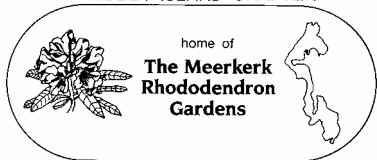


WHIDBEY ISLAND CHAPTER



A R S - DISTRICT 2

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

October 2007

Next Meeting: Wed, Oct 24th Program: *Dominique Emerson* Art in the Garden

Dominique Emerson is the creative owner of Moose Ridge, a 50 acre diversified garden of 'rooms' and complimentary areas.

Dominique will be speaking on Art in the Garden. Her slide show focuses on the care and maintenance of art in the garden. She will cover various materials from wood to bronze, steel, glass and stone. She will also discuss placement considerations and present simple design guidelines that everyone can use. It sounds like an interesting program that will help you in the garden whether you're placing a birdbath or a life-size sculpture to enhance your rhododendrons. *Bring a friend!*

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Oct 12-14 ARS Regional Conference
Cleveland, OH
Oct 24 Chapter Meeting
Nov 14 Pie Social/Annual Meeting
Election of Officers / Oriana Hybridizing 101
Dec 8 Chapter Holiday Dinner
@ Christopher's in Coupeville

Don't Forget Those Dues

Time is running out to renew your ARS membership. Please send your renewal to Marilyn as soon as possible so she can get them in to National headquarters by November 15th. If your membership is not renewed by then you may miss the January issue of the ARS Journal.



Hosting Our Canadian Friends

Our Canadian rhododendron friends are planning to visit us again during the last week in April. If you would like to open your home to them as overnight guests or want to share your garden for a tour please contact Bill Stipe 678-8740 or wstipe@whidbey.com. Now is the time to put together a plan of action to get your garden looking great for this event.

Busted Myths

Myth: Prune off the top of trees when planting to compensate for root loss.

Fact: Trees recover more quickly when top growth remains.

Myth: When planting a tree or shrub, dig a big deep hole and mix lots of soil amendments into the backfill.

Fact: The hole should not be deeper than the depth of the root ball, but should be twice as wide, and in native soil only.

(Written by Mary Robson and Holly Kennel, Washington State University Cooperative Extension/King, Snohomish and Pierce counties. Seattle Times)

*Golden leaves in an amber pool,
And rocks all warm in the sun.
Why should we fret that summer is gone,
When autumn has just begun?*

-October Ale- Esther C. Grayson



Cookie reminder:

Marilynn Wright & Stephanie Rodden

From the Prez

Bill Stipe



Summer is over and badly needed fall rains are gracing our gardens. This is the ideal season to plant or transplant rhododendrons. Whidbey Island is in USDA Plant Hardiness Zone 8 (Sunset zone 5) with minimum winter temperatures of 15 to 20 degrees F. As long as a plants root zone is not frozen, the roots will continue to grow and be ready for spring growth. With the coming colder weather, top growth will slow down and the sap will migrate down to the roots, making the plant capable of surviving freezing temperatures without damage. In the off chance that our winter temperature dips lower than usual, it is a good idea to add a layer of mulch over the roots. Conifer barks are readily available on Whidbey and make a good looking and effective mulch.

Our chapter by-laws require that we hold a business meeting in November. At that meeting we must elect the officers for the next year starting in January. Our nominating committee chaired by Donna Lee Von Falkenberg has been contacting members to find candidates for the open positions. The term for President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer and newsletter editor is two years and the three Directors serve three year terms. Our VP (Pat Sasson), Secretary-Treasurer (Marilyn Wright), and newsletter editor (Gail DaPont) have each served several terms and have done a commendable job! Marilyn and Gail have agreed to serve another term but Pat would like to retire from the VP job. So we need to vote on Vice President, and one director.

Candidates for the open positions are: VP- Stephen Schwarzmann, Director-Mary Wyman and Stephanie Rodden. Because Stephen is currently a Director, we need a replacement to serve out his term and Pat Sasson has agreed to do that. John Marshall will continue to advise the Board as Past President. At our October meeting we will accept additional nominations.

Ongoing Plant Sales

There is still time for you to do your part to help these Nurseries clear their stock:

Glynneden Gardens, 2970 Smugglers Cove Rd, Greenbank, continues its *½ price* clearing sale on many hybrid rhododendrons through the end of October. Find a stop in your garden for 'Kiwi Magic', 'Noyo Brave', 'Surry Heath', 'Yaku Sunrise', 'Edith Boulter', and more!

Kirk's Nursery, 3693 Scriven Ln, Langley, is having a 20-50% off sale on an assortment of perennials, grasses, shrubs and trees.



Those Falling Leaves

Gail DaPont

That crisp edge in the weather is a sure sign that fall is upon us. All the glory of leaves in reds, oranges and gold is the prelude to... heaps of fallen leaves. But take heart, since you'll have to gather them up to keep them from smothering the lawn, you might as well put them to good use. Those fallen leaves will make a nutrient rich cozy mulch for your rhododendrons and garden beds.

Before you can glean the benefits of those leaves as mulch you'll have to gather them up and, if they are the dinner plate size leaves from the native big leaf maples, you'll want to shred them for quicker decomposition to get those nutrients working for you.

The tried and true gathering method is with a good old fashion rake. If it's any consolation, raking leaves for half an hour burns 150 calories (American Council of Fitness and Nutrition). Rake out your flower beds into your paths and/or lawn then use your mower to shred them. Gather them into piles with rake, leaf blower or lawn vacuum and your ready to spread. A two-inch layer of shredded leaves will help to insulate and feed your garden through the winter and into spring. In your exuberance to use your new leaf mulch remember to keep it away from your rhododendrons stems to decrease chances of disease or rot.



Why Computers Sometimes Crash!

by Dr. Seuss

If a packet hits a pocket on a socket on a port,
and the bus is interrupted at a very last resort,
and the access of the memory makes your floppy disk abort,
then the socket packet pocket has an error to report.

If your cursor finds a menu item followed by a dash,
and the double-clicking icon puts your window in the trash,
and your data is corrupted cause the index doesn't hash,
then your situation's hopeless and your system's gonna crash!

If the label on the cable on the table at your house,
says the network is connected to the button on your mouse,
but your packets want to tunnel to another protocol,
that's repeatedly rejected by the printer down the hall.....

And your screen is all distorted by the side effects of gauss,
so your icons in the window are as wavy as a souse;
then you may as well reboot and go out with a bang,
'cuz sure as I'm a poet, the sucker's gonna hang.

When the copy on your floppy's getting sloppy in the disk,
and the macro code instructions cause unwanted risk,
then you'll have to flash the BIOS and you'll want to RAM
your ROM,
just quickly turn the darn thing off and run to tell your Mom!

Well, that certainly clears things up for me. How about you?

Wildlife Trees in the Urban Landscape

By Bill Herbst

Trained at Windsor Great Park in England and a former Director of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society, Bill Herbst currently works as Parks Foreman for the City of Port Coquitlam, BC.

Editors Note: You'll find this article is also applicable to the rural areas here on Whidbey Island.

Usually called snags, standing dead and dying trees are now being referred to as "wildlife trees" in recognition of their habitat value to birds, mammals and other creatures. Many types of birds, animals, insects and fungi rely on these afterlife trees to provide food and shelter, and they are important stages within the food chain.

The primary colonizers of dead trees are insects and fungi, elements which are essential for the healthy decomposition of materials, breaking down wood, leaf and litter to make available essential elements for the soil. The varieties of invertebrates that inhabit wildlife trees are staggering. These organisms provide food and contribute to the long process of decomposition by softening the wood, which makes it easy for cavity dwellers to gain access and create nesting cavities. Gardeners may be concerned that these mites, earwigs, beetles, spiders, ants and many varieties of fungi are a threat to our homes, but in fact, our homes are too hostile of an environment for them to survive.

A standing dead tree can remain in place for many years. Some of the giant snags of the Pacific Northwest forests have stood for 150 years and longer, and forest companies now map snag locations for preservation in their forestry operations in recognition of their value to wildlife. Smaller snags may not stand as long, but most can easily stand for several decades. Often, the trees will crumble and fall apart and sometimes they will fall straight away. This should be taken into consideration when deciding how and where to retain a wildlife tree in your garden as safety should always be a top priority.

When snags eventually crumble and fall, they continue to contribute to the food cycle. They decompose, adding valuable organic matter to the soil while continuing to provide shelter for mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and insects. These nurse logs are nutrient-rich and become the germination ground for many species of plants. In addition, the ground around and under the log retains much more moisture than in the surrounding soil, even during drought conditions.

In our often sanitized approach to gardening where everything must look neat and tidy, the idea of retaining a dead, decaying tree is often overlooked and while the idea of promoting wildlife habitat appeals to us, we may recoil at the thought of leaving a dead, rotten tree. But, gardeners who wish to introduce viable wildlife habitat into their gardens must realize the role that dead trees play and should consider creating a wildlife tree whenever the opportunity presents itself. If there are no trees in your garden that require culling, there are



numerous tactics you can use in place of standing snags. Pieces of trunks and limbs with natural cavities can be secured into existing trees and other corners of the garden to provide shelter and habitat. Stumps and logs can be placed into the garden landscape to provide interesting features that can be planted up to look like natural elements within the garden.

When creating a wildlife tree, the existing tree should ideally be located in an area where human activity is minimal and where limited damage will occur, should the tree fall. I like to leave at least 5 metres of standing trunk along with a number of limbs to provide perches for birds. The base should be girdled and tops should be cut off at angles and made jagged with a chainsaw to create a realistic looking snagged top that looks like it was blown out by a windstorm instead of the many snags I see that look like they were created by Bart Simpson's barber!

At this point, you can leave the tree as it is, but there are other options you can do to help with habitat enhancement. One inch holes, drilled six inches deep, are irresistible for woodpeckers and flickers, and they will happily peck away and create cavities. I have planted vines which envelope the snag, creating additional protection for small mammals. Planted vines can look very appealing; my Boston ivy looks magnificent when it colours in the fall. However, vines do add extra weight and can hasten the tree's collapse.

As the snags age and decompose, they should be evaluated from a safety perspective. If safety is an issue, the tree can be felled and left in place, but if safety is not an issue, the tree can be left to stand and decompose naturally. Wildlife trees add a very interesting feature to the urban garden and I would encourage everyone to consider this approach to habitat enhancement.

Reprinted with permission from the September 2007 Vancouver Rhododendron Society newsletter 'Indumentum'.

Happy Halloween

Trick or treat,
Smell my feet,
Give me something
good to eat.



Please submit articles of interest for Nov Newsletter by 11/2/07

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