

ARS Whidbey Island Chapter NEWSLETTER

Website: www2.whidbey.net/dapont/ARS

Meets the 4th Wednesday of each Month
Fire District 5 Headquarters Station
215 East Race Road, Coupeville, WA
Refreshments: 7:00 Meeting: 7:20

February 2006

Annual Chapter Plant Sale

Saturday March 11th, 2006

8:00am to 4:00pm

Coupeville Middle School



This is our **major fundraiser for the year**. Get out early to find the rhododendrons you've been looking for (See page 3 for plant list).

Help needed for the Sale: Setup at 6:30-7am; pickup trucks and muscle to transporting plants from Bill Stipe's to the school; teardown at the end of the day.

Help needed during the Sale: Cashiers; experts to answer customer questions (bring your Greer's); sales people; helpers.

* Contact **John Marshall 678-5448** if you can assist.*

Next Meeting: Wed, February 22

Program: Marie Lincoln of the Chocolate Flower Farm.

Marie, in love with chocolate, has found a wealth of 'chocolate' plants which she grows at her Chocolate Flower Farm in Langley. Her specialty dark plants, rare perennials and all things chocolate for the gardener can be found at her retail shop, The Garden Shed, on First Street in Langley.

*February... Valentine's Day...
Chocolate...what could be a better companion to rhododendrons!*

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Feb 25-26 Mt Baker Orchid Show/Sale
Mt Vernon, WA

March 11 Annual Chapter Plant Sale

March 22 Chapter Meeting
Don Kohlenberger, Hands-on, Rhodies from seed

April 26 Meeting/Potluck/Show/Auction
Kristi O'Donnell, Garden Inspiration

May 12-15 ARS Annual Convention
Rockville, MD

May 24 Chapter Meeting
Lucile Whitman, Companion Trees

June 10 Meerkerk Picnic

Sept 22-24 ARS Regional Conference
Harrison Hot Springs, BC

2006 Western Regional Conference

This sounds like the vacation for all of you who have been out tending your gardens all spring and summer. Sit back, relax in a hot springs pool, and let that garden dirt wash out of your pores.

Sept 22nd - 24th, Harrison Hot Springs Resort & Spa
Harrison Hot Springs, BC

Nestled between the steep slopes of the surrounding mountains of the upper Fraser Valley, at the base of Mt. Cheam (6,913 ft) lies a mystical jewel of a community. The town of Harrison Hot Springs is renowned for its breathtaking scenery and for the natural hot springs. The Harrison Hot Springs Resort & Spa is a luxury hotel which hosts five hot indoor and outdoor pools, each fed by the natural mineral hot springs that have remained a primary attraction for visitors for more than 100 years.

Speakers: Des Kennedy; Steve Hootman; Dalen & Lori Bayes; Colleen Forster; Charlie Sale; David Sellars; Dr. Norma Senn; Don Martyn

Tours: Harrison Lake Boat Tours; Bridal Veil Falls / Minter Gardens; Ferncliff Gardens / Westminster Abbey / Xá:Ytem

Information and registration online:

<http://www.arsfallconference2006.com>

and/or look for details in the summer ARS Journal.



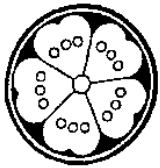
February cookie reminder:
Marilynn Wright & Mary Wyman

Elsie Watson

Don Smart/Karen Swenson

Some of you may know that Elsie suffered a compression fracture of her spine in late October. She was recovering nicely but suffered a setback while out cleaning her patio. Even though she is experiencing a lot of pain, she is determined to get through this. Her thoughts have been about the garden and the NW Hybridizers Group. Elsie isn't able to handle many visitors, but she would certainly appreciate your cards! Elsie Watson, 11530 Holmes Point Road, Kirkland, WA 98034.

Whidbey Gardening Workshop



The Whidbey Gardening Workshop is presented annually for the benefit of the gardening public and is sponsored by the Island County WSU Master Gardeners. This year's workshop will feature more than 45 garden-related classes, local vendor booths, WSU publications, and educational displays. Fees are \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door. For registration information and a list of classes, call the Island County WSU Cooperative Extension office at (360) 240-5527; or visit the website:

<http://www.island.wsu.edu/mastergardener/wgw2006front.html>

Keynote speaker, **Tonie Fitzgerald**, is the author of "Gardening in the Inland Northwest", numerous articles including WSU Extension publications, and is the Extension Educator at WSU-Spokane. She has been teaching and working with farm producers, landscape professionals, gardeners, and Master Gardener volunteers since 1985. She is an invited speaker throughout the Northwest and her articles have appeared in *American Nurserymen*, *The Goodfruit Grower*, *Washington State Magazine*, and the *Spokesman Review* newspaper.

Tonie's presentation, "Botany, Fate, and the Lewis and Clark Plant Collection", will cover the Lewis and Clark journey, their observation of the local fauna and flora, and how it impacted the botanical studies and passions of the day.

Meeting Reminder

Bring...

- ♥ Trusses from those early blooming rhodies!
- ♥ Plants for the dollar table
- ♥ A friend
- ♥ Your enthusiasm



... your warmth and friendship to share!

Meerkerk Magic

Kristi O'Donnell

*I gave myself a treat today:
A sweetheart walk in the Gardens.*

*Raindrops ceased yet streamlets raced
Filling culverts and shimmering ponds.*

*Tiny pink buds and canopies graced
The paths now softly carpeted.*

*The first crocus, violet
The first iris, blue
Joined early rhodies
In harmony.*

*The heron he cawed
The eagle she flew
Squirrels on the march as well~*

*Give yourself a treat today
A sweetheart walk is swell.*



Meerkerk Gardens 2006 Events

March 18, 19	Spring Opening Sale	9-4
April-May	PEAK BLOOM!	Open Daily 9-4
April 15	Early Blommers Sale	9-4
April 23	Meerkerk Magic, Celebration of Flowers	Noon-4
May 14	Mother's Day Harp Concert	Noon-4
June 10	Annual Picnic	10-3
July 29	Meerkerk Medley	4:30-9
Oct 14	Autumn Rhododendron Sale	9-4



Meerkerk Gardens is cared for by a dedicated group of volunteers. Friends from the American Rhododendron Society, local garden clubs, Island County Master Gardeners and our community assist throughout the year. There are many ways you can volunteer to help at the Gardens:

2nd Saturday: Work Party

We share coffee and rolls at 8:45 and embark upon Garden projects at 9:00 am. A potluck lunch is served at noon.

Thursdays: Hands-on-Horticulture

Work with the Island County Master Gardeners, local garden clubs and the garden manager on projects in the gardens. Park in the volunteer's parking lot and meet in the Volunteer Cottage for hot coffee and tea at 8:45 then into the Gardens to dig up some dirt. Projects vary from simple branch pickup to garden grooming...as well as indoor work on mailings and library organization.



Chapter Plant Sale

Dennis Giberson

For those of you who want to plan ahead, here is a list of the 1-gallon plants that will be available at the chapter plant sale, March 11. Larger, yet undetermined, rhododendrons will also be available. There will be a picture book of the sale rhodies at the sale.

R. *augustinii* var. *chasmanthum*
R. *augustinii* 'Tower Court'
'Baden Baden'
'Barto Alpine'
'Blue Diamond'
'Brilliant'
'Bruce Brechtbill'
'Cary Ann'
'Cheer'
'Cunningham's White'
'Curlew'
'Dora Amateis'
'Elizabeth Hobbie'
'Ginny Gee'
'Jingle Bells'
'Lucy Lou'
'Molly Ann'
'Ocean Lake'
'Rose Elf'
'Ruby Hart'
'Whitney Red'
'Winsome'
Yak. 'Berg'
Yak. 'Elmer's Orphan'
Yak. 'Fred Peste'
Yak. 'Incense'
Yak. 'Swen's Pink'
Yak. 'Titian Beauty'

Almost all of these are small leaf or medium leaf varieties that will take sun and wind. Most of them are also low to medium growers.

In the Garden

February Rhododendron tips: *(Bill Stipe)*

- Start fertilizing rhododendrons that need it but keep these tips in mind. And a reminder that species need little to none...



TIPS FOR FERTILIZING SANDY SOIL

Because of its structure, sand does not hold on to nutrients very well. Many plant nutrients dissolve in water, so they tend to leach out of sandy soil fast. For this reason, it is important to use a timed-release fertilizer that won't wash through the soil before plants can make use of it.

Sandy soil dries out quickly, so it's important to use mulch to slow down evaporation from the soil's surface.

TIPS FOR FERTILIZING CLAY SOIL

Clay soil has many tiny spaces that hold on to water and nutrients. Because water that holds dissolved nutrients moves through clay soil slowly, it's important to mix fertilizer into the soil well.

General gardening tips:

(Mary Robson, author of "Month by Month Gardening in Oregon and Washington" (Cool Springs Press, 2006), and Sandy Dunham, Seattle Times desk editor)

- Groom ornamental perennial grasses by trimming old seeds and stalks.
- Prune your roses, traditionally after Presidents Day. Prune hybrid teas heavily, but go easier on English roses and shrubs, removing only a third to half the branches.
- Rake up leaves and twigs and let the light hit your lawn.

Bylaws Revision

At the last Board meeting we took a hard look at our bylaws and found that the following revisions should be made:

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE: Include education.

ARTICLE IV – DUES: Clarify Associate Member dues.

ARTICLE – VI – OFFICERS: Set Officers terms for 2 years.

ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS: Set the annual meeting in November.

ARTICLE VIII – ELECTIONS: Define when the slate of nominees is presented to the membership and when the new officers and director take office.

ARTICLE XI – BUDGET: Specify a budget review.

ARTICLE XII – FINANCIAL AUDIT: Committee appointment changed from Board of Directors to President.

Draft copies of the revised bylaws will be handed out at the February meeting for you to take home and review or a copy will be mailed to you. A vote on the revisions will be taken at the March meeting.

❧ *Did you eat your chocolate today?* ❧

Please submit articles of interest for Feb Newsletter by **3/10/06**

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