



People, Places & Plants with John Elsley

Pam Felts, Education Chair

From the Royal Botanic Gardens

at Kew, England, to the halls of George Park Seed Company in Greenwood, South Carolina, to Beaver Creek and Song Sparrow Nurseries in the Midwest, John Elsley has had an exceptional career covering every aspect of horticulture. On

Sunday, April 25th, NPA is pleased to welcome Mr. Elsley as featured speaker at our annual Nicolay Lecture. His lecture, **"People, Places & Plants: Inspirational Highlights of My Horticulture Career"** will take us through his years of study, research and key positions that include service to the Royal Horticulture Society; Curator of Hardy Plants at the Missouri Botanical Garden; nearly



two decades at Park Seed Company with positions in development and introduction of new plants, marketing, product selection for the Wayside Gardens catalog and general editor of "The Wayside Gardens Collection," an eight-volume series on home gardening.

Mr. Elsley has developed and selected new plant introductions (two with patents and a third pending) for a new variety of *Cornus angustata* 'Empress of China,' along with *Euphorbia characias wulfenii* 'Shorty' and *Liriope muscari* 'Snowcone'. He worked with English rose breeder David Austin which led to Wayside's offering of the first line of "English Roses" in North America; has lectured

far and wide at garden symposiums, plant society and professional trade events, and appeared on segments of NBC's "Today Show" and WOR Radio's "Garden Hotline" in New York. Before departing Song Sparrow as Director of Horticulture in 2009, he assisted Roy Klehm in the breeding and introduction of herbaceous plants including hostas, daylilies and peonies.

This, and more, from John Elsley, connoisseur of plants, traveler and photographer of gardens around the world, keeper of his own home garden featured on the South Carolina Festival of Flowers Garden Tour, and a highlight of NPA's 2010 lecture series. ❁

NPA Nicolay Lecture

SUNDAY, APRIL 25, 1:00 PM

DOORS OPEN AT NOON FOR

PLANT & SEED SALES

NPA MEMBERS \$5 / NONMEMBERS \$10

CENTER FOR URBAN HORTICULTURE

3501 NE 41ST STREET, SEATTLE

Join Us for 'Solstice Celebration'

The Hardy Plant Study Weekend includes a festive evening on June 19 at the Bellevue Hilton at 7:00 pm. We're combining two of our favorite things: delicious desserts and light-hearted laughs. Enjoy fine wines, coffee drinks and desserts as you visit with fellow gardening friends. Then delight as Steve Lorton shares the premier sequel to his acclaimed monologue, "My Life in Other People's Gardens." You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll eat chocolate — you'll love it!

This year we're reserving a few

spots for this memorable evening for NPA members who would like to attend, but are not able to register for the entire 4-day Study Weekend.

But hurry — the conference is nearly sold out, and these special spots won't last long. The \$50 ticket includes one drink. To register, mail your check for \$50 per person to NPA, PO BOX 279, Dupont, WA 98327 and mark "Solstice" in the "For" space. If you are purchasing a ticket for a guest, please include a note with the guest's name for their name badge. ❁

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NPA EVENTS

Calendar

- MARCH 13 - 14** Giving o' the Green Plant Drive, Saturday & Sunday, all day, Wells Medina Nursery, 8300 NE 24th St., Medina
- APRIL 3** Spring Garden Fling tours, Seattle area, Saturday, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm.
- APRIL 10** NPA Border Planting, Saturday, 8 am – 12 pm, Bellevue Botanical Garden, 12001 Main Street, Bellevue.
- APRIL 9 – 11** Spring Garden Fling tours, Kitsap Peninsula area, Friday – Sunday, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm.
- APRIL 18** NPA SPRING PLANT SALE, Sunday, 10 am – 3 pm, North Seattle Community College, 9600 College Way North, Seattle.
- APRIL 24** Spring Garden Fling tours, Whidbey Island, Saturday, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm.
- APRIL 25** NPA Nicolay Lecture, "People, Places & Plants: Inspirational Highlights of My Horticulture Career," with John Elsley, Sunday, 1:00 pm at CUH, 3501 NW 41st Street, Seattle.
- MAY 9** Mother's Day Social, Sunday, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm, by Bellevue Botanical Garden Society, 12001 Main Street, Bellevue.
- MAY 22** NPA Lecture, "Garden Art from Found Objects," with Beth Evans-Ramos, Saturday, 1:00 pm at Lakewold Gardens, 12317 Gravelly Lake Drive SW, Lakewood.
- MAY 27** NPA Border Planting, Thursday, 10 am – 2 pm, Bellevue Botanical Garden.
- JUNE 13** NPA Border Planting, Sunday, 10 am – 2 pm, Bellevue Botanical Garden.
- JUNE 18 – 21** NPA 2010 HARDY PLANT STUDY WEEKEND, "Four Season Splendor: Design for Year-Round Beauty," Friday – Monday, Bellevue Hilton, register online at www.n-p-a.org. Only a few spaces remain!
- SEPTEMBER 11** NPA FALL PLANT SALE, Saturday, 11 am – 3 pm, Bellevue Botanical Garden.
- For updates on all NPA events visit www.n-p-a.org and click on Calendar.

"GARDEN ART FROM FOUND OBJECTS" WITH BETH EVANS-RAMOS

Pam Felts, Education Chair

As co-owner of the well-known Salvage Studio, Beth Evans-Ramos honed her unique skills by rescuing good junk and repurposing it into fun and functional pieces. She shares her love of junk with NPA members and guests in her popular lecture, "Garden Art from Found Objects, Salvage and Really Good Junk," at our South Sound lecture at Lakewold Gardens, Saturday, May 22 at 1:00 pm.

Beth's interests range from art and gardening, to professional "junking," and she confesses to an unabashed addiction to anything rusty. She has shared these passions with others throughout



her career, teaching workshops, and speaking to groups, both locally and nationally. In 2008 Beth and her business partner, Lisa Hilderbrand, and their business, The Salvage Studio, were featured in *Sunset Magazine* in *Sunset's* "Think Green" event. Her own Mill Creek garden and art graced the pages of *Flea Market Style* in an article last summer about her talent for "repurposing" household items.

Beth is the co-author of *The Salvage Studio: Sustainable Home Comforts to Organize, Entertain and Inspire* (Skipstone Press, 2008). The *Everett Herald* wrote in its review

NPA South Sound Lecture

SATURDAY, MAY 22, 1:00 PM
NPA MEMBERS FREE / NONMEMBERS \$10
LAKEWOLD GARDENS, 12317 GRAVELLY LAKE DRIVE SW, LAKEWOOD
DIRECTIONS: FROM I-5, TAKE EXIT 124 HEAD WEST ON GRAVELLY LAKE DRIVE SW AND FOLLOW SIGNS

about Beth's creative pieces, "Everything old really is new again."

Beth's most recent area of focus is Vintage Eco Design and Consulting, where she works with retail businesses to incorporate sustainable products and styling.

Please join us for NPA's South Sound lecture and the opportunity to meet Beth and see her many inspiring creations! Plan to take in the beauty and splendor of spring at Lakewold Gardens during your visit. The small nursery and gift shop are a fun place to shop. 🌸

~Photo by Julie Sotomura

It certainly *seems* like spring is here to stay! I try to guess what the future holds with regard to weather. Things have been zipping along nicely with rather balmy days in the first part of the year. Some sources predict a continued “warmer and drier” weather pattern than usual thru spring. But others are a bit less promising, predicting freezing temperatures and snow likely in mid-to-late winter. I am thinking that things will indeed get cold again before our “real” spring is here, but with luck, it won’t be too damagingly frigid. After last winter’s disastrous freezes we could use a nice easy season. I really hope to focus on new plants, and completing the huge Border renovation, rather than worrying about replacing more winter-killed specimens.

New plant acquisitions are coming in, and I hope a deluge of new plants will be swamping us by early May. With donation request letters sent to nurseries, and a few “Buy Me for the Border” events planned, we hope to get plenty of plants in the ground before Mother’s Day. Watch the website and emails for more specifics about upcoming planting parties. They are a great learning experience with fun camaraderie.

Phase One of the renovation is growing in nicely. This season it should be quite full and showy. The Hydrangeas that took a hit in last summer’s drought have regained strength and are poised to be loaded with blooms. Hardy Fuchsias are all bursting forth from the base. What were wee bits of Primula are now ever increasing puddles of beauty. In mid-February we were thrilled to get several hundred *Helleborus x hybridus* seedlings from Charles Price’s hand-pollinated crosses, which we added throughout the Border. It will be a few years until we see the resulting gems, but well worth the wait to get these coveted selections.

The north beds are ready to accept all kinds of interesting plants. Rare flowering quinces and Peonies, saved from the previous border, along with many new finds, are slated

to go in soon. There are a few small trees on order at Wells Medina, such as *Acer griseum*, to fill in the gaps. Several evergreen shrubs and small conifers are also marked for donation at our first “Giving o’ the Green” event at Wells Medina on March 13 – 14.

More than half of the plants in Phase One were donated by members and nurseries. We are hoping to top that support with donations for the second phase. Your donation is always welcome, and can be made at www.n-p-a.org.

You can feel good knowing that you are helping to establish an important new educational garden for the next generation of gardening enthusiasts. This spring the horticulture students at Edmonds Community College will be getting a rare opportunity to assist in planting a large, public garden.

The only disappointing aspect of the second stage of the renovation has been the invasive plants that have persisted. Sheets of *Allium ‘Hair’*, *Arum italicum* and *Ranunculus ficaria* are returning, despite our best efforts to eradicate them. (There’s a lesson here! Don’t plant these unless you really, really love them.) A few areas of the Border may have to be left unplanted until we can be sure these garden thugs are really gone. ❁

If you’d like to volunteer to work with George at the NPA Border, please contact him through the NPA office at 425-647-6004 or info@northwestperennialalliance.org.

“You can help establish a new educational garden for the next generation of gardening enthusiasts.”

PLANT THE BORDER!

Join the fun and be a part of planting this horticultural treasure for the next generation of gardening enthusiasts! We’ll be planting the NPA Border to get it ready for its big debut in June!

SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 8 – 2 PM

THURSDAY, MAY 27, 10 – 2 PM

SUNDAY, JUNE 13, 10 – 2 PM

Feel free to come for all or part of the times. We have most tools, but if you have a favorite planting tool, bring it. Bring snacks, water, and sack lunch. We have tasks at all levels and abilities, from large trees to label writing. Direct questions to George Lasch, Border Supervisor, or Carol Scheuffele, at info@northwestperennialalliance.org.

FLORAL & FOLIAGE SPECIMENS DESIRED FOR STUDY WEEKEND

We are planning for a comprehensive floral and foliage display at the Hardy Plant Study Weekend, June 18–20. If you feel you will have interesting plants in bloom or dynamite foliage and can provide fresh cuttings, we’d like to hear from you. In particular we are interested in finding a rosarian to offer cuttings. One or two stems per plant are all that is needed. We can use flowers of all kinds, interesting seed heads, and fabulous foliage of all sizes and shapes (bold and colorful, delicate and lacy, fern fronds, etc.) The exhibit will be prearranged, so please contact us by June 1 and let us know what beauties you’d like to contribute. Contact Linda McDonald or Jean Schollmeyer at info@northwestperennialalliance.org. ❁

NPA Spring Plant Sale, April 18th at North Seattle Community College

Janet Endsley

With record warm temps this January you're no doubt itching to go out and primp your garden, marveling as your plants once again make their seasonal debut. Now is the time to fill up those vacant spots, or just satisfy your lust for the some new plants, by shopping the **NPA Spring Plant Sale on Sunday, April 18th from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm at the North Seattle Community College**. You can shop comfortably indoors as you fill your cart with the newest 'must-have' plants. The NPA will also be bringing some choice plants from the Border, along with many plants from NPA members' gardens.

This year you can support a regional horticulture treasure by buying a plant for the NPA Border when you shop the sale. Border designers Glenn Withey and Charles Price are going to preview the plants as the vendors unload the trucks, marking their favorites with a **"Buy Me for the Border"** tag. These new plants going into the Border represent today's best choices for Northwest gardeners, so you'll want to pick up one (or three!) for your own garden, along with donating one for the Border.

Our nursery vendors are bringing rare and unusual perennials, grasses, fuchsias, shrubs and groundcovers. Many will be perfect for planting for some immediate gratification: a dash of color from foliage and bloom to beckon spring and gladden your winter-weary soul. Many more provide great summer color or fall interest. There will be plenty for everyone at our Spring Plant Sale.

Bouquet Banque grows unusual perennials, uncommonly well. Judy Zugish and Bill Roeder will have their usual smorgasbord of cool China plants

and other hard-to-find perennials, including *Dichroa fibrifuga*, *Choisya 'Aztec Pearl'*, Chinese *Polygonatum*s, *Podophyllums*, *Disporums*, *Thalictrum honanense*, plus early *Arisaema*'s.



Top: *Arisaema candidissimum* and bottom, the blue berries of *Dichroa fibrifuga*, just two of the many unusual plants coming to the NPA Spring Plant Sale.

You can count on Arlen Hill at **Keeping It Green Nursery** to fill the truck with great plants, so you can fill your own car and garden. They specialize in hardy orchids, woodland perennials, and hard-to-find plants with distinctive foliage. They are looking to treat us to *Trillium albidum*, *Erythronium revolutum* 'White Beauty' and *E. 'Pagoda'*, *Dichelostema ida-maia*, *Triteleia ixiodes* 'Starlight', and *Delphinium nuttallii*.

NPA Spring Plant Sale

SUNDAY, APRIL 18,

10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

NORTH SEATTLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

9600 COLLEGE WAY NORTH, SEATTLE

Kristi Fina at **White Picket Gardens** specializes in the more uncommon perennials in the plant kingdom. On their list for our sale are *Astrantia major* 'Moulin Rouge', *Baptisia australis*, *Bergenia* 'Lunar Glow', *Geranium* 'Margaret Wilson', *Heuchera* 'Miracle', and *Heucherella* 'Golden Zebra.'

Elemental Plants grows NW natives along with other plants suited to our region. David Biek says he'll be bringing some great shrubs and small trees, such as Port Orford Cedar (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*), McNab Cypress (*Cupressus macnabiana*), Mimosa tree (*Albizia julibrissin*), and pink and golden Currant (*Ribes sanguineum* and *R. aureum*).

Early bird shoppers will find a selection of very nice plants from the Border that were potted up last year, including some rare Solomon's Seals (*Polygonatum*, *Disporum* and *Disporopsis*), several wonderful Primulas, bold Rodgersias and a few more gems.

You'll find free, convenient parking in the visitor parking lots off College Way North, between 95th & 97th, along the west side of the campus. (Do avoid the east side of the campus, which is under construction!) For a map of the venue, go to www.northseattle.edu/maps/directions.

Join in the fun and volunteer! Our volunteers get first dibs at the choicest plants, and refreshments are provided. To volunteer just contact Carol Scheuffele, Volunteer Chair, at info@northwestperennialalliance.org. 🌸



Trillium albidum

There is something very thrilling about the transition from winter to spring and the anticipation of early bloomers. Our Pacific Coast Trilliums emerge much earlier than the East Coast species that seem to dominate the market and hoard all the attention. *Trillium albidum* is one of five-plus species that grace Pacific Northwest forests but is an uncommon resident in gardens. It is a sessile trillium with large citrus scented white blooms that often have a pink cast at the base, and are nestled directly on the dark purple and green mottled foliage. Emerging early in the season, *T. albidum* combines well with other late winter bloomers such as *Erythronium revolutum*, and *Arisaema nepenthoides*. Like other Trillium, these are clumping rhizomatous perennials that form large colonies over time. Thriving in dappled shade and rich moist to rather dry soil, these nostalgic plants are well adapted to the Pacific NW.

~Arlen Hill, *Keeping It Green Nursery*



Podophyllum delavayi

It's odd, is it not, what sets a gardener's heart to throbbing? Before me is a clump of twisted gnarled eruptions — looking more like dinosaur warts or petrified dung clumps. These ugly tubers are the payoff of seven years' of patient cultivation. It has been an adaptation from their home ground in Yunnan province to my own moist loam and dappled shade in Marysville. Intoxicating! Their giant mottled leaves, rich purple stems, and deep maroon blooms are heart stopping in the border, and exotic as a pot specimen. The plants increase with each year of maturity, standing about 15" tall. I give them room to grow to nearly 3 feet across! Be sure to mulch them for winter. Bouquet Banque will be offering divisions of this unusual treasure at the NPA Spring Plant Sale, as well as a panoply of Chinese *Arisaema*, *Disporum*, *Polygonatum*, and *Podophyllum* just breaking dormancy and ready to plant.

~Judy Zugish, *Bouquet Banque Nursery*



Clematis heracleifolia

Clematis heracleifolia is native to northern and central China, and it's a must-have for a perennial border. It is a versatile and useful shrubby clematis (not a vine) that forms low bushy mounds. It has dark blue to light blue variations of sweet-smelling tubular flowers in late summer. After the beautiful array of flowers, it has interesting curly seed heads as well. This clematis makes a great cut flower for your late season bouquets. Around late June we cut them back to encourage bushier growth with more flowers and it works! It is an ideal plant for the lazy gardener in all of us. Everyone should have at least one of these in their garden border. The clematis has grown to be about 3-4' and 2' wide here in Stanwood in morning sun with afternoon shade. However it will be happy in full sun as well as full shade. It's in Pruning Group 3, so prune it hard in early spring. 🌸

~Kristi Fina, *White Picket Gardens*

**These plants and many more will be available at the NPA Spring Plant Sale,
Sunday, April 18th at the North Seattle Community College**

NPA SPRING PLANT SALE VENDORS

Botanica
Bouquet Banque Nursery
DeGro Flower & Garden
Desert Northwest
Elemental Plants

Glenwood Gardens
Growing Girls
Keeping it Green Nursery
Lee Farm & Nursery
NPA Border Selections

NPA Member Donations
Ramble on Rose Perennials
The Greenery
White Picket Gardens
And more!

NEIGHBORHOOD *Groups*

KATHRYN HIGHLAND, MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

I can't wait! Each April NPA members, including myself, eagerly anticipate the arrival of the **2010 NPA Open Gardens book**. This wonderful publication includes garden descriptions, all geographically and chronologically grouped so that visitors may plan ahead, or on the spur of the moment, to tour members' open gardens. Visiting other gardens always inspires me to "change things up" with my own garden, and I love the camaraderie with all the people I meet along the way. What's more fun than a sunny day, touring beautiful gardens with friends who share the same passion? So, be on the lookout for your 2010 Open Gardens book!

~Kathryn Highland

THE NORTHERN EXPOSURES

In December, we held our annual planning session at Joyce Lewis' Camano Island home. In January we met in a heated greenhouse at Sunnyside Nursery and discussed solutions to gardening problem areas and creative ideas for new gardening spots. Sandy

Milam led the discussion and then lead us through the nursery, pointing out specific shrubs, trees and perennials that seemed destined to solve many of the gardening issues we had just discussed.

~Sandy Schumacher

SHOVELS & HOES

In 2009 our activities included a trip to James West's garden in Port Orchard and a trip to Whidbey Island with the Lilies of the Valley, where we visited a waterfront garden, owned by a friend of one of the Lilies. We also went to Cultus Bay Nursery, a must-see nursery where we bought too many choice plants. A highlight was a visit to the award-winning garden of Jim and Paula Umbeck in Carnation, who have created a serene shade garden, nestled on the shore of Lake Marcel. We also experimented with creating hypertufa troughs, and took shopping trips to Molbak's, Flower World, and Portland Avenue Nursery.

~Barb Danek

LILIES OF THE VALLEY

We have started off the year with a bang! In January we learned about Mason bees and became involved with preserving the species. February brought instruction on irrigation methods. The rest of the year we have arranged garden tours throughout the Seattle area. Since our group is associated with the Snow Valley Senior Center, we planned a volunteer day in March to give back, weeding, pruning and planting in their garden. Many of us are also involved in the Plant Sale for the Senior Center at Remlinger Farms. We also hope to join other NPA groups for some shared experiences. For 2010, we have been invited to join the Shovels & Hoes for a member garden tour and picnic in July, and hope to meet more of the groups. We are looking forward to the NPA Study Weekend event that only happens in our area every four years. It is shaping up to be a fantastic event and we hope to see everyone there. 🌸

~Beverly Hutchinson

A warm welcome to our new members!

Kristi Adler
Shannon Allen
Linda Andrews
Ken & Donna Armitage
Ruth Bailey
Joan Baldwin
Paula Bamburg
Marvin Bame
Karen Beck
Terry Benioff
Pat Bergford
Karyn Borcich
Barb Brown
Michele Butcher
Cathleen Caesar
Jennifer W. Carlson
Gail Cerra
Barbara Clasen
Liz Cooper
Stacie & Jon Crooks
Janis & Bob Cunningham

Kathy Dart
Kate McKereghan &
Mike Deeley
Jerry & Carolyn Doherty
Elizabeth Drury
Beth Duncan
Chiko Faria
Kate Farley
Phoebe Fine
Larklyn Fisher
Ann Fleming
Maria Fletter
Janell Frazier-Day
Marion Friedrich
Melissa Hambleton
Sonja Hammar
Gail Handelman
Betsey Hansell
Marie Hansen
Christine Harvey
Brian Haupt

Brooke Heilman
Lisa Hummel
Sheryl Ice
Colleen James
Anne Jones
Valarie Keaton
Diana Klock
Lucy Krause
Sharon Lampman
Susan LaTourette
Sally Lawless
Kathy & Roger Lintault
Ingrid Long
Laurie Long
Linda Maclaren
Priscilla Madsen
Linda Maida
Margo Mallicoat
Jeanne Marcil
Carolyn A. McDaniel
Kristin McKinnon

Lisa Mittelsteadt
Nick & Nancy Moffitt
Cheryl S. Monte
Dee Montpetit
Jonathan Morse
Micheal Moshier
Louise Munson
Julie Niewohner
Georgetta Nupen
Mary Olavarria
Kimberly Ordon
Linda Paine
Jeanne Pettersen
Sharon Quaale
Debra Quinones
Richard Ramsey
Lisa Raskind
Bonnie Remlinger
Lilli Ricardi
Sue Rust
Jean Savory

Cee Schacker
Michallea & Dave
Schuelke
Tatyana Searcy
Terrie Shattuck
Julie Sheehan
Barbara B Smith
Mary Jean & John
Stephens
Fran Stone
Betty Studer
Eve Thyrum
Janet Walker
Carol Whitaker
Ellen Wilkinson
Karen Wittren
Ron Wright

Plants *Without Merit*

Wendy Laggozino

I like to peruse the seed catalogs when herbaceous plant life is sleeping underground and the ephemeral spring is just a dream. These catalogs' promise of lush foliage and bright blossoms draw me in. One day I came across an interesting entry that touted the beauty of a plant originating from the rocky, open slopes of the Himalayas, common in Nepal, called *Saussurea nepalensis*, from the Asteraceae family. The common name is Saw-Wort. It forms a basal rosette of long, deeply lobed leaves that are markedly white beneath. The flowers are borne in late summer showing an unusual, dark purple flower measuring an inch and half across, with papery, purple-tinged bracts. This 10-12" tall plant was listed as a hardy perennial. I was unable to find it in any of my various resource books, which of course made it all the more intriguing.

High Hopes

Once ordered and received, I planted the seed inside in late winter, not knowing how long it would take to germinate and achieve a size ready to plant when temperatures warmed. By May, the seedlings were ready, and planted in a full-sun area of the garden.

As the season progressed, I have to admit the seedlings were forgotten in the frenzy of spring planting, plant sales and lush new spring growth all around. Evidently, they continued to gain size and maturity, because they appeared in the same area the next spring — but as a mystery to me!

After some investigation, I surmised what they were and waited impatiently for their first bloom. They did not appear to be happy in their full-sun, well-drained site, as they wilted in a twisting fashion each day. This showed



off their bright white undersides, which so far seemed to be their only redeeming feature.

As I walked out with my watering can to indulge them every day or two, I nurtured them along until July, when they finally sent up slender, six inch stems of tight buds. But week after week, the buds did not appear to mature or give any sign of opening. A full month had ensued when one day I bent down to examine this perplexity. I saw that a flower had indeed opened and already gone to seed. How could this have transpired behind my back, despite my diligent attention? Could it be I actually had a life beyond the garden and missed the big event? Damn!

Well, there were plenty more flowers to come and I vowed not to miss one again. The next morning was bright with sunshine, just the formula for a

flower to open up to greet the pollinators. As I bent down in rapt anticipation of a lovely purple flower, the likes of which I had never seen before, I was shocked at the sight. There was a flower all right. But here was a flower, half way open, that was definitely not a dark purple flower, over an inch wide, with papery-tinged bracts. Although I must admit it was unusual. Unusually *awful*. It looked like a dandelion gone to seed, a dull brown color that was only brushed at the tips with just the slightest tinge of purple.

Shattered Dreams

I could not believe my eyes! I had not missed the bloom — this was it! I've waited 2 years for this little surprise — a meager flower that barely opens before it turns brown and lets loose in the wind. My disappointment was complete. I could not even pick a bouquet of them to take to the trash before they lost their seed heads on the way.

Do you ever see books with lists of “unworthy” plants, the plants without merit? There seem to be plenty. They fall into categories like excessively thorny, malodorous or dangerously invasive. Now I have one that could qualify as a floral disappointment. Does anyone have a flower to add? It could be a whole new category.

On the positive side, I now have a great reason to shop for more unusual perennials at the NPA Spring Plant Sale in April! 🌸

Wendy Laggozino is an avid gardener on Queen Anne who likes to try the new and unusual.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Many thanks to our generous 2010 Donors for supporting NPA's fine educational programs, including the Open Gardens, the NPA Border at the BBG, student scholarships, horticulture classes at EdCC, lectures, workshops and our popular Neighborhood Groups. Membership dues alone do not cover the cost of providing these benefits; your gift supports our 26-year tradition of offering quality horticulture education to be enjoyed by both new and seasoned gardeners alike.

PLATINUM PERENNIAL (\$500 and up)

Sue Moss

GOLDEN SHOVEL
(\$250 - \$499)
Janet & Michael Endsley
Louise Schultz
Charles Price & Glenn
Withey

SILVER TROWEL (\$100 - \$249)

Barbara BonJour
Mary Ann Byhre
Gerrie Cherry
Nancy Daar
Melinda Fahy
Joe & Kathy Freedman
Karen Herman
Peggy Hinman
Caroline Holloway
Darlene & Dan
Huntington
Miriam Keller
John MacKean & Mary H.
Krock
Sonja Kvamme
Sarah Navarre
Ann S. Ormsby
Linda S. Park
Chitra Z. Parpia
Keith & Janet Patrick
Leonard & Irene Peyton
Judith & Kirk Prindle
Gayle Richardson
Clifford Sharples
Steve & Pauline Smith
Carol Scheuffele & Percy
Tierney
Jean Walker

Joanne White
Delia Zeuschel

PEONY
(\$75 - \$99)
Sandra Booren
Renagene Brady
Robin Bruins
Dianne L. Carreri
Carolyn & Peter Curtis
Betsy Fitzgerald
Christine Hansen
Linda & Roger McDonald
Penny O'Byrne
Louanne Peyton
Liz Sanborn
Lucy Sullivan
Nils Sundquist
Nancy Wieland
Sherri Wilson
Jean Zook

HELLEBORE (\$50 - \$74)

Kristi Adler
Karen Baer
Christa Balk
Susan Beecham
Cassandra Fall Benz
Shannon Bergstedt
Nicola Bocek
Charlanne Brakebill
Rebecca Brenneman
Alice Brewer
Angie Brown
Walt & Dona Bubelis
Rod Parke & Dale Burke
Ellen Carnwath
Jade Chan
Patricia Lee Church
Ria Claassen

Marsha Clarkson
Luanne Coachman
Joel Connelly
Kathleen Cook
Julia Craig
Luann Cunningham
Bonita Dennison
Christy Dowd
Pat Drummond
Lisa Dufour
Carin Dugowson
Cheryl Bisceglia & Mark
Eshom
Nancy & Charlie Evans
Kate Farley
Pamela E. Felts
Dianne Ferris
Highline Botanical Garden
Foundation
Elizabeth Frankenberg
Kathy Gehrt
Patricia Gibbon
Lelia Gooding
Rama Gopinath
Sandy Gordon
Colleen Gray
Margaret Green
Molly Green
Sarah Green
Sue & Bud Grieff
Carol A. Hart
Susan Hedrick
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Robert Jones & Daniel
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Caryle Hitchcock
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Sigrid Hokanson
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Michael Thanem
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Toni Howard Tully
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Hege Watkins
Jan Jensen & Harry Welling
R. Gene Wheeler
Carol Whitaker
Susana Wiehle
June Willard
Betty Willis
Molly Wolfe
Jenny Wyatt
Kathy Yerke
Marcia & Klaus Zech

2010 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The NPA has awarded \$1,500 scholarships to two outstanding students. **Keri DeTore's** volunteer work has deep roots in the gardening community. She is a past chair of the West Seattle Garden Tour and she helped Cancer Lifeline, in Seattle, create a concept for a memorial garden on their property, which provided a peaceful space for visiting and reflecting for both clients and the surrounding community. Keri hopes to make a positive contribution on local communities, whether it's through wetland restoration, creating community green spaces and parks, or working with people to create a more sustainable personal environment. Working towards a degree in landscape restoration at Edmonds Community College, she was praised by faculty for her passion for community involvement, excellent design ability, and a desire to make the world a better place.

Selina M. Hunstiger is currently a planning intern for City Green Building in the Dept. of Planning & Development, Seattle, while she pursues her master's in landscape architecture at the University of Washington. She has volunteered for many years at Seattle Youth Garden Works and Seattle Tilth. In the future she hopes to be working closely with botanists and horticulturists for a holistic approach to landscapes, and to develop more efficient, sustainable and environmentally responsible methods of horticulture practices. She was cited by one professor as an "exceptionally talented and creative student, with an open and engaging approach to her work."

The Scholarship Committee received a record-high 15 applications for 2010. Our thanks to Janet Endsley, Chair; Kathleen DeMaria, Kathryn Highland, Barbara Reisinger, and Rebecca Ripley for their work. 🌸

Q&A Gardening

IRENE MILLS

Q: My neighbor wants me to take out my flowering currant, which the hummingbirds love, because it could harm his weeping white pine. Can it?

A: Yes, it could. The genus *Ribes* (currants and gooseberries, including *Ribes sanguineum*, flowering currant) is the alternate host for white pine blister rust (WPBR), a fungal disease — lethal to all species of five-needle pines — that requires the presence of both host plants within about 1000 feet of each other to complete its life cycle. (There are several rusts that require two or more hosts to complete their disease cycle; another example is wheat stem rust, in which the alternate host is common barberry, *Berberis thunbergii*. Common barberry is banned in Eastern Washington, where wheat is an important crop.)

The disease begins on ribes, migrates to white pines where it overwinters, then migrates back to ribes. Rust spores may be carried by wind or insects, so the easiest remedy, where feasible, is to remove one of the host plants and so break the cycle. Although it's a bit nervy for your neighbor to ask you to remove your currant, his weeping white pine (*Pinus strobus* 'Pendula') is by far the more valuable plant, and there are plenty of alternatives to flowering currant that will keep your hummingbirds happily coming back. Acceding to his request would be a neighborly gesture—I hope he has offered to pay for the replacement! For lists of plants that benefit hummingbirds and other wildlife, check the Appendix in *Landscaping for Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest* by Russell Link (UW Press); the Cornell University Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic Factsheet has more about white pine blister rust: <<http://plantclinic.cornell.edu/FactSheets/wpineblister/wpineblister.htm>>.

Q: Our daughter wants to have her wedding reception in our garden this summer. We have large trees and shrubs, but not very many summer flowers. What can I plant to make the garden look beautiful, perfect, and romantic on a budget?

A: The only people at a wedding who care whether the garden is perfect are the owner of the garden and the mother of the bride. Often those two people are the same person. Trust me on this: Three of our children were married in our garden, and I still get exhausted just thinking about it. If I had it all to do over again, I would keep it simple, remembering that the garden is only the background, and the wedding is just one day. Spend your money on good food and good music, and be sure to hire a wedding tent—or several. Whether it's cool and drizzly or warm and sunny, your guests will appreciate the shelter, and, decorated with fairy lights and flowers, tents make the garden even more festive.

To get your garden ready for the big day, first of all, give it a meticulous cleanup: Weed thoroughly and often, and prune judiciously—if you have hydrangeas, they'll be in bloom for the wedding if you don't get carried away and prune out all the flowering wood. (See the Q&A column in the Summer 2009 *Perennial Post* for tips on pruning bigleaf hydrangea.) Mulch the beds as you go; for a finished look, I like a 50-50 mix of fine fir bark and composted steer manure, spread about 2 inches deep. (I mix my own using bark and manure purchased in bags from garden centers. It's more expensive, but more practical.)

Then plant drifts of sweet alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*) all through the garden, as a facing along the edges of borders and wherever there are gaps. If it's going to be a late afternoon-into-evening event, use lots of white alyssum, which shows up better in low light. My NPA friend Debra Hansen achieved a beautiful effect for her daughter's wedding by planting alyssum in waves of color using white through pale and dark shades of purple. Besides its color, texture, and fragrance, alyssum is inexpensive and you don't have to worry about timing the way you do with other plants—plant in springtime from seed or pony packs, water it as necessary (it's not very drought tolerant), and shear lightly to keep it blooming prolifically. (Another benefit: When alyssum is planted around the vegetable garden, its

nectar is highly beneficial to adult parasitic wasps, whose larvae help to control pests such as cabbage loopers.)

I can just hear NPA members sputtering, "What?! *Alyssum*?!" Yes, I know, this fluffy, ordinary little beginner plant is beneath the dignity of us knowledgeable plant nerds, but again, trust me: Sweet alyssum is perfect for making a garden look (and smell) pretty and romantic, which is exactly what you want for a wedding. And then, when summer is over and the wedding is only a memory, it's easily removed—the last of the guests to leave, and one you will have enjoyed every minute of its stay. 🌸

Irene Mills is a former NPA Board member, Master Gardener, and Certified Professional Horticulturist.



Sue Buckles

Dianne Ferris

Perhaps no one better exemplifies the spirit of the Northwest Perennial Alliance than Sue Buckles. Sue, 76, was part of the original group that founded the NPA and was instrumental in establishing the NPA Border at the Bellevue Botanical Garden. For 18 years she led a monthly volunteer crew, serving a vital role in border maintenance. Even after she ‘passed the trowel’ to another crew leader, Sue still faithfully came every month. In addition to holding many NPA positions, she taught workshops, opened her lovely garden, and was supremely generous with her knowledge of both plants and that wonderful resource — British and Irish plant experts.

To thank Sue for her 25-plus years of inspiring gardeners, and her unwavering support and dedication to the NPA and our signature project, the NPA Border, the NPA presented Sue with its first, and only, Lifetime Membership.

Unforgettable Tours

Many would say that Sue’s greatest gift to early NPA members was her ability to conduct garden tours. Every two years Sue would organize a garden tour abroad. Born in Coventry, England, she grew up near Wales. Sue tapped her many contacts in Great Britain and Ireland, arranging visits to splendid gardens, nurseries and quaint hotels, and the excitement began! But don’t take my word for it — let the following reminiscences speak for the enchantment of these tours.

Glenn Withey, one of the designers of the original NPA Border, writes, “There was always such a good feeling on these trips, in large part created by Sue,

who was upbeat, professional, calm, and kind.” Lee Neff says she learned “many, many things from Sue, including the wise advice to always take a shovel with you when house hunting — in order to test the soil!”

“Sue didn’t waste a minute,” recalled Jean Macdonald. “We had barely left London when we visited the Saville Gardens. I enjoyed meeting



Photo by Barbara Stanfield

Sue Buckles, right, with British author and horticulturist, Dr. Dilys Davies, in 2005.

gardeners whose books I have read.” Jean said often every empty seat on the bus was filled with plants. Indeed! I remember making sure my seat was clearly marked as occupied, so I would not lose it to plants.

Long-time NPA volunteer Dan Huntington recalls Sue taking groups to some wonderful but out-of-the-way places. They even had to move a small car once, so the bus could make it through. Three stalwarts simply picked up the car and put it on the sidewalk. “In Wales we had to go in two smaller buses because of the narrow and steep roads,” Dan remembers.

Ellen Carnwath took five trips with Sue: “Sue worked tirelessly to ensure that each day’s activities would go as

planned, making many phone calls into the evening. By keeping the groups small we gained access to many private retreats a larger group wouldn’t. And Sue was economical with expenses. I would gladly pay twice the amount to repeat any of the trips! I still remember my mother and Sue washing soil off of plant roots prior to taking them through customs. There are still many botanical treasures from those excursions in my garden.”

Invaluable Lessons

The memory of washing plants is very real for Linda McDonald. She says that it taught her not to be afraid of exposing roots and even more of becoming aware of the whole structure of the plant. Indeed Linda credits Sue’s tours with making her a much more knowledgeable gardener. And I can wholeheartedly second that!

“I attended one of the slide lectures given by tour members and was hooked,” recalls Linda. “Off to Scotland in 1994, I thought I’d been launched into heaven. After several nursery stops the bus oozed with plants! We all knew the marathon ahead, as the night before departure the roots had to be washed clean and the Latin names attached. After committing that rough treatment I was never intimidated by plants in my own garden. Without cringing I can shake the soil off plants or lop off half their roots when needed. Sue’s early profession was teaching, and through these rich travel experiences I was lucky to be one of her students.” ❀

Dianne Ferris gardens in Seattle tending many plants she discovered on one of Sue Buckles’ garden tours.

THE BOOK *Garden*

SUE GOETZ

Plant driven design is garden design that falls in love with texture, placement and the natural play of plants in the garden. It is design based upon the lay of the land, not forced or calculated. We as gardeners, whether rabid or casual, really know gardens are all about the plants, but the rub is how we blend and mesh good design elements into our plant passions.

The book is a visual delight of very natural design effects, nothing cookie-cutter here. Authors Scott Ogden and Lauren Springer Ogden take us on a walk through a myriad of gardens that, as reflected by the book's title, honor plants, places and spirit. Rich in sumptuous garden photography by Lauren Springer Ogden, the text also teaches us how to reconnect the formality of landscape architecture and design back to a garden's natural geography and surroundings. You could call it the "organic" side of garden design; a marriage of good plantmanship coupled with good design. All of this gives the sense and knowledge that you can add the effects into your own space without being intimidated that it will not be proper.

Taking a quick peek at the table of contents makes you want to dig deeper into this book:

- PUTTING PLANTS FIRST
- PLANTS WITH PRESENCE
- PLANTS AS HEROES
- PATTERNS, PLACEMENT AND PROCESS
- CONNECTING
- PLANTS HONORED

The thirty-seven 'Features' and 'Plant Lists' throughout the pages suggest the right plants for the garden spaces as they are truly defined, not necessarily how they are forced by design. From contemporary lists like "Power Plants" to the cottage-themed "Tough and Beautiful Old-Fashioned Roses," it touches base with all styles of gardens, for gardeners of all skill levels.

A fun list titled "Plants with Good-Looking Spent Flowers" reminds us that

dead flowers are all a part of the process of a garden. It's amazing to discover how many varieties have interesting spent flowers — there are 80-plus plants that make the list.

Other valuable lists include "Unsung Trees," "Conifers Deserving More Use," "Plants that Thrive in Acid Soils," (so

useful for Northwest gardens), "Plants for Dry Shade," (ditto) and "Understory Trees and Shrubs."

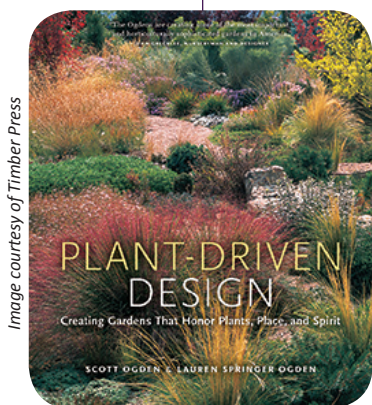
Plant Driven Design takes its place in a gardener's library for both its thoughtful reference and visual beauty.

Plant Driven Design: Creating Gardens That Honor Plants, Place and Spirit

By Scott Ogden & Lauren Springer Ogden

Pub Date: October, 2008
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Hardback, \$34.95 ❁

Sue Goetz is a designer and owner of The Creative Gardener. Visit her website at www.thecreativegardener.com



Northwest Perennial Alliance

The Northwest Perennial Alliance is a group of ardent gardeners with a passionate devotion to herbaceous plants. Members comprise a wide range, professional and amateur, but all with the aim of furthering gardening in the Northwest.

Website: www.n-p-a.org
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Roger McDonald, Vice President: 425-488-9748
Chris Niblack, Secretary: 425-647-6004
Michele Cournoyer, Past President, 425-868-5541

Membership:

The membership year runs from January to December. To join, visit www.n-p-a.org to pay electronically or download a membership form. You may also mail a check for \$35, payable to NPA, to the address below. Include your name, mailing address, email address and telephone number. NPA accepts certain credit cards and debit cards by telephone at 425-647-6004.

Donations:

NPA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and your donations are tax deductible. Donations are used to support our educational programs, including Open Gardens, lectures, workshops, neighborhood groups, the NPA Border at the BBG, classes at Edmonds Community College and student scholarships.

Submissions:

Contact the Perennial Post Editor at post@northwestperennialalliance.org

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Bouquets to NPA

Thank you!

"A friend talked me into joining NPA and it was the most wonderful experience. I've never enjoyed a summer more. All the gardeners were so gracious and the gardens so beautiful. I've learned so much and am looking forward to another great year." ❁

~Joan Killingbeck