

## March 2026 Newsletter

Spring is coming (and maybe even here)!

Spring is an invitation to begin again. With every first green shoot, birdsong, and bloom that opens up to the world, nature beckons us to join the chorus it's already singing ... one of renewal and fresh starts. Spring offers the chance to seek new growth and inspirations in the day-to-day. Embrace it's offerings ...

### **MARCH GARDEN CLUB MEETING:**

**Date:** March 11, 2026

**Time:** 9:30 AM - Set-up

10:00 AM - Meeting

10:45AM - Social Time and Snacks

11:00AM - Speaker

12:30 - Clean-up

**Horticultural Corner:** Rosemary by Maura E.

**Program:** A presentation by Countryside Floral and Garden. Always fun!

**Location:** Our Savior Lutheran Church  
745 Front Street South  
Issaquah, WA

### **Snack Crew:**

Hostess: Lois H.

Crew: Deb M.

Sandra R.

Gale B.

Maura E.

**April Meeting:** April 8, 2026

**Horticultural Corner:** Cilantro by Georgann L.

**Program:** Cleo Raulerson - Shrubs that Grow Well in King County Gardens

### **LETS SAVE ON KITCHEN SUPPLIES:**

Please remember to bring your own plate, napkin and silverware so we don't deplete the club's supplies and reduces our garbage footprint! And, attention coffee and tea drinkers - remember to bring your own cup (THANKS)

## **YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED:**

### ***February Meeting:***

#### **HORTICULTURAL CORNER:**

(See end of the newsletter for more Mint information)

Debbie D. discussed mints. Many herbs are included in the mint family - basil, oregano, lavender, sage, rosemary and thyme for example. Mints can be easily incorporated into cooking by sprinkling over peas, green beans, zucchini, fruit etc. It can be added to summer drinks (ice tea and lemonade) as well as frozen into ice cubes.

To make a tea steep the leaves for 5 minutes before drinking. Mints make a nice digestive aide for after dinner. Can also be used as a facial astringent by adding it to witch hazel, allow to sit for a week and strain out the herbs. Mints make a good mouthwash, can be applied to burns, added to unscented cleaners and can be used as a moth repellent (and other bugs including ants). The herbs need to be replaced every few days and can also be used to keep pests off of pets.

#### **TREASURERS REPORT:**

\*\* Dues for next year is payable starting in March. Everyone who can financially handle an extra donation is encouraged to do so. This will keep the annual dues amount low so as to not exclude anyone.

\*\* \$175.00 was collected for the food bank. Sandra made a single donation from the Issaquah Garden Club.

#### **GARDEN THERAPY (JOAN H.):**

\*\* A large group did arrangements for Valentine's Day in record time. And, thanks to Gale's shopping at Trader Joe's there was a nice assortment of flowers and many brought some fun and unusual greens that were used.

#### **POST OFFICE (GEORGANN):**

\*\* Everything looks good except the cypress is getting a bit large. It was discussed if the tree could be trimmed and it was decided that planting something tall on the other side of the planter would be best. This will assure that the tree is not damaged.

#### **GRANT TIME:**

For all committee chairs it was discussed that it's time to apply for grants. The initial thought is to apply for Garden Therapy (Joan) and Blue Star

Marker (Dianne). It was discussed and tabled to apply for any additional Post Office Trough money this year.

### **OUTING OPPORTUNITY:**

Pine Lake Garden Club is sponsoring a trip to see the Blue Poppy Garden  
Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2026  
Time: 9:00AM - 3:00PM  
Location: Rhododendron Species Garden in Federal Way  
Cost: \$25.00 which covers the cost of the privately hired bus to get you there are back and entrance fee and tour  
RSVP: Nancy Way at [nancyway77@gmail.com](mailto:nancyway77@gmail.com)  
Tell her your club affiliation

### **SAVE THE DATES:**

**August 21 - 23** - Washington State Flower Show “Red White, & Bloom” (celebrating the 250th Birthday of the United States. This will be held at Bellevue Botanical Gardens. Volunteers will be needed!

### **EDUCATIONAL CORNER:**

## **Garden Designers Reveal the Secrets to Creating A Whimsical Yard – For a Dreamy, Low-Maintenance Outdoor Space**

Seven designers share ideas to help you create your own whimsical yard that goes above and beyond the ordinary

1. Follow the Mantra of Less is More | 2. Harness The Art of Storytelling in a Garden | 3. Stage Setting is Vital | 4. Make Color Bold and Rebellious | 5. Create a Sense of

## Discovery | 6. Small is Beautiful | 7. Build An Edible Landscape

What do we mean by a whimsical garden? We're not talking wishing wells, and ornamental fairies but something that feels more wistful and dreamy. A space that will sweep you up and transport you to another world. It's about creating a garden that feels playful and magical, but also naturalistic.

We don't want strict symmetrical lines or formal landscaping. Instead we want to lean into creativity and charm, through carefully selecting the right whimsical [umbellifer perennials](#), that provide structure, texture, playful pops of bold colors and scent, as well as incorporating water and rustic arches that look well established.

It doesn't have to be complicated. There is no rulebook and less is often more. Plus naturalistic planting, which allows plants to spill over the edges onto pathways, is also ideal if you want to create a stunning low-maintenance backyard. I spoke to expert garden designers to gain an insight into how we can get on board with the burgeoning [whimsical](#) garden trend.

For [Camellia Taylor](#), the award winning landscape architect and designer, creating a whimsical garden is all about restraint, knowing when to step back and let the plants surprise you.

Her own back yard was originally all lawn. Rather than imposing hard routes, she introduced simple mown paths

that meander through the planting, encouraging you to wander.

Edges are kept soft, materials minimal, and the planting has been allowed to find its own rhythm. [Foxgloves](#) and aquilegias self seed and melica catches the light in late spring, while [asters](#) lean and drift in autumn, and seed heads and grasses carry movement into winter. Camellia tells me: 'It's these moments of looseness where the garden feels most alive.'

She continues: 'That same sensibility shaped the garden I designed for Aspens at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2023. Although whimsical in character, the garden was carefully held, with winding paths, curved walls, planting that revealed itself gradually and a water feature designed to be seen, heard and touched.'

'A whimsical garden, for me, isn't about novelty or [nostalgia](#), but about creating spaces that feel generous and quietly permissive, relaxed, sensory and welcoming, allowing both plants and people to find their own way.'

## **Camellia Taylor**

Award winning garden designer Camellia Taylor, and founder of The Garden Taylor switched careers from working in psychology to garden design and landscape architecture. Her passion lies with incorporating the senses and nature into the heart of every design, no matter the size of the project. In 2023 she won a Silver Gilt at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, for The Natural Affinity Garden for Aspens.

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## **Catherine McDonald**

Catherine McDonald explains to me, 'I've always loved history and craftsmanship, so being able to weave those elements into my designs is a real pleasure.

'It's vital to strike a sense of balance in the garden, and the juxtaposition of bold structure with softer, more subtle elements works beautifully to create that sense of wonder.'

Catherine continues: 'The same principle applies to planting: clipped yew hedges and [topiary](#) provide weight and definition, while layered planting brings movement, texture and a more naturalistic feel. It's this interplay between formality and looseness that gives a garden its character and sense of quiet magic.'

In The Boodles Garden that she is creating for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show this year, Catherine says, 'I've deliberately selected plants with strong, contrasting shapes, then worked with subtle tonal variations within the reds and purples to create depth and visual interest.

'The result is planting that feels [luxurious](#) yet playful; structured enough to feel intentional, but soft and expressive enough to spark curiosity, imagination and a sense of discovery.'

A whimsical yard is also about injecting your own personality into a design, creating something which is original, expressive and layered with stories with an element of surprise, according to garden writer, designer and educator [Rochelle Greayer](#) who is the author of [Cultivating Garden Style, available from Amazon.](#)

Incorporating structures into your yard also helps create a whimsical feel. Rochelle believes, 'Whimsy suggests a life lived outward, a little restless, a little curious. There is a chapter in my book titled *Enchanted Bohemian*, which incorporates the idea of [wanderlust](#) made physical.'

Rochelle continues, 'Depth and age also matter. Whimsy gets credibility from things that look like they've been there a while. Gnarly old trees, a willow tunnel that insists you walk through it, an epic hedgerow that compresses space before releasing you into light.

She adds: 'It's also a good idea to consider timings. A white or pale garden that comes alive at dusk. Flowers that glow, release scent, or simply feel more present at night. Encourage [fireflies](#) with your design. There's something kind of magical about a garden that saves part of itself for after dark.'

A whimsical garden shouldn't be tightly controlled like the reins of a horse, but rather as the award winning garden designer [Ann-Marie Powell](#) explains: 'A whimsy garden is spontaneity made visible. It's surprise, delight, those moments that make you smile without quite knowing why.'

It's that feeling when you walk into a garden and something shifts. Suddenly you never want to leave.'

Anne Marie embraces the idea that everything comes together when you stop trying to exert control.

She adds, 'When [Verbena bonariensis](#) seeds itself exactly where it's perfect. When a climbing rose finds its own way through an apple tree and you think, I couldn't have planned that if I'd tried. Let paths meander rather than march in straight lines – [gravel paths](#) are brilliant for this, softening at the edges where plants can self-seed into them.

'Plant grasses where they'll catch that last bit of afternoon sun – the sort that stops you mid-trudge to the compost bin because the light's doing something extraordinary. And [bulbs](#) – everywhere, always, in great drifts. Tulips that return year after year if you choose the right varieties, narcissus naturalised through grass, *Crocus tommasinianus* scattered like a purple haze.'

In a whimsical garden, every month should stop you in your tracks and of course if there is one thing that Ann-Marie is adamant about is that none of us should be afraid of color, something she has embraced in her new book [A Year of Colour, available at Amazon.](#)

## **Ann-Marie Powell**

Ann-Marie Powell is a multi award winning garden designer, television presenter, journalist and author, who divides her time between designing innovative gardens for

private clients, companies and charities, and enthusing people about gardening through her books, television appearances and articles in national newspapers and magazines.

There is no need for novelty or decoration when it comes to whimsical design but rather, as garden designer [Neil McCullough](#) believes, you create a whimsical feel from a balance of intention and looseness, what I often describe as organized chaos.

The most engaging yards avoid rigid patterns and predictable repetition, instead allow for variation, surprise, and moments that feel slightly unplanned.

Plants appear where you don't quite expect them, edges blur rather than stop, and the garden reveals itself gradually as you move through it. That sense of discovery is where true whimsy lives.

Neil tells me: 'My plant selection quietly supports this approach. I tend to favor species that have presence without heaviness and that contribute to movement and seasonal surprise. Plants like *Baptisia alba* and *Amsonia hubrichtii* create a soft, open framework, while finer-textured [ornamental grasses](#) such as *Molinia* add motion and rhythm.

'Planters are another quiet way to introduce whimsy, particularly on a seasonal level. Because they're flexible and temporary, they allow for experimentation, unexpected combinations, and subtle shifts through the year without committing permanently to the garden,' he adds.

## Nick McCullough

Garden designer Nick McCullough has developed a distinctive style he calls Midwest Modern, one that relies on a balance of natural paving and innovative perennial plantings. Based in Ohio, he and his team at McCullough's Landscape & Nursery create and maintain plant centric gardens in and around the Midwest that are both ecologically sensitive and family-forward. His first book American Roots which he co-authored with his wife Allison and Teresa Woodard has recently been published by Timber Press.

[Dr Libby Webb](#) has done exactly this in her own back yard. The garden, at only 7x14m, presented Libby with an incredible opportunity to experiment with the boundaries of illusion and what might be achievable in a relatively small space.

She explains: 'It was my hope to recreate the effect of a [woodland forest garden](#) into a city garden, and a number of techniques have made this incredibly successful.

'I've had a lot of fun challenging the sense of scale, planting trees in the foreground of the small garden, to triangulate along a curved path.

'The asymmetry of the trees and path, the variety of planting beneath and the very deliberate use of plants that spill over the paths creates whimsy and irregularity to mimic a natural scene more closely,' she adds.

## Katie Oglesby

According to Katie, 'The most memorable outdoor spaces invite us to move, pause, harvest, gather, and return again throughout the day.'

'Beyond kitchen gardens, meadow-style orchards and perennial plantings offer another way to create spaces meant for strolling and lingering. [Fruit trees](#) layered with perennial beds beneath can replace open lawn with something you walk through rather than mow.

'Whether the path is grass for a softer feel or stone that ties back to the architecture of the home, it guides movement and shapes experience. Thoughtful lighting along those paths allows the garden to remain active into the evening, extending its use while highlighting bloom, texture, and seasonal change.'

Kitchen Garden Design House is a garden-to-table lifestyle design studio based in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. Tailored to those who appreciate life's simple luxuries, Kitchen Garden Design House specializes in crafting bespoke kitchen gardens that seamlessly blend elevated aesthetics with sustainable, garden-to-table living practices.

Seven different interpretations, but a common theme that runs through each set of ideas is that to take a step back is okay.

Less is more. The more natural and established the planting and the design is, the more whimsical and [enchanted](#) your yard will feel.

## **BONUS LEARNINGS:**

Debbie D. presented on Mint and has shared the article by Margaret Boyles in The Almanac Newsletter which she used for her presentation. Read and enjoy ...

### TWELVE MARVELOUS USES FOR MINT

How do you use extra mint leaves? Here are 12 marvelous uses for mint around the home and garden—from culinary and medicinal uses to mouthwash to bug repellent!

#### Meet the Mints

Did you know that the mint family, Lamiaceae, is the sixth- or seventh-largest of the flowering plant families?

- The most common and popular mints for growing are peppermint (*Mentha × piperita*), native spearmint (*M. spicata*), Scotch spearmint (*M. × gracilis*), and corn mint (*M. arvensis*); also (more recently) apple mint (*M. suaveolens*).
- Many of our common culinary herbs (e.g., basil, oregano, marjoram, rosemary, sage, thyme, and summer and winter savory) are members of the mint family.

- Mints include dozens (perhaps hundreds) of traditional medicinal herbs, not to mention many aromatics used in flavorings, perfumes, and cosmetics.
- You'll also find mints among the favorite landscaping plants. Think salvias, agastaches, lavenders, bee balms, hyssop, and Russian sage. All summer, they produce nectar-rich blossoms, which attract bees and beneficial pollinators, along with an occasional hummingbird. Many, if not most, mint family members contain strongly aromatic oils (think lavender, rosemary, basil, thyme, and sage), which account for their many uses as seasoning, flavoring, and perfuming agents.

## 12 Uses for Mint Leaves

There are many safe uses for mint-family herbs besides beautifying your gardens. Here is just a sampling:

1. Food: The peppermints are especially good culinary mints, ideal for chopping into salads, sprinkling over fruits, or combining with basil or cilantro to make mint pesto. We like to add a couple of tablespoons of fresh chopped mint to peas, green beans, carrots, cauliflower, or zucchini to create minted vegetables!
2. Drinks: Freeze a few trays of strong mint tea, then use the ice cubes to cool your summer drinks! Add mint leaves or cubes to mojitos, iced tea, or fresh lemonade.
3. Tea: Why buy mint tea when it's so easy to make? What we usually call the "mints" (peppermint, spearmint, apple mint, etc.) are traditional tea herbs. Just steep your fresh

mint leaves in boiling water for about 5 minutes and serve. It's a great digestive aid after dinner. Apple mint is one of my favorites, with more flavor and less aftertaste.

4. Hair rinse: Add strong mint (especially rosemary) tea to one part cider vinegar for a conditioning rinse, which you can leave in or rinse out. The vinegary smell dissipates after drying.

5. Facial astringent: Add a few finely minced leaves of fresh peppermint or othermints to a cup of witch hazel. Store in a glass jar for a week or more, shaking occasionally. Strain the herbs from the mixture after a week.

6. Mouthwash: Chop a quarter cup of fresh mint, bee balm, lemon balm, basil, thyme, or oregano leaves and infuse them in a quart of boiling water. When cool, strain the herbs and store them in the refrigerator.

7. Mint bath. Steep a handful of mint leaves in a pint of hot water for about 10 minutes, then strain. Add to bath water for an invigorating, stress-free soak.

8. Ease sunburn pain: Make a strong peppermint tea and refrigerate the mixture for several hours. To use, gently apply to the burned area with cotton pads.

9. Breath freshener: Just chew on a few mint leaves! Sage teas and extracts have been used for centuries as a mouthwash for oral infections. Don't chew mint-family herbs if breastfeeding, as even small amounts of sage and peppermint may reduce milk supply.

10. Scent up a space: Keep your home smelling fresh by adding a few drops of mint essential oil to your favorite unscented cleaner, or just take a cotton ball and dap onto a light bulb.

11. Moth repellent/scented sachet: Tie a few branches of strongly scented mint (peppermint, sage, lavender, rosemary, bee balm) together, or pull off a handful of leaves, and stuff them into the leg of an old nylon stocking. Suspend by a string inside a garment bag, tuck into bags of stored woolen clothing, or just place in your drawers to let your clothes soak up the scent. Refresh periodically to keep the scent fresh.

12. Bug repellent: When ants come into the kitchen during the summer, placing a few stems of mint, gently crushed, near suspected entry points really does deter ants. You need to replace the mint with fresh material every few days.

Also, keep pets flea-free by stuffing a small pillow with fresh spearmint and thyme and placing it near your pet's bed. You could try these other natural bug repellents, too.

Of course, mint isn't only used to deter bugs; it also attracts beneficial insects. Bees, butterflies, and hoverflies love mint, which is rich in nectar and pollen, and this benefits pollinated plants and crops.

## Medicinal Use of Mint Plants

Mint has been long known as an herbal remedy, easing queasy stomachs, calming stress and anxiety, and promoting restful sleep.

Peppermint tea has been known to ease an upset stomach, calm the digestive tract, and alleviate indigestion, gas, and cramps. Mint has also been used for centuries in traditional medicine, veterinary medicine, as insecticides or insect repellents, and as antifungal or antibacterial protection for crop plants.

Mints are potent plants, full of phytochemicals that plants manufacture to protect themselves against harmful bacteria, viruses, and other assaults from the environments they evolved in. Interestingly, there are studies that show spearmint is even beneficial to honeybees, driving out the mites that infect their hives.

### But Use With Caution

If herbal medicine interests you, please approach the mints, especially their essential oils, tinctures, and concentrated extracts, with care. This goes for both over-the-counter and homemade remedies.

Although many have been used by traditional healers around the world for centuries, most herbs haven't undergone rigorous testing for safety and efficacy, especially in pregnant/nursing women, children, elders, and people with chronic illnesses. Seek out as much information as you can from books, online sources, and

experienced herbalists in your area. Inform your healthcare practitioner whenever you begin using an herbal remedy. Most herbalists recommend avoiding ingesting essential oils as medicines unless under the care and observation of a medical provider experienced with herbal medicines. Out of an abundance of caution, herbalists also urge pregnant and breastfeeding moms, as well as people with serious chronic diseases, to avoid using mint-family essential oils in massage oils.

Many mint-family species contain potent phytochemicals that affect the endocrine system, sometimes dramatically. For example, sage and peppermint, even as tea or food flavorings, can reduce the milk supply in breastfeeding women. The essential oil of pennyroyal, historically used to induce menstruation or as an abortifacient, can be lethal if ingested in a large enough dose to accomplish those purposes.

Some mints contain strongly psychoactive compounds. Among the most potent: the hallucinogenic *Salvia divinorum*, whose use and/or sale has been banned in many nations, as well as half of U.S. states.

## Growing Mint

You may have heard that mint takes over the garden. It's primarily spearmint that gives mints this bad name. Peppermint, with its short and shallow stolons, stays more or less where you put it. Also, peppermint rarely produces viable seeds, so you won't find it popping up in different garden beds.

Wild spearmint is the real bully, developing an enormous network of tough, quarter-inch-thick rhizomes under flower beds, spilling out into a large section of lawn, sending up a new plant every inch or two from the underground nodes. I've pulled up yards and yards and yards of the ropey invaders, but they still keep coming.

But if you are cultivating spearmint in your garden, just give this attractive ground cover plenty of room to spread. Alternatively, keep mint contained in a terracotta pot near the kitchen window. In the ground, it's ideal to grow spearmint in its own bed. But if you want to grow mint in a bed with other herbs or plants, consider sinking a deep bucket or tub without holes into the soil and plant into that. Otherwise, spearmint will choke out other plants in the bed.

When cold weather approaches, plants can be lifted and brought indoors in their own pots to give fresh leaves through the first part of winter. Note: It is best to grow mints from cuttings, roots, or transplants. The mint seed does not come true to type.