October 2026 Newsletter

THE FIRST LEAVES

Beyond the porch, from the grand old tree
The first leaves of autumn were just set free.

They don't fall - *THESE LEAVES* - they fly
In windswept pirouettes:
They leap and float,
They swim and dive.

On their descent - *THESE LEAVES* - a wonder
In sunlit harvest hues:
Of wheat and amber,
Of fire and umber.

They don't crash - *THESE LEAVES* - they bow
In easing down to the earth:
One story ends, another begins,
Right here, right now.

A prophetic sign of things to come
A change befalls us, everyone
Summer green fades to autumn gold
The seasons ahead, are stories untold.

But the moment at hand is the miracle of now
So, let us walk here in wonder
While time will allow.

OCTOBER GARDEN CLUB MEETING:

Date: **OCTOBER 14, 2026**
Time: 9:30 AM - Set-up
10:00 AM - Meeting
10:45AM - Social Time and Snacks
11:00AM - Speaker
12:30 - Clean-up

Program: *Emilie Castle presenting about Container Gardening*

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

The focus for the year is getting to know each other better … make this happen by sitting at a different table than your usual spot.

Snack Crew:

Hostess:	Lois H.
Crew:	Georgann L.
	Debbie D.
	Joanne W.
	Helen S.
	Cynthia N.

NOTE: Mark your calendars that the November meeting will be **on the third Wednesday - November 18.** This change has been made to accommodate the Veteran's Day Celebration at the Blue Star Marker at 10:00AM on November 11.

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)

SALES TABLE:

It will be back the year as it's a good money maker:

** Since our gardens are beginning to go to sleep for fall/winter it's a good time to dig volunteer plants and bring them to be sold

** Clean out that closet you've been wanting to get to and bring the treasures you find

** Put a price on all items you bring

** Remember … what isn't sold you will need to take home

YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED:

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING:

On Monday, September 28 a General Membership Meeting was held. The morning speaker was Caroline Zebroski and local expert on growing Fuchsias. A handout has been emailed to all garden club members by Joyce.

The business meeting was primarily composed of getting volunteers to fill the positions on the nominating committee. It is an election year for the district so you might receive a call asking you to volunteer for a district level position … please say "YES"!

Lunch was delicious baked chicken from Safeway along with potato salad, veggie and fruit platters and concluded with homemade cookies!

The afternoon speaker was Gracie Lange … she shared about drying flowers and herbs and how to make potpourri.

ABOUT THE ISSAQUAH GARDEN CLUB …

TREASURERS REPORT:

** We are starting the year with a healthy bank account thanks to all the extra donations made during the dues collection process this last spring.
** The Treasurers records were reviewed per by the Bylaws and found to be 100% in order (thank you Sandra)

GARDEN THERAPY (JOAN H.):

** The next Garden Therapy session will be immediately after the November 18 meeting when we will make Fall/Thanksgiving arrangements. All are invited to stay and help!
** Remember to bring clippers as well as greens from your garden.
** Gale will purchase the flowers.

BELLEVUE BOTANICAL GARDEN (GALE):

** Check the BBG website for all kinds of classes and activities that are happening at the garden!
** The next Work Day is Friday, October 16, 2026

POST OFFICE (GEORGANN):

** There will be a work day in October to freshen the trough
** No watering is needed during the rainy months but we will need volunteers to check that all plants are alive and there is no garbage etc. in the planter

BLUE STAR MARKER (DIANNE):

** The next gathering requiring a floral arrangement will be Veteran's Day on November 11. Dianne will schedule a work day in October so that we're sure the gardens look their best for the next celebration.

NEW BUSINESS:

** Marie (Membership/Hospitality Chair) has suggested a way for us to have emergency contact information available if needed. She will be cutting out card stock cards that will fit behind our name badges. On these cards we'll record such information as month and day of birth, emergency contact information, allergies, blood type (if known) etc.
** The new yearbook was reviewed and a few changes were highlighted. One big change is the November 11 meeting has been moved to November 18 due to the Veteran's Day celebration. It was also found that a few books have a blank page for the Snack Committee list so Lois will make a few hard copies of the list for those that want it.
** Future General Membership Meetings and IGC responsibilities:
    * February 22 - Raffle Item
    * May 24 - Table Decorations
** For anyone that hasn't signed up to help with snacks the list is available

SAVE THE DATES:

** October 16, 2026 - Bellevue Botanical Garden work day, 9:00 - 11:00AM
** November 11, 2026 - 10:00AM - Veteran's Day Ceremony at Blue Star Marker - Issaquah Community Center
** February 22, 2027 - Winter General Membership Meeting
** May 24, 2027 - Spring General Membership Meeting
** June 7 - 10 - WSFGC Convention/Annual Meeting, Suquamish Resort, Suquamish, WA

EDUCATIONAL CORNER:

Why Owls Are Good for Your Garden—and How to Attract Them

These fascinating birds are nocturnal creatures that provide pest control benefits to the ecosystem.

Inviting owls into your yard to improve your garden might not be something you've heard of. However, these nocturnal creatures bring with them a host of benefits for your landscape. Owls play a crucial role in the ecosystem by controlling pest populations, and their presence adds beauty and intrigue to your outdoor space. Ahead, experts delve into the many benefits of attracting owls and share tips on creating an inviting environment for these magnificent creatures.

Meet Our Expert

David Mizejewski, a naturalist with the National Wildlife Federation and author of *Attracting Birds, Butterflies and Other Backyard Wildlife*
Matthew Parks, an associate professor of biology at the University of Central Oklahoma and a birding enthusiast for over 30 years

Benefits of Attracting Owls to Your Garden

Attracting owls offers fascinating benefits for the garden and ecosystem.

Provides Pest Control

Forget about setting up pest traps; let the owls work for you while you sleep. “Owls are important predators of rodents and rabbits, both of which can be pests when their numbers get out of control,” says David Mizejewski, naturalist with the National Wildlife Federation. Depending on their size, owls can gobble up one to three rodents per day, functioning as a continuous automatic shield against property-damaging mice and rats.

Matthew Parks, an associate professor of biology at the University of Central Oklahoma, adds that owls occupy an important place near the top of the food chain. “What they eat varies by species, but their diets can include mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and insects,” he says. Great horned owls are even one of the few species known to prey on skunks.

Parks explains that owls have adaptations that allow them to hunt in conditions that would be challenging for many other birds. “Barn owls can locate prey by sound alone and have been able to catch mice in complete darkness, even when the prey is hidden by vegetation or snow,” he says. “It is estimated that a single family of barn owls can consume around 3,000 mice each year.”

Minimizes Reliance on Chemical Pest Repellents

Because owls prey on rodents, supporting healthy owl populations is one piece of a more natural approach to managing these pests. “Avoiding rodenticides is particularly important because owls and other animals, including cats and dogs, can be poisoned when they eat contaminated prey,” says Parks.

Offers an Exciting Bird-Watching Opportunity

Owls can be hard to find because many species are nocturnal and very well camouflaged. There are 19 species of owls in North America, says Parks. “Ranging from the powerful great horned, great gray, and snowy owls, with wingspans up to 5 feet wide, to the diminutive saw-whet, pygmy, and elf owls, which are around the size of a robin.”

Each owl species has its own unique calls, habitat, and behaviors and is a prized addition to a nature enthusiast’s life list. “Catching a fleeting glimpse of an owl in the dark, hearing their hoots and other calls at night, or finding feathers or owl pellets beneath their roosting trees are all wonderful ways to experience the natural world right outside your door,” says Mizejewski.

Parks adds that sharpening your hearing by learning their calls can be one of the best ways to discover that an owl is living nearby.

Tells You What's Living Nearby

If you're curious about the animal activity in your area, owl pellets provide a great clue. "Owl pellets, small bundles of the indigestible parts of prey that an owl regurgitates, are essentially records of their meals and can contain identifiable bones, teeth, and fur," explains Parks. By examining a pellet, you can discover what prey an owl has been eating.

How to Attract Owls

Attracting owls to your landscape can be relatively easy. Owls typically do not build their own nests; instead, they look for safe, secure spots in native trees or suitable nesting boxes. Providing a proper habitat can encourage them to settle in your area.

Plant Native Trees and Vegetation

The best way to attract owls is to plant trees and other native vegetation and protect the mature trees you already have, says Mizejewski. "Native plants are the foundation of the food web that supports the animals owls eat, and therefore the owls themselves," he explains.

Most owl species also nest in trees or other large vegetation. "Some species, such as the great horned owl, nest in the branches, while other species nest in cavities, including screech owls, barred owls, and elf owls, which nest in cavities within large cactuses."

Install Nesting Boxes

For cavity-nesting species, you can also install nesting boxes designed specifically for those owl species. An owl nesting box attracts owls by mimicking the deep, safe tree

cavities they naturally seek out but cannot dig themselves. You can easily purchase a species-specific box online from reputable sources.

To maximize your chances of attracting an owl, choose a mature tree trunk in your yard in a quiet, low-traffic area. Mount the box 10 to 20 feet high, facing the entrance hole away from winter winds and ensuring it is shaded from harsh afternoon sun. Provide an open flight path directly in front of the opening, allowing owls to land and launch effortlessly during their nighttime hunting shifts.

Provide a Water Source

A consistent water source is essential for attracting owls, as these silent hunters need regular drinking and bathing to maintain their specialized feathers, which are crucial for stealth while hunting. You can achieve this by adding features such as a bird bath, pond, fountain, or even a small kiddie pool. Remember to keep the water clean to avoid potential health issues for the birds.

Mistakes to Avoid

Attracting owls to your yard and garden is fairly easy; nonetheless, there are common beginner mistakes that you can easily avoid with the right knowledge.

Leaving bright lights on overnight: Spotlights and bright floodlights can dazzle hunting owls, making them feel overly exposed and reluctant to nest in such well-lit areas.
Leaving backyard netting or soccer goals up at night: Owls fly low to the ground while scanning for mice and rats and can easily get tangled and injured in loose sports nets.
Cleaning the nesting boxes during winter and spring: While keeping the owls' home clean is a great idea, disturbing the nest between January and June can scare away a breeding pair and cause them to abandon their eggs.
Using plastic or unventilated boxes: Thin plastic or unventilated nesting boxes can create an oven-like effect in the summer heat, leading to dehydration and potential loss of owlets. Instead, use a thick, untreated wooden box designed for the owl species you are targeting. Ensure the box has proper drainage holes at the bottom and ventilation slots at the top to help keep the owlets cool and dry.