



# GARDEN DELIGHTS

Issaquah Garden Club

*“Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle — a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light, a bud straining to unfurl. And the anticipation nurtures our dream.”*

*Barbara Winkler*

## DECEMBER MEETING

December 14, 2011

Following a brief business meeting, **Michele Seth-Bristow**, an innovative designer who directs workshops at Squak Mountain Nursery, will present our program, “**Christmas Greenery and Décor.**” She’ll show us inspiring and beautiful seasonal decorating for both inside and outside our homes, using live and faux materials. She plans to create a porch pot, incorporating evergreen branches and other materials, resulting in a decoration that may be left outdoors for a couple of months.

Next, we’ll hear our monthly “Garden/Design Sharing,” and then enjoy our potluck luncheon. Specific members will serve as hostess and kitchen crew. Members are asked to bring a favorite holiday dish serving six to eight people. Main dishes will be provided by members with last names A through G; salads by those H through T, and desserts by those W through Z.

As you prepare for our meeting, please don’t forget to bring your place setting—at least your coffee cup or mug and utensils—and your contribution to the Issaquah Food and Clothing Bank.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

December already? November seemed to fly by—there were so many things going on.

I hope all present for the November program enjoyed the program presented by Nancy Claire Guth and John VanZanten as much as I did. We learned the mechanics of creating a rain garden as well as the benefits of having one. We enjoyed pictures of the construction of a rain garden, as well as a presentation of appropriate plants for the different areas of the garden, from boggy to relatively dry near the borders of the garden. [Elsewhere is a list of Nancy Claire Guth's favorite rain garden plants.]

Our December meeting should entice members to attend: not only will we have an informative program about holiday decorating, we'll also enjoy a potluck provided by all of us. I can't wait to see what dishes members come up with!

Sandy Young will supervise our kitchen crew, Rita Hansen, Joann Morgan, Karen Lee, Joann Morgan, and Joanne Westveer.

Above all, we should all have a good time at our meeting—early enough in the month so that many of us can avoid holiday stress.

**Cate Mueller**

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## WORKING AT BBG

On October 26, a crew of garden club workers, including six from Issaquah Garden Club, worked on the Forest Enhancement Project, a native plant venture. The work party was organized by June Ann Hassebroek, ELWD's Native Plant Chair. Following the work, some members toured the Yao Garden, which was designed to be especially attractive in the fall. It was!

## AGNES SCHMOE MEMORIAL

On November 15, Janet Wall and Cate Mueller met with Micah Bonkowski and Mary Joe de Beck of Issaquah's Resource Conservation Office, and Falah Jones, of Seattle Tilth, at the Pickering Barn gardens. They walked around the areas identifying tasks Garden Club members might do, from simple weeding and raking, to pruning, digging out blackberries, moving plants to more appropriate spots, and enhancing the beds with additional plants. RCO representatives and Falah Jones are excited about having Garden Club members help, probably starting sometime in March. In the meantime, the Garden Club should create a logo that could be placed on signs near work areas, particularly while members are working. (Other volunteers might be attracted this way.)

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## PLANT THERAPY

On November 23, Garden Club members met at Issaquah Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. Under June Willard's supervision, members created seventeen arrangements for Thanksgiving. Those who participated were Joan Harris, Joann Morgan, Cate Mueller, Shadi Wang, and Sherran Whatley. We are indebted to June for spending hours and hours, collecting, washing and conditioning greens, and providing the flowers and Oasis for the arrangements in advance of our workshop.

**Please sign up at our meeting December 14 to help create flower arrangements for Christmas at Issaquah Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. We'll meet at 9:30 AM on December 22.**



## NANCY CLAIRE GUTH'S FAVORITE WATER GARDEN PLANTS

The letters following each plant listed below denote the zones in which the plant thrives:

**W**et; **MO**ist; **ME**sic (moderately moist habitat); **X**eric (requiring only a small amount of moisture)

Betula (jaquemontii or nigra) - Paperbark or River Birch W-MO-ME

Acer circinatum - Vine Maple MO-ME

Amelanchier - serviceberry W-MO-ME

Myrica californica - coast myrtle MO-ME

Salix nana purpurea - Dwarf arctic willow MO-ME

Cornus shrub varieties red/yellow/orange twigs W-MO-ME

Vaccinium - blueberries/huckleberries MO-ME

Ilex 'Golden Gem' - dwarf boxleaf holly MO-ME

Spirea varieties MO-ME

Polystichum - evergreen ferns MO-ME

Iris setosa or ensata - non-flag irises W-MO-ME

Acorus gramineus 'Ogon' - evergreen sweet flag W-MO

Rudbeckia - black-eyed Susan ME

Heuchera - Coral bells ME-X

Other perennials that could work nicely in the Northwest: Astilbe, Eupatorium, Eryngium, Filipendula, Miscanthus, Molina, Thalictrum, Tradescantia, Verbena, Veronica.



Iris ensata variegata

## WET FEET

[Here's another list of plants that don't mind being moist. ]

Astilbe

Athyrium filix-femina (Lady Fern)

Chelone lyonii (Turtlehead)

Helianthus angustifolius (sunflower)

Hibiscus coccineus (swamp hibiscus)

Heuchera species (Coral bell)

Hosta species and cultivars

Iris ensata 'Variegata' Japanese Iris

Ligularia

Lobelia cardinalis (Cardinal flower)

Magnolia virginiana (sweet bay magnolia)

Metasequoia glyptostroboides (dawn redwood)

Miscanthus sinensis 'Gracillimus' (Maiden grass)

Physostegia virginiana (obedient plant)

Polygonatum odoratum and cultivars

(Solomon's seal)

Pulmonaria species and cultivars (Lungwort)

Rodgersia pinnata

Tiarella species and cultivars (Foamflower)



Rain garden picture by [Orchid-flowers.wordpress.com](http://Orchid-flowers.wordpress.com)

## HELLEBORE TEA, 2012

Jon Throne, of Countryside Floral and Garden, will design and decorate one of the two tables our Garden Club will have at the Tea on March 11, 2012. Joanne Morgan will design and decorate our second table.

To date, thirteen members and guests have signed up for participation at our two tables. We will have tickets on sale for the Tea at our December meeting. In addition to the ticket for \$10, those attending contribute part of the refreshments for the tea.

Further information about the Tea will be available at the December meeting.

## CONTAINER CLEANUP

[Adapted from an article by Barbara Gruca in Garden Gate magazine, December 2009, p. 43]

Now that the weather is cooler, it's time to take care of the containers you've invested in and planted for the spring and summer. If exposed to freezing winter elements, glazed and terra-cotta containers often crack or flake apart. But with a little time and effort, you can prevent that and get many years of use from them.

**Clean your container:** After you've removed your plants from the container, it's important to empty your pot. If the plants in your pot had disease problems during the season, these materials can harbor the disease until next year. Just to be safe, it's good to clean them up. Use a stiff-bristled brush to scrub off as much potting mix, moss and mineral deposits — the white material that builds up on the pot from water or fertilizer. —as possible. Then wet down the entire pot with water to loosen anything remaining and

scrub it again. If there's still some mineral build-up left on the pot, you can daub on a solution of 1 cup vinegar in 1 quart of water and brush it down again. Rinse it with plain water.

**Sterilize your container:** Once the pot is clean, sterilize it with a 1:10 bleach and water solution. Spray the inside to kill any diseases in the pot. (A spray bottle is useful to direct the bleach solution where you want it so you don't accidentally bleach your clothing.) Next set pots up off the floor in a warm, dry spot, like a garage workbench, for a few days until they are totally dry.

**Store containers;** Garden containers are best stored indoors, protected from rain and snow. They can be placed in the garage, potting shed, basement, or anywhere dry and out of the way. Ideally, store your pots unstacked to prevent breaking them. If you are short on space, you may stack them upside down outdoors (to prevent rain/snow accumulation) or right side up if they're inside. Place long strips of cardboard between the pots to separate them and prevent them from sticking together. In the spring, they'll be easy to lift apart.

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## COLOR HINT

The latest E-newsletter I've received from Garden Gate magazine, suggests combinations of orange and pink flowers, for instance, **Peruvian lily** (*Alstroemeria* 'Pacific Sunset Peachy Orange') with **Clematis** (*Clematis* 'Ernest Markham', with magenta flowers in summer). You might also try combinations of impatiens in orange and pink, or **Cosmos** (*Cosmos sulphureus*) Annual; long-blooming orange flowers all summer, with **Purple coneflower** (*Echinacea purpurea*) Perennial; pink flowers in summer to fall.

## THINGS TO DO IN DECEMBER

After several killing frosts have occurred this fall, cut back dormant perennials to about three inches above ground. After the ground is frozen, plants can be mulched to guard against displacement due to soil heaving. These steps ensure a successful show of plant foliage and color next season.

Tender plants in perennial gardens benefit from a light covering of evergreen boughs. The purpose of this covering is to lessen desiccation (drying out) by wind. Take care not to smother the plants. You should be able to see the plants through the branches.

If you are an early Christmas tree shopper looking for a live tree for the holidays, be sure to select a Christmas tree that will survive in our climate and soil. White pine (*Pinus strobes*), Norway spruce (*Picea abies*), and blue spruce (*Picea pungens*) are excellent choices for live Christmas trees that can also be planted outdoors after the holidays.

Dig the planting hole before the ground freezes. Fill the hole with straw or hay to keep it from freezing. Store the soil in a garage or shed so you will have workable soil when you need it for planting the tree.

When grouping potted plants together to give them the benefit of increased humidity, allow the leaves of each plant to lie in a natural position; don't jam them together.

African violets do well when potted in rather small pots. A good general rule is to use a pot one-third the diameter of the plant. To humidify African violets, surround the pot with moist peat contained in a second pot. When buying new plants, avoid those with any signs of yellowing leaves.

To clean garden tools, put warm water and a tablespoon of dishwasher detergent into a bucket. The detergent helps detach soil clumps from metal blades. When clean and dry, use a broad file to sharpen shovels and hoes for next season.

A thorough garden clean up is essential, especially if you've had problems with insects and diseases this year. If you leave remnants of diseased or infested plants in the garden, you could be setting the stage for a return of the same problems for the 2012 growing season. Good sanitation is critical!

The average family's needs and activities change in cycles of six to seven years. The smaller the property, the greater the landscaping planning challenge. Design outdoor areas and facilities to be modified easily with your changing needs,.

We often forget the spots outdoor where rain doesn't reach. Check moisture around foundation planting beneath a roof overhang and water that area if necessary.

Be careful when using deicing salts around driveways and walks this winter; salt is toxic to many flowers, trees, shrubs and lawn grasses. Sand, sawdust, or a combination of these work well for deicing walks and will not injure plants. Use your lawn seeder/fertilizer to spread sand or sawdust on drives and walkways.

Take a walk through your garden as the fall season winds down. Take time to reflect on the successes and failures of your garden this year. Make notes in your gardening notebook for new things to try and things to fix next spring.



## GROWING BULBS IN OUTDOOR CONTAINERS

If you haven't already done so, now is a good time to plant bulbs in outdoor containers. Here are some helpful ideas for doing so:

- Containers should be 14 inches or more deep with good drainage, made of wood, fiberglass or concrete.
- Place one inch of gravel in the bottom and add three inches of potting soil mixed with bone meal or commercial bulb food, such as "Bulb Tone."
- Put the bulbs in and cover with additional potting soil (As a general rule, the amount of soil above the top of the bulbs should be about three times the diameter of the bulb at the widest point.)
- Place the container where it can get rain or snow on it. Soak it thoroughly to start and make sure it is kept moist through the winter.
- After cutting back the dying, yellowed foliage following blooming, you may plant annuals over the bulbs.

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**This month:  
Holiday Decorating**

