mom to enjoy the class together, or learn how easy it will be to create your own delicious luncheon for her on Mother’s Day. On the menu: Chilled Pea and Mint Soup; Garden Green Salad with Spring Flowers; Smoked Salmon, Asparagus and Goat Cheese Strata; Strawberry-Rhubarb Tartlets.

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

# Christianson's Spring Calendar – continued

## *Invincible Vines*

Friday, May 17 6 – 7 p.m.  
reservations required class fee: \$5

You can always find room in your garden to go vertical with vines! Create a “wall of Wow!” with dramatic big-flowered clematis, or let peek-a-boo blooms sweetly scramble through a shrub. Join **Rachel Zeutenhorst** and **Andrej Suskef** of *T&L Nursery* in Woodinville as they showcase a wide variety of flowering vines, focusing on fragrant honeysuckle and clematis, shade-loving akebias, intriguing climbing hydrangeas, and vines that attract hummingbirds.

## *Growing Proven Winners*

Friday, May 24 6 – 7 p.m.  
reservations required class fee: \$5

The Proven Winners line of plants is known for outstanding garden performance – but it takes a lot of work to get them to that point. **John Gaydos**, head of product development for *Proven Winners*, based in Illinois, will take us on a trip around the world meeting the plant breeders and hearing stories of how plants come here, how long it takes and where they have been along the way.

## *Grand Geraniums: The Specialty Varieties*

Saturday, June 1 11 a.m. – noon  
reservations required class fee: \$5

Fancy leaves, Martha Washingtons (Regals), ivy type, scented-leaf type ... join us in an exploration of *Pelargonium* (the genus name for what we commonly call geraniums). These beauties, native to South Africa, reward us with steady blooms and great fragrance. **Kevin Jones** of *Jordan Nursery Greenhouses* in Stanwood will discuss the selection and care of specialty geraniums, inspiring us with choices for baskets, potpourri gardens and window boxes.

## *Stay in Touch*

- Website:** [www.christiansonnursery.com](http://www.christiansonnursery.com)
- Garden Notes:** Our monthly emailed newsletter (sign up on our website)
- Facebook:** Look for the Facebook icon on our website
- Radio:** *The Garden Show* with John & Mike  
Sunday mornings, 9:30 a.m.  
AM 660 KAPS

## *Your Herb Garden: An Inviting Home for Beneficial Insects*

Saturday, June 8 11 a.m. – noon  
reservations required class fee: \$5

Herbs are among the best plants for attracting beneficial insects to aid in the health of your entire garden. **Alison Kutz** has been an owner/operator of *Cascade Cuts* nursery in Bellingham for more than 30 years and is dedicated to growing in the least toxic way possible. She consults and supports biological approaches for the green industry through *Sound Horticulture* and will share ideas with you for making your herb garden an “insectary” – a habitat for the good bugs that are a dynamic part of a healthy ecology.



## *June Bloom Walk with John Christianson*

Saturday, June 15 1 - 2 p.m.  
reservations requested complimentary

With summer just around the corner, join **John Christianson** on a stroll among 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'll meander next door to discover the highlights of the season.



Sunday, June 30 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Private gardens in the La Conner area are featured, with live music at each location, in this lovely tour that is a fundraiser for *Skagit Symphony*. Tickets and full information are at [www.SkagitSymphony.com](http://www.SkagitSymphony.com). For more information, call the symphony office at 360-848-9336.

## *Our "Big Tent Events" in June*

Dan Hinkley • Karen Chapman • Ciscoe Morris

Please see details on Page 5

# A Rosy Day Out: Tenth Annual Rose Festival

Saturday, June 29

Keynote speakers and longtime “Rose Buds” **Ciscoe Morris** and **John Christianson** talk roses and plant companions.

- 8:30 – 10:30 a.m. Rose Display entries can be submitted  
9 a.m. – 6 p.m. Self-guided tour of Schoolhouse Rose Garden  
10:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. **Tri-Valley Rose Society** Display  
10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. **Tri-Valley Rose Society** members available for rose advice  
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. **WSU Skagit County Master Gardener** Plant Clinic  
1 – 2 p.m. **Robyn Swesey** and **Larry Sawyer** of the Tri-Valley Rose Society talk about “No-Spray Roses”  
2:30 p.m. **Ciscoe Morris** and **John Christianson**, followed by a Rose Ice Cream Social



## Calling All Rosarians ...

As part of Christianson’s Annual Rose Festival, the **Tri-Valley Rose Society** is 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 John Christianson will announce the winners and gift certificates will be awarded. Entries must be submitted between 8:30 – 10:30 a.m. on the day of the festival.

## Also Under the Big Tent in June

### *Dan Hinkley: Plant Explorer*

Saturday, June 22 1 p.m.  
reservations required class fee: \$5

We are thrilled once again to welcome renowned plantsman **Dan Hinkley** to our Nursery, in partnership with *Monrovia*. We’ll be setting up a big tent on the lawn behind our Schoolhouse and have plenty of seating, but please call soon for your reservations!

Dan will be talking about “New and Exciting Plants for the Pacific Northwest” and we’ll have a great selection of The Dan Hinkley Collection of plants from *Monrovia* for sale.

Dan has traveled the globe to find new plants. In 1987, he founded *Heronswood Nursery* with Robert Jones on the Kitsap Peninsula, and it quickly became the “must-go” destination for gardeners looking for the unique and wonderful. *Heronswood*, a nursery no longer, now has a fascinating future ahead with its new owners, the Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe. Since 2009, Dan has been consulting with *Monrovia* on trialing and evaluating new introductions from his many expeditions.

### *Karen Chapman: Container Creations*

Sunday, June 23 1 p.m.  
reservations required Class fee: \$5

Are you looking for ways to bring pizzazz to your pots with plant combinations that keep delighting throughout the seasons? Make the most of your container gardens with the exciting ideas of **Karen Chapman**, co-author with Christina Salwitz of the new book, “*Fine Foliage*”. Karen will do a fun mix-and-match with a variety of plants while demonstrating two container gardens – one for shade, one for sun. You’ll leave with great ideas, ready to plant!

Born in England, Karen Chapman grew up with an appreciation for the beauty of nature and the wonders of gardening. She has her own design company, *Le Jardin*, and teaches container design at Edmonds Community College Horticulture program. You can start drooling over some of her design ideas at [fine-foilage.com](http://fine-foilage.com).



## Special Attractions June 22 and 29

### Master Gardener Clinics

Volunteers from the **WSU Skagit County Master Gardener Program** will be at the Nursery:

Saturday, June 22, 10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Saturday, June 29, from 10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.



### Gourmet Picnic Fare & Espresso

**The Milkman's Daughter** will be selling gourmet nibbles from her vintage Ford panel truck and **Iversen's Espresso** will be on hand to keep us going on both days. Bon appétit!

# Spring Specials

April 1 – 14

## Magnolias

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

May 1 – 12

## Basket Stuffers

premium annuals for baskets or gardens growing in 2" pots  
20% off

May 6 – 12

## Geraniums

zonal, ivy, scented and fancy-leaf growing in 4" pots  
20% off

May 20 – 30

## Fuchsias

hardy, upright and trailing fuchsias in baskets and 2, 4 and 6-inch pots  
20% off

June 10 – 23

## Perennials

our best selection of perennials ever: 4-inch, quarts and 1-gallon  
20% off

April 15 – 30

## Rhododendrons and Azaleas

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

May 11 – 12

## Mother's Day Weekend Special

Eastern and Asiatic dogwood trees in bloom (approximately 6' to 8' tall)  
20% off

May 13 – 19

## Shady Days

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

May 31 – June 9

## Vines

clematis, honeysuckle, jasmine, wisteria, akebia and more 1-gallon to 5-gallon sizes  
20% off

June 24 – 30

## Japanese Maples

upright and laceleaf varieties from 1 gallon to 7' tall  
20% off

## "Lemon" Sale

ugly plants with beautiful futures: nursery seconds at greatly reduced prices  
50% to 70% off

# CLASSES & EVENTS

April 5 – 28

Art at the Schoolhouse 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

**Saturday, April 6**

Plant a Chair! 1 p.m.

**Friday, April 19**

Vegetables: New, Best, Organic 6 p.m.

**Friday, April 26**

Uncommon Edible Plants for the Northwest 6 p.m.

**Saturday, April 27**

Rhododendron Show 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

**Friday, May 3**

How to Make Your Own Photo Book 6 p.m.

**Friday, May 10**

Mother's Day Festive Cooking 6 p.m.

**Friday, May 17**

Invincible Vines 6 p.m.

**Friday, May 24**

Growing Proven Winners 6 p.m.

**Saturday, June 1**

Grand Geraniums 11 a.m.

**Saturday, June 8**

Your Herb Garden & Beneficial Insects 11 a.m.

**Saturday, June 15**

June Bloom Walk with John Christianson 1 p.m.

**Saturday, June 22**

Dan Hinkley: New & Exciting Plants 1 p.m.

**Sunday, June 23**

Karen Chapman: Container Creations 1 p.m.

**Saturday, June 29**

Tenth Annual Rose Festival 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

**Spring Hours**  
Daily 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
(Open Fridays until 8:00 p.m.)  
April 19 – May 31

**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**  
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