

WHIDBEY ISLAND CHAPTER



# ARS Whidbey Island Chapter NEWSLETTER

Website: [whidbeyrhodies.org](http://whidbeyrhodies.org)

Meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each Month  
Fire District 5 Headquarters Station  
1164 Race Road, Coupeville, WA  
**Refreshments: 7:00 Meeting: 7:20**

October 2008

## Next Meeting: Oct 22

### Program: *Bill Stipe*

#### Castle Gardens and Rhododendrons in Scandinavia

**Bill Stipe** will share pictures taken on a recent cruise through Scandinavia, Scotland, Great Britain, and The Netherlands. He will also comment on methods the Danes use to grow their rhododendrons.

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

Sept 25-28 ...	Western Regional Conference
	Hilo, HI
Oct 22 .....	Chapter Meeting
Nov 19 .....	Pie Social/Annual Meeting
	Election of Officers
Dec 10 (Wed) .....	Holiday Dinner
	@ Christopher's in Coupeville
Jan 28 .....	Chapter Meeting
Feb 25 .....	Chapter Meeting
March 25 .....	Chapter Meeting



## 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 15<sup>th</sup>. If your membership is not renewed by then you may miss the January issue of the ARS Journal.

## Newsletter by Email

If you would like to receive your newsletter via email please contact me, Gail DaPont, [gail@whidbey.com](mailto:gail@whidbey.com). Postage runs \$4.20 a year per member. Of our 59 members, 22 receive the newsletter online. If just half of the remaining members (18) could switch to email that would save us \$75.60 a year!

## Garden Tidbit

If you've use straw as mulch in any of your garden beds consider using the clippings from your ornamental grasses. This sounds like a great way to suppressing those weeds and skip the trip to the compost pile.



## Cookie reminder:

Pat Sasson & Kristi O'Donnell

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*Autumn is a season followed immediately by  
looking forward to Spring.*

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*Anonymous*



## From the Prez

Bill Stipe



I attended the ARS Western Regional Conference in Hilo Hawaii the last week of September. The ARS National Board of directors meeting was held there at the same time. Chapter insurance was an item of discussion and it was resolved that all US chapters will be covered by the ARS blanket liability policy. The cost will be approximately \$2.50 per member. A printed membership roster is being considered, but the price will be \$5.00 a copy if a minimum of 500 are ordered. At that price it is questionable if enough members will order it. If you are interested, please let me know so I can provide the number of copies our chapter wants. Also being considered is an online version. The budget report indicates a deficit of \$21,607. Declining membership and rising costs are a problem. An increase in dues is being considered.

After the Board meeting, Mary and I visited the Volcano, several private gardens, an orchid nursery (I bought 51 cattleya orchids) and the macadamia nut factory (where I bought a bunch of nuts). The rhododendrons on Hawaii are mostly the *Vireya* species and hybrids. These rhododendrons bloom all year long and are really beautiful, but they will not survive in freezing climates. I didn't bring any home because my greenhouse will be full of orchids.

The planning for the 2009 convention is coming along nicely with few details still to be finalized. Make sure and mark your calendars for April 30 – May 3 2009.

Fall is the ideal time to plant rhododendrons and most of the nurseries have them on sale now, so don't hesitate; get those rhodies you need to fill in your gardens.

## Meerkerk Notes

Join our dedicated group of volunteers who tend the Gardens year 'round. Come and share your talents in gardening, propagation, plant cataloging, education, fundraising, special events and more...

- ♦ *Work Parties:* Join us for monthly work parties the 2nd Saturday of each month, 8:45-12:00. We share a potluck lunch at noon.

- ♦ *Wednesday Construction Team:* Join our crew in building and repairing structures in the Gardens, 9-noon.

- ♦ *Thursday Mornings: Hands-on-Horticulture:* Enjoy working with gardening volunteers and the Meerkerk staff on horticultural projects in the Gardens.

- ♦ *Independent Opportunities:* Work on your own schedule on a solo or team project in the Gardens or your home office. Contact:

[Penny@meerkerkgardens.org](mailto:Penny@meerkerkgardens.org)

## Growing potted trees

*The Seattle Times* 02/02/06

Growing a tree in a pot is an attractive proposition for a nervous gardener. It's like having an entire garden in one small space.

A potted tree converts a barren porch into a minimalist Eden, complete with mulching perennials that can be changed to suit the changing seasons.

### What kind of tree?

Trees in containers never reach a mature size, so it's best to select a species that reaches no more than 25 feet when planted in the ground. Dwarf varieties of evergreens such as boxwood are fine choices, or deciduous trees like Japanese maple grow nicely in containers. Talk to a plant expert for more detailed advice.

### What kind of pot?

The type of pot matters less than its size. The diameter should be at least 20 inches, and ideally larger. Clay is sturdier than plastic, but it's also heavier should you decide to move the plant.



### What kind of soil?

"Potted trees need a healthy soil mix because of their restricted growth," says Andrea Cummins, a plant educator who fields calls for the Natural Lawn and Garden Hotline, a public service sponsored by Seattle Public Utilities' Natural Soil Building Program.

She recommends filling the container with good potting mix available at any home and garden center.

Do not use soil directly out of your garden. Instead, experts advise using a soil-based compost containing good organic matter and, to keep air in the soil, some perlite or pumice.

### How much food, water?

Caring for a potted tree is relatively simple. Keep it watered, but not wet. Give it a feeding in winter and again in spring, and it happily will unfurl its ever-lengthening branches. A granular, slow-release fertilizer works well for potted trees.

### What about the roots?

About once every five years, the roots will bind up as they press against the sides of the pot.

When this happens, it's time to take the root-bound tree out of its pot for a shave. This takes anywhere from two to four people, depending on the size of the tree, and requires a padded plant dolly.

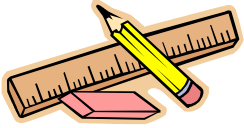
Gently tip it onto the dolly, saw off two to three inches of roots along the sides and the bottom, then carefully place it back in the pot.

*Sources: Natural Lawn and Garden Hotline;  
Oregon State University Extension Service*

*Editor's Note: I'm forever without a measuring tool while in the garden so I found this common sense article in the Eugene Chapter's October newsletter of particular interest. Reprinted with permission.*

## Yakkin' at the Old Tool Shed *Douglas Furr*

To decide where to begin or add to a garden we must know how to measure and anticipate change. Admiring that gorgeous shrub in its one-gallon container is a different experience a few seasons later when confronted with it having grown into a six-foot tall hedge.



To measure you will need a ruler, a tape measure, and a piece of graph paper. To get things into proper perspective, first measure and draw the house, garage, shed, or other structure on the paper. Find a happy conversion to scale. For example, if the front of the house is fifty feet, then you can mark it on your paper as five inches (scale: 1 in = 10 ft). Then add structural plants to your drawing. When drawing a large plant, such as a tree, depict the size of the canopy of the tree at 10-15 years. That will help to evaluate the amount of shade and select plants for the future garden.

Once you've measured and drawn the structures (human and plant), you have a visual idea of your garden's open spaces. The next challenge is to lay out a physical plot in an open space that matches your mind's eye of what you want to grow. In this article, we'll lay out a vegetable patch by eye using the following body measurements:

1. The length of your step. If you can walk in sand or something similar, after several normal steps, go back and measure from the heel of the left foot to the toe of the right. This approach also works if you have wet feet and walk across the kitchen floor (but be quick to clean before it's noticed).
2. The width of your index and middle finger together.
3. The width of your three middle fingers.
4. The width of your four fingers, and
5. The width of the splay of your hand from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the pinkie. For example, my measurements are as follows: Step = 34 inches, Index/Middle Finger = 1.5 inches, Middle Fingers = 2.25 inches. Four Fingers = 2.75 inches. Hand = 8 inches.

To demonstrate putting all of the above together, let's say I want to plant turnips. For a family of four, I would need 3 rows five feet minimum with five to six inch spacing). Easy! Three steps and a splayed hand would be pretty close to fifteen feet, and for the spacing, two sets of all four fingers. *Happy Planning!*

## How much shade is shade?

*Fine Gardening Magazine*

Because not all shade is the same, you need to know the different types in order to determine what plants will thrive in your specific conditions. Here are three common conditions you may have.

**Bright shade:** An east-facing location that receives between four and six hours of unobstructed morning sun would fit this classification. Reflected light from nearby walls may also contribute to the light intensity. Some sun-loving and most partial-shade plants will thrive in this situation.

**Dappled shade:** This term refers to the filtered light that passes through the canopy of deciduous trees or is found under a structure such as an arbor or pergola. Many plants that require partial shade will do well under this scenario.

**Dense shade:** True shade-loving plants require dense shade, which occurs in a north-facing aspect, under evergreen trees, or in areas heavily shaded by adjacent structures

## Happy Halloween

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



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Please submit articles of interest for Nov Newsletter by 11/7/08

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