

# GARDEN GAZETTE

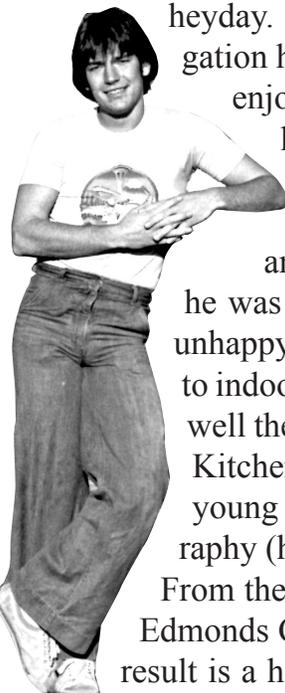
July – September 2014

John Christianson, *Editor*

## CHRISTIANSON'S Nursery & Greenhouse

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

### *At the Heart of Gardening*



What does an ambitious and energetic fifteen-year-old boy do when he has a job he loves? Well... John did love his very first job working at Saxe Floral and Greenhouse during this famous Seattle nursery's heyday. He was a carry-out who also stocked plants, sterilized soil, worked in their plant propagation house, nailed wooden flats together and otherwise hung out with seasoned gardeners. He enjoyed both their companionship and their conversation, which was filled with old garden lore and legends from personal stories in addition to the latest scientific garden news. So, what did he do? He quit this job and took a job in 'domestics' with J.C. Penney. Not because he thought he would like it better but because his pay went from \$2.25 to \$3.50 an hour. With that one decision he learned a momentous life-changing lesson. At Penney's he was responsible for stocking sheets, towels and small appliances. I can only imagine how unhappy he was. Overnight he lost the perfect job for a high-energy kid who preferred outdoors to indoors, running to walking and plants to bath towels. And, the conversation in domestics was, well the conversation was beyond boring. It was about thread count, polyester versus cotton and KitchenAid versus General Electric. Enough to throw an otherwise curious and enthusiastic young man into a depression. True, he had more money to spend on skiing, music and photography (his other passions) but that definitely did not make the change even remotely worthwhile. From then on John took every horticulture class his high school offered and later graduated from Edmonds Community College with a degree in Horticulture and Retail Nursery Management. The result is a happy man making a reasonable living doing what he loves. Is running a nursery really work? Not for the right person. A man who can work ten to twelve hours a day, seven days a week, often in blowing winds and pelting rain, often in wet pants and wet shoes with holes in the sides, is the right person. And John has been the right person for thirty-eight years, without missing a beat...no burnout and no waning interest. It is amazing what happens when a person chooses a career they find compelling. He spends time outdoors not only with plants, but also sharing information with, and gaining information from, the people he likes best...fellow gardeners. We should all be so fortunate to have our work also be our passion and our pleasure. So John, my wish for you is for many more years of a productive and happy life doing exactly what you love....gardening!

*Toni Christianson*

# A Brief History of the Meadow Schoolhouse

One-room schoolhouses have had a significantly important role in the history of the Skagit Valley, particularly reflected in settlement patterns influenced by farming and the Skagit River. As the area became settled by pioneers, many one-room schoolhouses were placed on land set aside on family farms in order to serve the growing education needs of the immediate community. Before dikes were constructed, several schools were rebuilt or moved when populations shifted due to major floods from the Skagit River that prompted relocation of these buildings to higher ground. Unfortunately, most one-room schoolhouses in the Skagit Valley have disappeared, victims of the need for larger, consolidated multi-classroom schools to accommodate a growing population and from land use changes. However, the fate of one schoolhouse has a happy ending.



Originally built in 1888 on the Lee Farm, next to the Skagit River (NW corner of Dike Road and W. Stackpole Road), the Meadow Schoolhouse was the original Meadow School, District No. 3 (commonly referred to as the “Lee School”). When replaced, in 1907, with a larger school farther to the north, the original Meadow School remained on the Lee farm as a machine shop and tool storage building. It was eventually moved off the farm when purchased by preservation enthusiast, Ronald E. Holttum in 1970 for \$600.

Mr. Holttum worked on the Schoolhouse for over 20 years with the intention of restoring it and converting it into a museum to display his extensive rock collection. Eventually, the Schoolhouse faced demolition due to future development of the property. John and Toni Christianson purchased the Schoolhouse in 1996 (also for \$600!) and moved it to its present location at Christianson’s Nursery

where it has become the focal point of the Display Gardens.

Lovingly restored, it is used for a variety of events, meetings and classes throughout the year. It is the oldest remaining one room schoolhouse in Northwest Washington and, with the exception of adding the bell from the old Harmony School, remains largely unchanged.

The demonstration gardens around the Schoolhouse were planted in 1998. As a display garden, it shows mature roses and perennials planted in harmonious color groupings. May through September are the best months to visit the gardens when plants are in peak bloom. We invite you to pack a lunch and enjoy a picnic on the Schoolhouse grounds during warm weather.

*There was nowhere to go  
but everywhere.*  
*Jack Kerouac*

Abbie Kanch Photography

*American and European vintage  
apparel for those who seek adventure.*

**PRIMROSE**  
*a promise of the unexpected*

## Primrose

We have the most wonderful, very large glass cloches in Primrose.

Because there is an opening at the top they can be used as terrariums much like the terrariums so popular with Victorians and 1970’s gardeners. Planted with maidenhair ferns and other small ferns for a green backdrop, seasonal plants such as potted paperwhites, snowdrops, pansies, primroses, lily of the valley, or an African violet can be added in front of the ferns and then replaced as the seasons unfold. The size of this terrarium makes a statement and also adds a personal touch where

a seasonal flower bouquet might otherwise be placed. It is both easier and less expensive in the long run than buying fresh flowers. And a terrarium adds the same all-important touch of nature to a home that a bouquet of flowers adds. Cut flowers are wonderful but a terrarium lasts for months and months. These large glass cloches can also be used to cover vignettes of family pictures, nature collections, bouquets of flowers or a grouping of antique fabric covered boxes. The choices are endless and the effect is beautiful.



# Christianson's Summer Calendar

## Structural Pruning for Young Trees

Saturday, July 12 11 a.m. - noon  
reservations required class fee: \$8



Nip it in the bud! Doing just the right pruning when a tree is young can prevent the need for costly, difficult pruning or structural failures when the tree is mature. In this lecture and demonstration, Certified Arborist, **Christina Pfeiffer**, will show you the simple steps for training young trees for future structure and beauty, and how to make the right cuts for the best results.

## Putting Your Woody Yard Debris to Work!

Saturday, July 12 1 - 2 p.m.  
reservations required class fee: \$8

Learn to create more vertical space and edges for microclimates that are diverse, artistic and easy to harvest. Join Certified Permaculture Designer **Nancy Chase**, owner of Shambala Farm on Camano Island, to learn the wonderful ways you can put your trimmings, pruning, weeding and combined organic materials to work in unique ways in order to create beds that are self-watering and fertilizing. Plus learn composting techniques that can be designed to simultaneously rotate, sift and make layout ready garden beds!

## Hypertufa

Saturday, July 19 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
reservations required class fee: \$39



Local landscape designer and garden artist **Kathy Hirdler** of Floribunda Designs returns to Christianson's to share her knowledge in making hypertufa containers and garden art.

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. Bring gardening gloves and wear old clothes or a sturdy apron and bring a trowel. Space is limited; sign up early!

## Clematis Made Easy

Sunday, July 20 1 - 2 p.m.  
reservations required class fee: \$8

Clemaniac, **Laura Watson**, will demystify the care and pruning of clematis. Learn how to choose a clematis, how to plant it, what the three clematis pruning groups are, which clematis are the easiest to grow and which do well in small gardens and containers. Laura will also recommend good companion plants for clematis (including other interesting vines), discuss kinds of structures clematis like and tell us how to coax clematis to grow into trees and shrubs.

## Growing, Tending and Harvesting Dahlias

Saturday, July 26 11 a.m. - noon  
reservations required class fee: \$8



Be it perfection of bloom that you seek, or just the glorious profusion of color in the garden, **John and Kathy Willson** can show you how to grow, tend and harvest dahlias successfully. Special emphasis will be given to watering and fertilizing dahlias without the need for special tools, harmful chemicals or excessive commitment of time or energy.

## A Way with Weeds!

Saturday, July 26 1 - 2 p.m.  
reservations required class fee: \$8

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 you can do to minimize their aggravation. Learn how to devise a weed-management strategy for different garden situations including how to know what your weed tolerance threshold is and pick your battles.



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

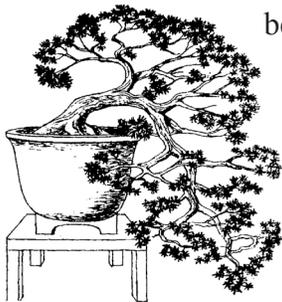
# Christianson's Summer Calendar - continued

## Beginning Bonsai Workshop

Sunday, July 27 1 – 3:30 p.m.  
reservations required

class fee: \$49 material fee: \$35

Learn hands-on basics of creating a beautiful bonsai from expert, **Tori Lenze**. Students will learn how to design and transplant a tree and how to use different tools for shaping. Class fees include all materials including bonsai pot, plant, soil and screening. Students bring small pruners, scissors and gloves. Additional tools and supplies available for purchase.



## Mulch Matters!

Saturday, September 6 11 a.m. – noon  
reservations required class fee: \$8

Join Certified Arborist and Consultant, **Christina Pfeiffer** as she explains different mulch materials and how they perform in the garden for weed suppression, aesthetics, and maintaining soil condition. She will also explain how to use leaves and the different compost products to their best advantage and why weed barriers are a dead end. Valuable information especially for all those folks who are compelled to scrape every last leaf out of their garden and leave the ground bare in the fall.

## Perennials for Fall

Saturday, September 13 11 a.m. – noon  
reservations required class fee: \$8

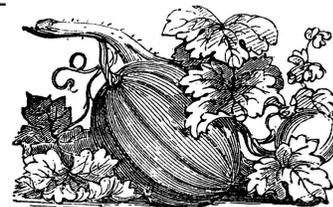
Although the focus on fall gardening is often preparing for winter, there are still plenty of lovely perennial blooms around to be enjoyed. Join **Ani Gurnee** of Aulos Designs as she talks about great perennials that keep performing until frost.



## Beyond Pumpkin Pie!

Saturday, September 20 11 a.m. – noon  
reservations required class fee: \$10

Join **Suzanne Butler** as she demonstrates creative ideas for putting pumpkin on the plate. Suzanne was “Galloping Gourmet” Graham Kerr’s cooking assistant for many years and is a Culinary Arts instructor at Skagit Valley College.



## Falling Into the Winter Garden

Sunday, September 21 1 – 2 p.m.  
reservations required class fee: \$8

Join Certified Low Impact Development Specialist, **Zsofia Pazstor** to learn about garden care and practices for fall and winter. A sustainable garden can keep producing all winter if the right steps are taken at the right time. And more than anything, winter gardens will be able to feed wildlife as well as people if we allow them to remain a habitat.

## Bats Incredible!

Saturday, September 27 11 a.m. – noon  
reservations requested complimentary

Got bats? If you want a healthy ecosystem, then the answer is “yes!” Back by popular demand, **Kathleen Bander**, founder of *Bats Northwest*, joins the fun of our Skagit Valley Giant Pumpkin Festival to talk about the 15 species of bats native to Washington. Learn about night-blooming plants attractive to the insects that Northwest bats eat. Get plans to build a bat house to put out next spring. Kids can get up close and personal with real mounted specimens.



### Stay in Touch

**Website:** [www.christiansonsnursery.com](http://www.christiansonsnursery.com)

**Garden Notes:** Our monthly emailed newsletter (Sign up on our website)

**Facebook:** Like us

**Pinterest:** <http://www.pinterest.com/primrosegifts>

**Radio:** The Garden Show with John & Mike  
Sunday mornings, 10:30 a.m., AM 660 KAPS

---

Fourth Annual  
*Skagit Valley*  
*Giant Pumpkin Festival*

Saturday, September 27  
at Christianson's Nursery

Sponsored by the  
Pacific Northwest Giant Pumpkin Growers



**Giant Pumpkin Weigh-off**

**Harvest Food • Pony Rides • Face Painting**

**Family Carnival Games • Toad Races • “The Bat Lady”**

**Cash prize for the biggest pumpkin!**

The prize amount is still growing as we go to press; stay tuned for updates about the prizes and all our sponsors at [www.christiansonnursery.com](http://www.christiansonnursery.com) and on Facebook.

**Howard Dill Award for “Prettiest Pumpkin”**

**We’ll also have prizes for**

**Giant Vegetables • Children’s Pumpkins • Big Sunflowers**

***Festival Schedule***

9 a.m. – 12 p.m.	Entries for pumpkin weigh-off accepted; also bring your exhibition veggies and sunflowers.	Noon – 2 p.m.	Musicians Laurel Bliss and John Clark play old-time, Cajun and bluegrass.
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.	Queen Bee Espresso	Noon – 4 p.m.	Giant pumpkin weigh-off
11 a.m. – 3 p.m.	Random Acts of Food	1 – 3 p.m.	Family fun! Pony rides with Lang’s Traveling Ponies, face painting, carnival games, toad races and more!
11 a.m. – noon	“Bats Incredible” with “Bat Lady” Kathleen Bander, founder of Bats Northwest. Reservations requested. All ages.	4 p.m.	Winners announced

***How to Enter***

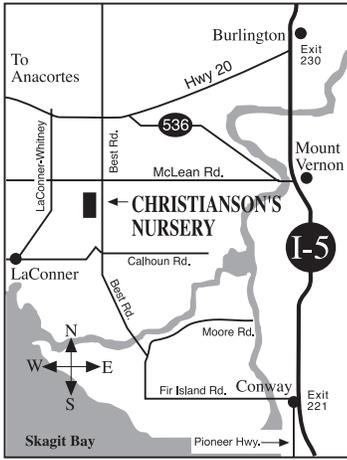
Contest entry forms are available at our Garden Store and on our website at [www.christiansonnursery.com](http://www.christiansonnursery.com)

360-466-3821 • 1-800-585-8200

# CHRISTIANSON'S

Nursery & Greenhouse

15806 Best Road • Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
[www.christiansonsnursery.com](http://www.christiansonsnursery.com)



**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. Continue north on Best Road; Nursery is 1 mile north of the intersection with Chilberg/Calhoun Road.

**Summer Hours**  
**Daily 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.**  
**July 4th, til 3 p.m.**  
**Open Labor Day**

**CLASSES & EVENTS**

**Saturday, July 12** Structural Pruning for Young Trees 11 a.m. - noon

**Saturday, July 12** Put Your Woody Yard Debris To Work! 1 - 2 p.m.

**Saturday, July 19** Hypertufa 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

**Sunday, July 20** Clematis Made Easy 1 - 2 p.m.

**Saturday, July 26** Growing, Tending & Harvesting Dahlias 11 a.m. - noon

**Saturday, July 26** A Way With Weeds! 11 a.m. - noon

**Sunday, July 27** Beginning Bonsai Workshop 1 - 3:30 p.m.

**Saturday, September 6** Mulch Matters! 11 a.m. - noon

**Saturday, September 13** Perennials for Fall 11 a.m. - noon

**Saturday, September 20** Beyond Pumpkin Pie! 11 a.m. - noon

**Sunday, September 21** Falling Into the Winter Garden 1 - 2 p.m.

**Saturday, September 27** Fourth Annual Giant Pumpkin Festival 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

**Saturday, September 27** Bats Incredible! 11 a.m. - noon

**Hydrangeas** July 7 - 20  
 our huge selection of summer-blooming favorites includes "hortensias", lacecaps, oak-leaf and pegee tree forms.  
 20% off

**Outdoor Containers** August 1 - 17  
 our huge selection of small to very large glazed and terra-cotta outdoor containers  
 20% off

**Water Plants** August 18 - 31  
 water lilies, floating plants, irises and more  
 30% off

**Weekly Radio Broadcast**  
*The Garden Show*  
 Sunday Mornings  
 With John & Mike  
 AM 660 KAPS • 10:30 a.m.

## Summer Specials

**Annual 40% off Sale** June 30 - July 6  
 hanging baskets, geraniums, impatiens, petunias, fuchsias, lobelia and more;  
 annuals in packs, 2-inch and 4-inch pots  
 40% off

**Summer Herbs** July 21 - 31  
 basil, lavender, oregano, parsley, sage  
 rosemary and thyme... and much more  
 20% off

**Summer Heather** August 18 - 31  
 hardy blooming plants  
 in a variety of colors  
 20% off

**Fall is for Planting** September  
 a wide variety of specials  
 throughout the month