
GARDEN GAZETTE

July – September 2016

John Christianson, *Editor*

CHRISTIANSON'S Nursery & Greenhouse

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

Who Spilled the Beans?

There are those times in life when the ‘light goes on’ and we come to a new understanding of an important lesson in life. We actually watched that happen with Emma, all in one evening. Actually, it has been happening slowly for just about all the years of her life but we saw it finally take hold all in one evening. Emma, who is seven years old and the quintessential perfectionist, would cry and run to her room whenever we laughed at something she said or did that was cute or funny. While she has a great sense of humor and can laugh at others’ funny mistakes, she was inconsolable whenever we would laugh at her funny mistakes. This particular evening Bryan, our son-in-law, came rushing through the door with a big, and I mean big, black furry spider. The men in our family all seem to have this strange sense of what constitutes entertainment, but at least Bryan had the spider in a glass jar (as opposed to John who carries them around in his hand with the long furry legs moving in and out between his fingers in an attempt to escape). Bryan did cause the accustomed screams of alarm from women in our house (much to his liking) and I finally convinced him to leave by the back door and take his spider with him. We were having our first picnic of the season so he went out to show the great, black spider to the rest of our family. When he and Emma came through the door, I asked if he had shown the spider to Emma yet (she loves spiders) and he said, “Oh Toni, now you spilled the beans.” I guess he had planned on making his own, private spider presentation to Emma. I apologized and went back to fixing dinner. Later in the evening, after we had eaten and we were sitting around the table visiting, Emma disappeared under the table to tie shoe laces together, as has been her habit ever since her older sisters, Ann and Allyson, told her about this practical joke they had enjoyed during their youth. Everyone always acts surprised when they stand up and try to walk and John will even stumble and fall over, much to all the children’s amusement. Well, this time someone mentioned they could feel little hands on the tops of their shoes. Emma’s head peeked out from under the table and she confidently said, “Oh, now you have split the beans!” We of course laughed, thinking her mistake was very cute. However, I could see that she was close to tears and ready to bolt from the room. She did have a very weak smile on her face and so, before she ran crying to her bedroom, I commented to everyone at the table that Emma was truly growing up because she was learning to laugh at herself. The observation came at just the right time. The light went on and she started to laugh beneath the tears. She of course realized she had made a mistake because, while we were laughing she heard people say, “Emma, it is spilled the beans, not split the beans”. Later in the evening while I was in the kitchen and our family was gathered around the fireplace making s’mores, someone called to me that Emma was making one for me. She turned her smiling face away from the fire and, looking directly at me as though we had a secret, announced in a loud, clear voice “I wanted it to be a surprise for you Mom. Now someone has just shrunk the beans”. And so it went from spilled to split to shrunk. Amidst the laughter, she smiled confidently as everyone was teasing her about her mistake. If she had winked at me it would not have been cuter.

Toni Christianson

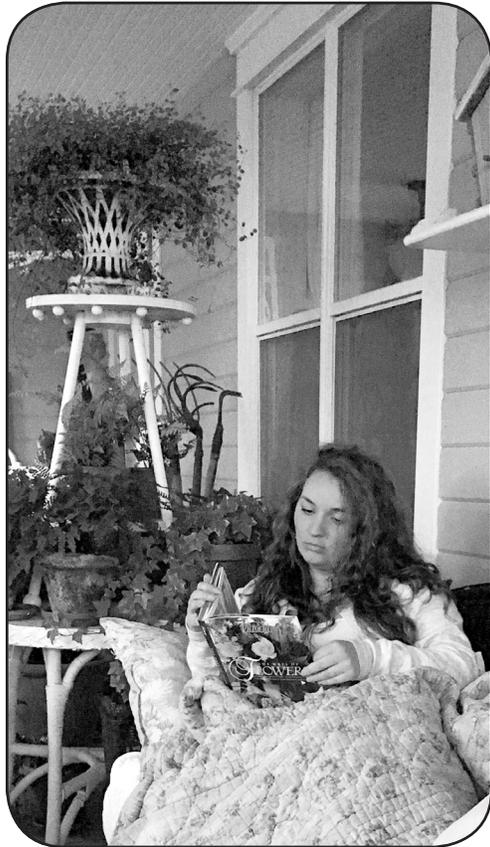
Reprinted from the April - May, 2004 edition of Garden Gazette



A Place Called Primrose..

I drifted into a summer-nap under the hot shade of July,
serenaded by a cicadae lullaby, to drowsy-warm dreams of distant thunder.

- Terri Guillemets



Summer nights, summer dresses, summer parties, summer daydreams... There are so many reasons to love this season. You can do everything or nothing at all. What's not to love about that?! Primrose is in a summer-state of mind as well, with whimsical and antique items for the home and porch, picnic baskets, flouncy summer tops and vintage jewelry, and summer hats for men and women.

At the end of your busy summer day, after the dishes are done, the sun has set and there's a nip in the air, what could be better than curling up under a vintage quilt with a good book? We carry a great assortment of antique French quilts and English eiderdowns and 100% cotton lap throws and pillows, as well as books for home, garden and 'foodie' inspiration, including coloring books for moments of meditative creativity.

As always, we have a great selection of lovely candles and bath products in summery fragrances that are chemical-free and made with pure botanical oils. For example, we have candles in scents like 'Heirloom Tomato & Peppercorn', 'Fresh Meyer Lemon', and 'Blue Sage and Lavender'. Perfect for a summer brunch or dinner party, or as hostess gifts. We also carry a wide selection of natural bath products from Island Thyme, a small, family-owned business on Orcas Island that creates wonderful lotions and soaps, including a few that are specially formulated with gardeners in mind.

Come to enjoy and explore, but expect to lose yourself in the summer wonderland that is Primrose.

Thank You!

John and I want to thank everyone who has recommended our Nursery to fellow gardeners looking for unusual plants. Not a day goes by that we do not hear from someone looking for a hard-to-find plant. John will order just a few of each of the rare plants that he can find because he loves the uncommon. It makes him smile to overhear a customer telling one of our staff members that they have looked all over for a particular plant and they are so excited to find one at our Nursery. After his trip to China with fellow horticulturists, he has been even more excited to carry any and every unusual plant grown in commerce that will survive and flourish in our climate. When I go on plant-hunting excursions with him it is like Christmas if he finds something unusual. He shouts out its name and literally leaps toward it with the excitement of a child. So, for all you gardeners, including Master Gardeners and Rose Society members, who have sent people to us we are very grateful. And, for all you gardeners looking for 'gourmet' plants, please email, call or come to see us for plants on your 'garden wish list'.

Sharing Garden Secrets

Too many tomatoes...cut cherry tomatoes in half and slice larger tomatoes into 1/8" slices. Dry in the oven or a dehydrator to the stage right before they are so brittle they break, then pack them in small sandwich bags which can then be stored with many bags together in a large Ziploc bag. Put them in the freezer to use after the fresh season is over. When planning a salad, omelette, pizza, spaghetti, or lasagna, just rehydrate a package in olive oil for a few hours, then rinse, drain and toss into your salad or other recipe. You can also put fresh whole tomatoes in a Ziploc bag (without skinning or deseeding), freeze, and then use later in place of fresh tomatoes when making soups and stews. We use our dried/frozen tomatoes all winter long in place of fresh and everyone agrees they are way better than the tasteless tomatoes of winter. In fact, John likes them better than fresh tomatoes. The best tasting were the Sun Gold cherry tomatoes, which were also our favorite when fresh, just like candy when eating them off the vine.

It is easy to keep hanging baskets looking nice by pruning them often. When one plant threatens to take over or is starting to look less than lush, just get out those pruning scissors and clip them into shape. The only time you must worry about the plant not making a fresh flush of growth is if the basket has dried out and the plant is actually dead. To keep the basket from looking like it just got a crew-cut you can cut back every third stem to the base of the plant. Then in a few weeks you can prune another third and then another third. This will keep the plants that can look very tired by the middle of summer from looking so stressed. These plants include allysum, petunias, bacopa, lobelia, immortale, fuchsias, and verbena.

I learned last year that we do not have to wait for most vegetables to grow to maturity to start eating them. I have always waited in the past and I have always had to throw some away because we could not find enough people to eat them all. Now we eat baby lettuce, onions, carrots, spinach, beets, chard, peas, beans, potatoes and cabbage before they would be considered grocery-store-ready and they are delicious! This way we can finish a small planting before it goes to seed or becomes too tough or bug-eaten to harvest. The only edibles we do not eat this way are the ones that must ripen before harvesting; such as winter squash, tomatoes, and of course, all the fruits and berries.

Christianson's Summer Calendar

Clematis Made Easy

Saturday, July 9 11 a.m. - noon
reservations required class fee: \$8

Clemaniatic, **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.

Away With Weeds!

Saturday, July 16 11 a.m. - noon
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.

Pruning Small Shrubs and Trees:

The Summer Advantage

Saturday, July 9 1 - 2 p.m.
reservations required class fee: \$8

Many gardeners are timid or even fearful of pruning in summer. There are good reasons to be cautious. Those same reasons make it an ideal time to subdue water sprouts and maintain size. Join Certified Arborist, **Christina Pfeiffer** to learn how to save work and produce better results by doing the right amount of the right pruning on the right plants during this time of year.

Nursery Walk with Ani Gurnee:

Her Favorite Summer Blooms

Saturday, July 16 1 - 2 p.m.
reservations requested class fee: \$8

Join **Ani Gurnee** as she takes you through the display gardens around the Schoolhouse and the Nursery to point out her favorite blooming plants for mid-summer interest. Learn which plants really shine during the hot months. Be sure to dress for the weather - summer hat and sun screen. Tour meets in front of the Schoolhouse.

Christianson's Summer Calendar - continued

From the Ground Up:

The Creation of a Japanese-Inspired Garden

Saturday, July 23 11 a.m. - noon
reservations required class fee: \$8

Creating a garden with a Japanese touch involves much more than just placing statues and lanterns into an existing garden. Using the example of a complete garden make-over, **Hans Wressnigg** from Niwa Japanese-Inspired Landscapes will explain the stages from inception and realization, demonstrating how a Japanese-inspired garden arises; considering the site potentials and limitations, as well as influences of specific situations on the design and responses in the Japanese-gardening tradition.

The History, Propagation, and Preservation of Iris

Saturday, July 30 1 - 2:30 p.m.
reservations required class fee: \$8

Iris is the largest genus of the family Iridaceae with up to 300 species – many of them hybrids. Join Iris grower and Nationally renowned authority, **Charlie Carver** as he takes a comprehensive look at the various classes of Iris in order to show the accomplishments of hybridizers over the last 150 years. He will discuss different Iris that are best suited to our region and different varieties that work well in containers. He will also touch on the extinction and preservation of cultivars.

Fall Soil Care for a Healthier Landscape

Saturday, September 10 11 a.m. – noon
reservations required class fee: \$8

How we treat the soil determines the success and health of the landscape. Join Certified Arborist, **Christina Pfeiffer** to learn the best things to do – and not do – at this time of year in order to be ready for Winter. She'll also discuss the best kinds of mulch to use, how to make leaf-mold mulch and offer tips for improving overall soil conditions.

The Pros and Cons of Fall Planting

Saturday, September 17 11 a.m. – noon
reservations required class fee: \$8

Fall can be a great time to plant, but there are a few considerations to ensure success. Join **Ani Gurnee** of *Aulos Designs* as she explains the factors involved such as, how observation of specific site conditions will influence timing.

Growing, Tending & Harvesting Dahlias

Made Easy

Saturday, July 30 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** formerly of Swede Hill Dahlia and Sunflower Farm, 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.



Perennials For Fall Interest

Saturday, September 3 11 a.m. - noon
reservations required class fee: \$8

Carry your garden color into winter with the inclusion of late blooming perennials. **Ani Gurnee** of *Aulos Designs* will present her favorite varieties and a few tips on how foliage and berries can function as brightly in the garden as flowers.

Mulch Matters!

Saturday, September 10 1 - 2 p.m.
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 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.

Bat's 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 at 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. Students can be up close and personal with real mounted specimens in small glass covered boxes. Children are welcome to join this educational and inspiring class.

Sixth Annual

Skagit Valley

Giant Pumpkin Festival

Saturday, September 24

at Christianson's Nursery

Sponsored by the Pacific Northwest
Giant Pumpkin Growers,

Skagit Valley Food Coop & Christianson's Nursery



Giant Pumpkin Weigh-Off \$1,000 prize

Harvest Food • Pony Rides • Face Painting

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

NEW! North Sound Brewing Company Beer Garden!

Cash prize for the biggest pumpkin!

Last year's pumpkin weighed in at over 1421 pounds! What will it weigh this year?
The prize amount is \$1,000. Stay tuned for updates about the prizes
and all our sponsors at www.christiansonsnursery.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. – Noon	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.
11 a.m. – noon	“Bats Incredible” with “Bat Lady” Kathleen Bander, founder of Bats Northwest. reservations requested. Children are invited.	Noon – 4 p.m.	Giant Pumpkin Weigh-Off
11 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Random Acts of Food, Northwest Coffee Co. & North Sound Brewing Company Beer Garden	Noon – 3 p.m.	Family fun! Pony rides with Lang's Traveling Ponies, face painting, carnival games, toad races and more!
		3 - 4 p.m.	Winner of the largest pumpkin announced!

How to Enter

Contest entry forms are available at our Garden Store and on our web site at www.christiansonsnursery.com

Summer Specials

July 1 - 10

Annual 40% off Sale

hanging baskets, geraniums, impatiens, petunias, fuchsias, lobelia and more annuals in packs, 2-inch and 4-inch pots
40% off

July 22 - 31

Summer Herbs

basil, lavender, oregano, parsley, sage rosemary and thyme...and much more
20% off

August 19 - 31

Summer Heather

hardy blooming plants in a variety of colors
20% off

September

Fall is for Planting

a wide variety of specials throughout the month

July 11 - 21

Hydrangeas

our huge selection of summer-blooming favorites includes "hortensias", lacecaps, oak-leaf and peegee tree forms.
20% off

August 1 - 18

Outdoor Containers

our huge selection of small to very large glazed and terra-cotta outdoor containers
20% off

August 19 - 31

Water Plants

water lilies, floating plants, iris and more
30% off

Weekly Radio Broadcast

The Garden Show

Sunday Mornings

With John & Mike

AM 660 KAPS • 10:30 a.m.

CLASSES & EVENTS

Saturday, July 9

Clematis Made Easy 11 a.m. - noon
Summer Pruning 1 - 2 p.m.

Saturday, July 16

Away With Weeds! 11 a.m. - noon
Nursery Walk With Ani Gurnee 1 - 2 p.m.

Saturday, July 23

The Creation Of A Japanese-Inspired Garden
11 a.m. - noon

Saturday, July 30

Growing, Tending & Harvesting Dahlias
11 a.m. - noon
The History, Propagation & Preservation of Iris
1 - 2 p.m.

Saturday, September 3

Perennials For Fall Interest
11 a.m. - noon

Saturday, September 12

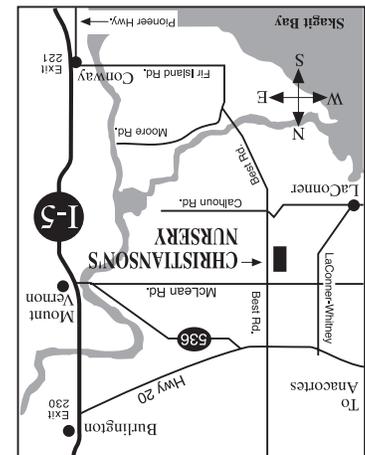
Soil Care for the Sustainable Garden
11 a.m. - noon
Mulch Matters 1 - 2 p.m.

Saturday, September 27

Fourth Annual Giant Pumpkin Festival
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Bats Incredible! 11 a.m. - noon

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

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.



360-466-3821 • 1-800-585-8200

CHRISTIANSON'S
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