



GARDEN DELIGHTS

Issaquah Garden Club

*A green thumb is nothing more than hard work
and the desire to make things grow.*

Albert E. Tuttle

MARCH MEETING

MARCH 14, 2012

10 A.M., Tibbetts Creek Manor

Gwen Bell will present our program this month, “**Hybridizing Rhododendrons.....and How It All Began.**” Ms. Bell writes of herself, “Growing up in Southern California, I had no interest in gardening at all. Seeing rhododendrons in gardens here changed me forever.” She states that her interest in rhododendrons led her to camping in Yunnan in China, trekking in Sikkim in the Himalayas and visiting gardens in Japan, Britain, New Zealand and Canada.

Ms. Bell belongs to the Seattle Rhododendron Society, the Rhododendron Species Foundation, the Arboretum Foundation, Pukeiti Gardens in New Zealand and is a member of the Lake Washington Garden Club.

At our meeting, we’ll also hear a vignette by Joan Harris on vertical gardening.

We’ll enjoy a luncheon provided by hostess Sandy Young and members Sally Cadranell, Audrey Ellingsen, Rita Hansen, Joan Harris, Marietta Hunziker, Jean Pass and Michele Peltonen.

Please remember your contributions for the Issaquah Food Bank. Sylvia Watson reports that we contributed one hundred pounds of food at our February meeting!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our February program on bamboo was chock full of good information and interesting facts. Who'd have thought that bamboo came in so many varieties or was so useful?

I enjoyed Sherran's presentation, as well. Our thanks also goes to Sherran for the recipes she gave us.

During our business meeting, we decided not to make any changes in our subscriptions to the quarterly publication, Smoke Signals. We also welcomed returning member June Beckerman.

Cate Mueller

PLANT THERAPY WORKSHOP

On February 13, June Willard directed three of our members in creating floral arrangements, embellished by bows provided by Joann Morgan, at the Issaquah Nursing and Rehabilitation Center.

We'll have a sign-up sheet for making Easter arrangements on **Friday, April 6, at 9:30 AM**. Hopefully, we'll have a larger crew to share this activity.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Four members have agreed to serve on the IGC Nominating Committee: Karen Bukantz, Joan Harris, Frankie Mowers, and Jean Pass. Please expect a call. Your current officers hope you'll be willing to serve next year.

ELWD AND WSEGC HAPPENINGS

About fifteen IGC members attended the ELWD General Meeting on February 27. (We comprised a quarter of those in attendance!) We enjoyed two pleasant and interesting programs and partook of an appetizing lunch.

March 12, Monday - GALA XXXIV: "Come Make Memories with Frank"

Gala XXXIV features one of the country's top designers, Washington state's own, Frank Arcuri. He specializes in showing people how to take branches, rocks, and greens from their own gardens to create designs for a special party or special occasion. The event takes place at Holiday Inn in Everett. Tickets for the noon luncheon and the design program are \$35 and benefit Headquarters House. The sales room opens at 9 AM, with noon luncheon, design program and auction of designs. For tickets, contact Barb Vest at 253-588-2-14 or email BVest1@comcast.net.

March 23, Friday - "The Joe Show," an invitational Designers Challenge Program, presented by ELAWAGS (East Lake Washington Arrangers Guild). This is an invitational event at which several gifted designers will create designs in containers from Joe Dahlbom, Jr.'s collection, chosen for them with materials also chosen for them. The event will be held at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, starting at 10 AM. Those attending will be able to walk around, watching the designers while they work. Tickets will be \$20 and include the design program, buffet lunch, raffle prizes and an auction of plant materials. The proceeds go toward expenses for the National Convention, "RainShine," held in Seattle in 2013. For tickets contact Elaine Pinkerton at 360-668-0243 or email at pinktwo2@att.net.

ELWD AND WSFGC, cont.

ELWD Arbor Day, Monday, April 16, 10 AM. This year's Arbor Day Celebration will take place in Duvall! We will be planting a *Liriodendron tulipifera*, commonly known as the tulip tree. The tree is being planted at McCormick Park. Following the planting, the ELWD Board will meet at 11 a.m. at Boxhill Farm Nursery, 14175 Carnation-Duvall Road, Duvall, WA 98019. A complimentary lunch will be served at the nursery, followed by a tour and shopping at the Nursery. Following this, trips may be made to Duvall True Value, All Season's Stone, West Coast Nursery, and Falling Water Designs for additional gardener's delights.

RSVP for Arbor Day planting and lunch by Friday, **March 30th** to info@elwd.org

[Perhaps we might have a sign-up sheet at the March IGC meeting.]

April 20, Friday: ELWD Work Day Ravine Planting Project. We'll meet at the Visitors' Center at **10 AM** that morning to work on this native plant installation project near the new suspension bridge at Bellevue Botanical Gardens. There will be a sign-up sheet at the March IGC meeting.

May 21, Monday: - ELWD General Meeting with Flower Show, "Jukebox Jamboree," presented by the West Lake Sammamish Garden Club.

OUR IGC PROJECTS

We have set **May 19** for our **Annual Plant Sale**. If you haven't already, please begin dividing and potting perennials for our sale. You might ask your friends if they have perennials or "volunteers" they would share with us. (You might also look for packs of plants

at Costco or big box stores that you'd be willing to pot up and contribute for our sale.)

We'll need volume and variety—plant divisions and seedlings of established plantings, and young plants grown from seed. We'll want to avoid invasive plants, of course. As you pot your plants, please remember to add a label that includes plant name, color of bloom, and light and water requirements. You might also indicate whether the plant is "fussy" or easy-to-grow. All this will make pricing and placement at our sale so much easier. It would help if you collected cardboard flats and bags for customers' purchases.

Please continue to collect items for our summer Garage Sale. Let Michele Peltonen know if you have boxes of items you wish stored elsewhere.

UPCOMING SALES

Mark your calendar for upcoming plant sales at the Bellevue Botanical Garden:

Northwest Perennial Alliance March Mania Plant Sale, March 10, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Puget Sound Dahlia Association Tuber Sale, April 7, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Eastside Fuchsia Society Plant Sale, May 5, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Washington Native Plant Society Sale, May 12, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

American Rhododendron Society Cascade Chapter Show and Sale, May 19-20, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

(See the organization website for more information.)

LENTIL AND SAUSAGE SOUP

[Sandy Young served this to the IGC Officers at our meeting, last month. We all enjoyed it, and thought you might, too. Besides...there's nothing better on a cold, rainy, blustery day than a nice, hot bowl of good soup!]

½ lb sweet Italian sausage (I bought links and took the “skin” off)
 1 small package pancetta, chopped
 1 large sweet onion, chopped
 1 stalk celery, finely chopped
 1 Tb chopped garlic
 2 ½ C or 1 16 oz bag dry lentils, rinsed
 1 C. chopped carrot
 1 box Swanson's chicken broth
 1 box Swanson's beef broth (only used beef because I didn't have 2 boxes chicken)
 1 box Pomi diced tomatoes
 1 Tb. Garlic powder
 2 Tb. Chopped fresh parsley (I used dried)
 2 Bay leaves
 ½ tsp. dried oregano
 ¼ tsp. dried thyme
 ¼ tsp. dried basil
 1 Tb. Salt (to taste)
 ½ tsp black pepper
 Grated fresh Parmesan cheese for garnish on top

Place sausage and pancetta in a large pot. Cook over medium high heat until evenly brown. Add onion, celery and chopped garlic, and sauté until tender and translucent. Stir in lentils, carrot, broth and tomatoes. Season with garlic powder, parsley, bay leaves, oregano, thyme, basil, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil then reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 2 ½ to 3 hours, or until lentils are tender. Ladle into bowls and garnish top with parmesan cheese.



GARDENING IN MARCH

Some annuals, such as verbenas, snapdragons and petunias take 70 to 90 days to bloom. If you haven't already started seeds for these indoors, plant to purchase these as greenhouse-grown transplants.

A well-designed berm or man-made hill is a landscape asset. Even a low berm adds considerable interest on a flat property. A berm will provide screening for privacy, deflect and absorb noise, or redirect wind or water flow when necessary. It can also improve the microclimate for plants: its south side staying warmer, its north side cooler.

Bronze-leaved fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare* 'Atropurpureum'), an anise-scented herb that grows to four feet tall, looks great in the perennial border with tall, red- or white-flowered phlox or tall, silver-leaved perennials, including artemesia.

A good salt substitute for anyone who wants to restrict sodium intake is a blend of equal parts dried basil, dill, lemon balm, marjoram, mint, parsley, rosemary, thyme, and a few dashes of Hungarian paprika. The mixture will keep indefinitely in a dark glass or ceramic container.

Birds consume hundreds of insects each day, and wise gardeners encourage them to take up residence in gardens by installing bird houses, feeders, and water sources.

A “little red wagon” can be useful for moving fertilizer, tools, or other supplies to the garden. You'll appreciate its stability compared to a wheelbarrow.

Reposition stepping stones that have heaved or sunk below grass level. Lift them up, spread sand in the low areas, and replace the rocks. A bed of sand under the stones will aid drainage and decrease heaving next year.

[In looking for something to fill this page, I came across a special article written by a dear friend of mine, several years ago. I hope you'll enjoy it as much as I do.]

MY LABYRINTH GARDEN

Several years ago, I walked the labyrinth path in Grace Cathedral, San Francisco. My companions, both accomplished gardeners, experienced profound spiritual insights. I confess I didn't. However, three years later, I began the creation of a labyrinth garden.

For three years, the labyrinth premise had simmered in the back of my mind—or perhaps in the compost heap of my spirit. A labyrinth is not a maze. The latter has one path through the puzzle and many others that dead end. The former has one path leading through many turns inward to a center and then outward to conclusion. One walks the labyrinth seeking the purgative, illuminative, and unifying Way. It is a spiritual exercise.

Nevertheless, I laid out a horticultural labyrinth. A garden hose formed a circle twelve feet in diameter. Through the fall and winter I filled it with leaves and other available compost. I spread most of my spring delivery of Falls Church mulch, and a friend tilled it into the soil for me. I planted a white rose bush, the gift of a friend, in the center, in memory of my daughter. Nearby are a small birdbath and a log to sit on and enjoy the ambience.

The space isn't large enough to define intricate paths, so after considerable thought and experimentation, I divided the area into pie-shaped sections, and planted vegetables in some, flowers in others. A chaotic if bountiful garden emerged in mid-summer. The following year, I attempted planting in circles centering on that rose bush. Again, bountiful chaos.

Last spring, as I was turning over soil and digging in mulch, one of my sons suggested the addition of stepping stones in a spiral path from an entrance on the south side of the rose bush. Pacing it off, I discovered that thirty-nine steps would bring one comfortably from edge to center. Thirty-nine certainly sounds like a mystic number. (The movie of the same name wasn't mystical but that's another story.) I bought the stones from Home Depot ten at a time; that was as many as I could bring in my trunk. It took a couple of weeks to get them all situated at the proper distance and in the proper curve. I was ready to plant.

Making the path the primary emphasis, I planted in amongst the stones. Lettuce and spinach mingled with tomatoes between steps on the east; potatoes and peppers lined the path on the west. On the north side pole beans bordered the perimeter, with squash hills between. At the end, the youngest grandchildren sprinkled handfuls of marigold and zinnia seeds wherever they wanted.

Yes, it was chaos again, but it was so delightful to walk through it all on the mystic stones, choosing a tomato or pepper or marigold along the way. The follower-planter especially enjoyed being able to walk (or hop) over lettuce, around tomatoes and in the shadow of beans, all without setting foot on dirt!

I have stacked the stones in four piles to make room for leaves and mulch, and have enlarged the garden by a foot in each direction. I'm burying kitchen scraps (amazing how well cherry tomatoes return!) and thinking about the future. The dried marigolds remain (one can save only so many seeds); I may yet find the potatoes that eluded me in the fall.

It hasn't been a mystical experience, but I do love my labyrinth garden.

Mary Frances O'C. Moriarty

YARD ART

Do you want to make a statement in the art world or your own back yard? From your suburban, urban or country setting, you can create garden art in the spirit of recycling. Children can join in the fun and get an appreciation for art forms in daily life. Who knows? What you create may even be good enough for the front yard!

Produce a sculpture for your garden. Connect scrap sections of PVC pipe or run heavy gauge wire through an old garden hose to make the form you wish. Outdoor spaces can handle large scale works of art.

Transform scrap into folk art. For example, create a personalized weather vane from materials such as wooden shingles, figures cut from plastic bottles, and an old fishing pole. Or give a second life to old rake tines and broken garden tools by assembling them into a mobile and hang it from a favorite tree.

Functional art has great appeal in the landscape. Decorative, shallow serving bowls can become bird baths or miniature water gardens., For a sundial, choose a round plate and get out your paints. Consult a gardening book to determine where to paint marks to denote the daylight hours onto the platter. Then use your artistic abilities to customize the piece.

[more next month]

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This month: Rhododendrons

