

GARDEN GAZETTE

January – March 2017

Toni Christianson, Editor

CHRISTIANSON'S Nursery & Greenhouse

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

Mole's End Remembered and Manila Folders

I have carried three boxes (and growing) of manila folders with me from home to home, room to room, garden to garden over the last five decades and they may be headed to the burn pile sometime soon. They are filled with the images my garden dreams are made of. These files are stuffed with pictures, articles, and details about gardens I've been working toward creating all my adult life. They are annoying to my family; not because they now fill three plus boxes, but because they find them anywhere and everywhere in our house and the files are not usually in the boxes. Instead, their contents are often spread around on tables, chairs, sofas, counters and the floor. Every so often I stuff them back into the boxes but I can't seem to keep them contained for long. I go to them when I need to relax before bed, when I'm looking for ideas for our display garden at work or when I need to solve a problem with the design of our gardens at home.

These pictures are an incredibly valuable resource for me. Some only depict a small but important detail that will jog my memory when the need arises and I can then incorporate it into a garden. So, I circle it and put it in the file. Other photos are of large landscapes, estates and endless perennial borders. Sometimes I use smaller parts of these in gardens and sometimes they are only pure inspiration.

These files are especially helpful when designing a garden for the Northwest Flower and Garden Show. Our display



Andrew Buchanan

gardens in the Convention Center are always a blend of the details I find in these photographs. And often, elements of the display garden are resurrected at home or work. In the case of our 1995 Northwest Flower and Garden Show display garden, Mole's End, pretty much all of the garden came home. It was reconstructed in the garden behind our house and fills the south-east quadrant of our vegetable garden. The three raised beds that form the other quadrants are part of the four sections that form a larger square. More importantly, Mole's End is also the back corner of our all white garden as seen from our

home. I absolutely love everything about it. It is a lovely visual but also a very practical addition. My favorite Mole's End activities have been working in the greenhouse during a downpour and having tea with our grandchildren in the potting shed. Both are very cozy activities during our wet Pacific Northwest seasons.

Hesitantly, I'm considering taking pictures of the pages and putting them in a Pinterest file, as Emma, our computer savvy daughter would like me to do. However, I'm not convinced that sitting in front of the fire with a hard-edged computer would be the same as going through dog-eared, soil smudged, and tea-stained pictures dating back to the nineteen sixties. So, I think I'll keep the manila folders for a while longer. They're food for my soul.

Toni Christianson



NORTHWEST
FLOWER & GARDEN
SHOW™

Flower Buses to the Northwest Flower & Garden Show February 22 - 26

Enjoy a ‘Taste of Spring’ at this year’s 2017 Northwest Flower & Garden Show! Our annual “Flower Buses” are available to ride so you can enjoy the show without the stress of driving and finding parking. Buses leave the Nursery at 8:30 a.m. and return around 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, February 22, 23 and 24. The cost of a combination show ticket and bus ride is \$52. Call the Nursery (360-466-3821) to reserve your seat. If you’re driving down to the show, save by purchasing early bird tickets in our Garden Store (\$17 per person, a \$5 savings over buying them at the show). Once at the show, stop by our booth (#2126) to spot trendy plant picks and traditional favorites that you will want for your home garden collection. We will also be showcasing our favorite antiques and fancy goods from Primrose, our gift shop.

The Benefits of Bare Root

“I’m planting a tree to teach me to gather strength from my deepest roots.”

- Andrea Koehle Jones, *The Wish Trees*



Christianson's has a vast selection of bare root trees and shrubs for sale from January through March. Bare root trees are sold without any soil around their roots, hence the name ‘bare root’. Because they lack soil, the benefit of buying bare root trees is less weight for transporting home and less cost because no soil or container is used. The lack of soil also makes them less cumbersome to lift and highly adaptable with the soil in your garden. Christianson's bare root trees and shrubs are locally grown in Skagit Valley and are chosen to thrive in the Pacific Northwest. The selection includes lilacs, Hydrangea, blueberries, Forsythia, dogwood, flowering trees, fruit trees and more.

A Fascination for Hellebores

Christianson's Eleventh Annual Winter Festival

Saturday and Sunday, March 4 and 5 ~ 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Katie Miller Saturday at 11 a.m.

Keynote Speaker: Riz Reyes Saturday at 1 p.m.

Our Winter Festival celebrates the range and depth of Hellebores and our Nursery will have a wide variety in full bloom ready to be planted and enjoyed this season. We are fortunate to live in a climate that is friendly to shade-loving Hellebores. When most perennials are in slumber, Hellebores are in full bloom from January through April. These understory perennials are easy-care and deer resistant. And the varieties are endless; some are clear, others have spotting, striping, and can be bi-colored. A few of our favorites are: *Helleborus x hybridus* ‘Sunrise’, *Helleborus niger* ‘Josef Lemper’, *Helleborus niger x orientalis* ‘Madam Lemonier’, *Helleborus x ballardiae* ‘Pink Frost’.



Complimentary classes begin Saturday at 11 a.m. with Skagit Garden's horticulturist, **Katie Miller**, who will discuss these ‘darlings of the winter season’ and their hardy characteristics. At

1 p.m., learn Hellebore basics from Keynote Speaker and noted horticulturist, **Riz Reyes**, as he discusses different types of Hellebores and how to use them in the garden, cut arrangements and containers. An inspiring and educational day for those seeking happy surprises in their winter gardens. Reservations suggested for these complimentary classes: 360-466-3821.

Primrose - Antiques & Gifts

*"Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth,
for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire,
it is the time for home."*

- Edith Sitwell

Each new year is filled with unknowns and possibilities. It is a time of clean slates and intentional living. For many, it's about coming home to our roots, about being true to our values and mindful about the choices we make in our daily lives.

Here at Primrose, we are doing the same. We have always been committed to providing you with products that are natural, organic, eco-friendly, and human-friendly. Sometimes this approach is complicated. Sometimes it means the products are more expensive. And sometimes it's challenging. We may find a beautiful item at a good price, but it doesn't make the grade on our list of criteria.

As we begin this fresh new year, we are re-committing ourselves to bringing in only the best possible products. When we feel good about what we sell and you feel good about your purchases with us, everyone benefits. In this spirit, we are delighted to introduce a beautiful new line of soaps and lotions from **Panier Des Sens**. Using only natural, non-synthetic ingredients and essential oils, **Panier Des Sens** products are both effective and environmentally friendly. All products in this line are free of parabens, phenoxyethanol, silicone, and aluminum, and are not tested on animals. Their soaps and lotions are beautifully packaged and come in clean, pure scents like Rose Geranium, Sweet Almond, Organic Honey, and Provence (a blend of lemon, artemisia and cypress).

We're also committed to offering more locally-sourced products. For instance, we're excited to be bringing in a new line of delightful bird and nature paintings by **Cody Bloomberg**, a mixed media artist from Seattle. And, for a tried and true line of botanically-based skin and body care products, including gift sets for gardeners, we have a fresh new line up from **Island Thyme**, a small, family-owned company in the San Juan Islands.

We'll have many other new offerings at Primrose this season so please swing by and join us as we celebrate the arrival of the new year!

Weddings in the Schoolhouse Gardens

All of us at Christianson's look forward to the first blossoms in our Rose Garden. For us, it is one of the best times of our working year because it reflects what we love...gardening with roses and perennials. Within this garden is a historic one-room schoolhouse as the centerpiece with a re-purposed summer fishing cottage that is nestled nearby at the edge of the Rose Garden's grassy lawn. In 1996 the historic '1888 Meadow School' was moved to the muddy, undeveloped site of our soon-to-be display gardens. In 2015 we salvaged the fishing cottage and restored it onsite.

Having the cottage has made it possible to welcome engaged couples to consider our garden for their wedding. The cottage has a bridal dressing room and two restrooms, all of which allowed us to become an official wedding venue. This location will accommodate fifty guests for a ceremony in the Schoolhouse and one-hundred guests for a ceremony in the gardens, and includes a small kitchen for food preparation.

We have participated in a few weddings with friends and winter weddings have often been our favorite. The Schoolhouse is magical during the winter evenings with candles lined up along the window sills and candelabras at the altar. This venue can also be rented for anniversary, birthday, Holiday and family reunion celebrations.

With the opening of the Rose Gardens for weddings we are happy to have found a way to follow our love for recycling old buildings that would otherwise be torn down. This is something we have done throughout our Nursery and will continue to do into the future. It creates the ambiance we love and saves these precious structures.

For more information and to inquire about rates and availability,
please contact our Events Manager, Stephanie Banaszak at 360-466-3821 or 1-800-585-8200

Suggestions from Our Seasoned Staff

Christianson's Nursery is always working hard to present our customers with top quality, locally-sourced plants. From the beginning, John and Toni Christianson have had a passion for plants and that enthusiasm is shared by everyone who works here at Christianson's. In fact, did you know that many of our staff are Certified Professional Horticulturists (CPH)? To earn this certification, they have put in many required hours to master a certain level of horticulture knowledge in areas such as botany, plant propagation, entomology, and more, and many specialize in certain areas.



For example, meet **Nancy Stewart**, our buyer for roses and annual plants. Nancy is passionate about roses! She just finished creating our master list of over 450 rose varieties for 2017 and has been busy 'checking in' our new rose bush arrivals. When choosing which roses to plant this year, her suggestions stem (ah, hem) from the most frequently asked questions she receives from customers. Here are Nancy's suggestions (and yes, we'll have all these suggested roses in stock):

Which are the most fragrant red roses?

Mr. Lincoln (a classic red Hybrid tea with a damask fragrance) and Munstead Wood (a violet red English rose with a strong, classic rose fragrance).

Which are the most fragrant white roses?

Claire Austin (a creamy white English rose with a strong sense of myrrh, meadowsweet and vanilla) and Margaret Merril (a satin white Floribunda with an intense citrus fragrance).

Which roses do best in the shade?

Hybrid Musks like Ballerina and groundcover roses like Drift Roses and Flower Carpets.

Which roses do well in containers?

As a category, the miniatures fit and do well in containers. Likewise, groundcover roses are good choices for containers.

Some of our customers are looking for something new and different, while others bring in names of roses they already have and are hoping to find more of the same. Many of our roses, especially the tried and true classics, are brought back year after year. English roses are still the most popular because they are so fragrant, they have a timeless old fashioned look and are bred to have repeated blooms, and they are low maintenance. Whatever you're looking for, please let us know!

Giant Pumpkin Preparations...

Every September Christianson's hosts the annual **Skagit Valley Giant Pumpkin Festival**. We thought we'd plant a seed in your mind should you consider teaming with fate and entering to win the grand prize of \$1000.00! Did you know that last year's largest pumpkin weighed 1458 pounds? Preparations for such an endeavor may be less complicated than you might expect. Here are four primary steps to start growing your giant pumpkin:

- 1.) The site should be level, well-drained and in full sun.
- 2.) Pumpkin seeds should be purchased from world class giant pumpkin seed growers.
- 3.) Seedlings should be protected from cool temperatures and wind.
- 4.) All secondary blossoms should be pruned off, leaving the first flower to grow without competition.

Resources for growing are found online just by searching "how to grow giant pumpkins?".

Information on submitting your entry can be found on our 'What's Happening' page
on our website www.christiansonsnursery.com



Christianson's Winter & Spring Calendar

Winter-Warming Sustainable Soups

Saturday, January 28 11 a.m. – noon

reservations required class fee: \$13

Suzanne Butler, former cooking assistant for “The Galloping Gourmet”, Graham Kerr, will demonstrate two winter-warming soups made primarily from local ingredients. Leek and Potato is a classic French soup with ingredients from Ralph’s Greenhouse on the Skagit Flats. It’s simple, tasty, and surprisingly quick to make. Velvety carrot soup will travel the flavor world. Both can please your family and with a few simple embellishments, you can impress your most discerning guests.

Gardening for Backyard Mason Bees

Saturday, February 4 11 a.m. – noon

reservations required class fee: \$8

Native bees are solitary but neighborly, hole-nesting bees that are easy-to-raise and excellent pollinators. Raising solitary mason bees is a part of the future of sustainable agricultural pollination. Solitary bees are gentle bees because they are not interested in defending their nest, making them safe to have around kids and pets. Just ask **Emma Davis** of W.S.U.’s Research Extension about these pollinators during our class and learn interesting facts about these flying friends.

Fortuitous Fruit Trees

Saturday, February 11 11 a.m. - noon

reservations required class fee: \$8

Interested in growing apples and pears? This class will cover the best growing conditions and the basic pruning methods for fruit trees. Discover your green thumb with the help of **Ani Gurnee** of *Aulos Design*, as she demonstrates techniques to help you learn how to keep your trees healthy and productive year after year.

Pruning Garden Roses for Health

Saturday, February 18 11 a.m. – noon

reservations required class fee: \$8

Rose pruning is hot this time of the year! Learn three basic guidelines to prune hybrid teas, shrub or climbing roses with Seattle’s Rosarian, **John Harmeling**. Enjoy a live demonstration on how to prune roses for optimum growth, health and strength along with tips for proper care. John will also demonstrate how to sharpen your pruners. You will return to your garden armed with prudent practices for beautiful blooms.

A Fascination for Hellebores

Saturday and Sunday, March 4 & 5 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

complimentary event but reservations suggested for classes

See bottom of page two for event details.

Starting, Planting and Staking Dahlias Made Easy

Saturday, March 11 11 a.m. – noon

reservations required class fee: \$8

Learn how to grow floriferous dahlias from tubers, cuttings and seedlings using inexpensive grow lights and propagation mats. **John and Kathy Willson**, former owners of popular *Swede Hill Dahlia Sunflower Farm*, will teach you fool proof methods for getting your plants off to a great growing season of amazing blooms.

How to Prune and Renovate the Overgrown Garden

Saturday, March 18 11 a.m. – noon

reservations required class fee: \$8

Overwhelmed with an overgrown garden? Discover how different types of pruning (thinning) techniques will restore your ornamental trees and shrubs as well as create solutions for an overgrown or over-planted garden. Well-humored *Plant Amnesty* founder & author, **Cass Turnbull**, will alert gardeners to crimes against nature being committed in their own back yards with bad pruning practices. This fun and entertaining class offers a broad range of pruning information to home gardeners.

Year-Round Succulents

Saturday, March 18 1 – 2 p.m.

reservations required class fee: \$8

Cacti and succulents can be grown outdoors in the Northwest! Learn which plants grow well outside in the greater Seattle area and which need extra TLC. You will learn general cultivation tips to raise successful succulents. Instructor and avid cactus/succulent collector, **Karen Summers**, has been a member of the Cascade Cactus and Succulent Society Board of Washington State since 1990.

Apps and Snaps for iPhone and iPad Gardeners

Saturday, March 25 11 a.m. - noon

reservations required Class Fee: \$8

Every gardener who seeks to capture the elusive moments of perfection in plants and gardens inevitably turns to photography. Hear **John and Kathy Willson** explain how they use the newest digital gardening tools - the iPhone and iPad - to capture and archive the stunning beauty and grandeur of gardens around the world. Take home skills with five new apps to immediately grow and harvest your garden photography skills. Make sure your phones are charged!

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

January - March Specials

Through January 31

House & Conservatory Plants

house plants: palm, citrus, gardenia, orchids, ferns, succulents and more
25% off

February 17 - March 2

Roses

our biggest Rose Sale of the year!
antique, English, climbing and drought-tolerant rugosa roses
20% off

March 3 - 16

Bare Root

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

Weekly Radio Broadcast

The Garden Show

Sunday Mornings with John & Mike AM 660 KAPS • FM 102.1 KAPS • 10:30 a.m.

Stay in Touch

Website: christiansonsnursery.com

Garden Notes: Our monthly electronic newsletter: christiansonsnursery.com/whats-happening/newsletters/

Facebook: facebook.com/christiansonsnursery.com

Pinterest: pinterest.com/christiansonsnursery.com

Instagram: instagram.com/christiansonsnursery.com

February 1 - 16

Blooming Witch Hazel

our winter favorites
20% off

March 4-5

Hellebores

hundreds of our favorite winter-flowering perennial
20% off
(2 days only)

March 17 - 31

Camellias

winter and spring flowering beauties
many in bloom!
20% off

Mark Your Calendars!



February 22 - 26, 2017

Tickets will be available for purchase in our Garden Store (\$17 for early bird tickets and \$22 during the show). Call today to reserve your spot on our 'Flower Buses', heading to the show on February 22, 23 and 24 (\$52 pp).

CLASSES & EVENTS

Classes are 1 hour unless otherwise noted

Saturday, January 28

Winter-Warming Sustainable Soups 11 a.m.

Saturday, February 4

Gardening for Backyard Mason Bees 11 a.m.

Saturday, February 11

Fortuitous Fruit Trees 11 a.m.

Saturday, February 18

Pruning Garden Roses for Health 11a.m.

Saturday and Sunday, March 4 and 5

A Fascination for Hellebores

Saturday, 11 a.m., Katie Miller

Saturday, 1 p.m., Riz Reyes

Saturday, March 11

Dahlias Made Easy 11 a.m.

Saturday, March 18

How to Prune & Renovate the Overgrown Garden 11 a.m.

Saturday, March 18

Year-Round Succulents 1 p.m.

Saturday, March 25

Apps & Snaps for iPhone and iPad 11 a.m.

(Daily, till 6:00 p.m. starting March 1)

5:00 p.m.

Winter Hours: Open Daily 9:00 a.m. to

From Belligham: Take Exit 221. Go .5 miles west on Hwy 20 to Best Road. Turn south, go 2 miles on Best Road, we're just past the round-about.

From Bellingham: Take Exit 220. Go 5 miles west on Hwy 20 to Best Road. Continue north on Best Road, we're just 1 mile north of the intersection with Chilberg/Cahoon Road.

CHRISTIANSONS
Nursery & Greenhouse
360-466-3821 • 1-800-585-8200
www.christiansonsnursery.com
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