



## Champagne Garden Gala

Barbara Conta, Gala Chair

Please join us for a lovely summer

evening at our Champagne Garden Gala to be held on Sunday, August 23rd from 4 to 7 pm in a very exceptional garden in Medina. The Gala will support our renovation of the NPA Border at the Bellevue Botanical Garden.

The Gala will be held in the garden of Bellevue Botanical Garden Society co-president Denise Lane, who said she is “honored to help support the Border renovation effort at the BBG. Breathtaking plant and color combinations exhibited in the Border will inspire the next generation of gardeners to create similar beautiful spaces of their own to enjoy. Sharing the joy of gardening with the public is truly a priceless gift. Thank you NPA, for your continued dedication to this piece of Eden.”

### Tapestries of Art, Color & Design

Denise’s glorious one-acre garden has been constructed over a period of 20 years. It is an eclectic, very personal collection of all kinds of plants, displayed in an informal way, along with unique art installations, both man-made and natural, including a 10-ton rock. At the heart of the garden, tall columns stand in a watery bog bordered with purple Heuchera and chartreuse grasses and shrubs. Created by Bainbridge Island artists Little & Lewis, this large water feature is dubbed “The Ruins.”



Stroll through winding shady paths with enormous conifers and bogs, accented with perennials, ornamental grasses and mossy borders. Sip champagne and fine wines, nibbling delicious

sweets and savories while

enjoying a guided tour of the garden, or simply wander on your own while being serenaded by live harp and cello music. There will also be an exhibition of glass art by Gallery by the Bay. These lovely pieces will be available for sale, with a portion of the proceeds benefitting the Border. Rarely open to the public, this garden has it all—magnificent tapestries of art, color and design. Space is limited, so now is the time to get your ticket.

### Support NPA

The NPA Border is one of the most renowned perennial borders in the U.S., and is a gift from NPA to the Northwest gardening community and visitors to the Bellevue Botanical Garden. It has been featured in many books, articles and photographs, and has been the site of countless horticulture classes, garden club tours and family strolls. The Border is undergoing its first significant renewal since its creation in 1991. “Our goal is to make the Border more dramatic and enjoyable, with an exciting new palette of plants, comfort-

able benches and strolling paths,” said NPA President Michele Cournoyer. “This renovation would not be possible without the support of our community and people like Denise Lane. We are very pleased to be able to hold our gala in her beautiful, personal garden.”

For garden enthusiasts who love to tour private gardens, art aficionados, and people who value the NPA’s contribution to the Bellevue Botanical Garden, we hope you’ll support this event. Please join us and spread the word to your friends and neighbors. All proceeds go towards the NPA Border renovation. A portion of your fee is tax deductible.

### NPA Champagne Garden Gala

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23, 4:00 – 7:00 PM

NPA MEMBERS \$70 / NONMEMBERS \$100

Purchase tickets online at [www.n-p-a.org](http://www.n-p-a.org) or send checks payable to NPA, P.O. Box 279, DuPont, WA 98327.

You will receive a confirmation letter with directions to the event. 🌸

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# DESIGNING THE GARDEN YOU WANT From Basics to the Final Touches

By Pam Felts, Education Chair

*A symposium on the process and principles for creating your dream garden*

**B**egin with a blueprint of the property around your home; then gather a slate of professionals who consider the blueprint and give you solid advice on the steps you need to create the garden of your dreams! This, and more, will be presented at an all-day symposium at Bastyr University in Kenmore, on Saturday, October 10th from 9:00 am—4:00 pm—lunch included.

This symposium will be a totally unique series of lectures never before offered:

- Moderator Don Marshall starts with an overview of the concept garden—a

## NPA Symposium

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10

DOORS OPEN AT 8 AM FOR SALES

PROGRAM BEGINS AT 9:00 AM

BASTYR UNIVERSITY

14500 JUANITA DRIVE NE, KENMORE

\$65 NPA MEMBERS / \$85 NONMEMBERS

LUNCH INCLUDED

REGISTRATION BEGINS AUGUST 24

REGISTER AT [WWW.N-P-A.ORG](http://WWW.N-P-A.ORG)

Northwest home and property not unlike your own.

- Irene Mills lays out the ‘bones’ of the garden, including foundation plantings,

front entry, back terrace space and play and planting areas, considering soil content, sun exposure and microclimates.

- Sue Moss gives recommendations to make the most of the often difficult shady side yard.
- Lorene Forkner teaches how to plan and prepare the best space to grow edibles, and what edibles work best in our climate.
- Tina Dixon shares her secrets for spectacular container gardens to enhance garden spaces, and how to place pots around various outdoor areas.
- Leanette Bassetti provides the finishing touches with tips on incorporating garden art that will fit your unique style and space.

## OUR SPEAKERS



**Don Marshall**—Educator, landscape designer, and nurseryman, Don Marshall has established one of the outstanding horticulture programs in Washington state. He teaches full time, is a Certified Arborist, and owns a landscape design, installation, and maintenance firm. He has received many awards, including the Lifetime Honorary Membership in the Washington State Nursery & Landscaping Association in 1998.



**Irene Mills**—Irene Mills is a Certified Professional Horticulturist and owner of The Plant Mommy LLC, specializing in garden coaching, consultation, and sustainable landscape designs. She designed silver medal-winning display gardens for the Point Defiance Flower & Garden Show in 2007 and 2008, and her own garden was featured on the cover of the Fall 2008 issue of *South Sound* magazine.



**Sue Moss**—Sue Moss has been designing and installing gardens for 20 years and has a degree in landscape design from EdCC. She speaks on topics such as drought tolerance, the aging gardener’s garden and perennials as cut flowers. She is a past NPA Co-Chair and Speaker and Open Gardens Chair. Her own garden was featured by Val Easton in *Pacific Northwest* magazine.



**Lorene Forkner**—Lorene Forkner has been described as the “rock star of the Seattle gardening scene.” For 13 years, Lorene was the owner/operator of Fremont Gardens, a specialty nursery in Seattle. A freelance writer, she has completed two 2009 “Encyclopedia of Country Living Home Guides” for Sasquatch: *Growing Your Own Vegetables*, and *Canning and Preserving Your Own Harvest*.



**Tina Dixon**—Tina Dixon is owner of **Plants a la Cart**, a design, installation and maintenance service specializing in exterior container gardens. She has been a certified Environmental Horticulturist since 1987. Named the “Best New Container Garden Designer” by *Sunset* in 1999, she also won a 2007 “Golden Trowel” award from Garden Design magazine. Her container designs were featured in a 2007 issue of *Garden Design*.



**Leanette Bassetti**—Leanette Bassetti and her husband Bill own the unique Crooked Arbor Gardens in Woodinville, which is known for the outstanding private sculptures by well-known artists placed throughout the three acres of rich and diverse display gardens. 🌸

# VALERIE EASTON GIVES STRATEGIES FOR A SIMPLIFIED GARDEN

Pam Felts, Education Chair

Valerie Easton hasn't missed a week of writing her "Plant Life" column for the *Seattle Times' Pacific Northwest Magazine* in the last twelve years. She contributes feature articles on gardens, homes, and the people who make them to many publications, including *Garden Design*, *Fine Gardening* and *Horticulture*. Val lives in Seattle and on Whidbey Island, where she has made a new low maintenance garden in Langley. From this experience, she will give us her advice for **"The Simplified Garden: Successful Strategies for Easier, Eco-Conscious, Satisfying**



**Gardens,"** at our lecture on Sunday, September 27th. Val lectures widely for garden shows and plant societies; spent eighteen years as a horticultural librarian for the Miller Library at CUH; trained as a Master Gardener and is well-known to avid gardeners up and down the West Coast. Currently, she is awaiting publication of her latest book, *The New Low Maintenance Garden: How to Have a Beautiful, Productive Garden and the Time to Enjoy It*, due from Timber Press this fall. She is also the author of *A Pattern Garden: The Essential Elements of Garden Making*; *Artists In Their*

## NPA Annual Meeting and Lecture

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1:00 PM  
(NOTE: THIS IS FOURTH SUNDAY IN SEPT.)  
DOORS OPEN AT NOON  
FOR PLANT AND SEED SALES  
NPA MEMBERS FREE / NONMEMBERS \$10  
CENTER FOR URBAN HORTICULTURE,  
3501 NE 41ST STREET, SEATTLE

*Gardens; and Plant Life: Growing a Garden in the Pacific Northwest.*

Valerie's down-to-earth style is instrumental in advising and teaching both beginning and seasoned gardeners. Her use of warm colors, patterns, water features and unique garden style has influenced many Northwest gardeners who look to her for the tools needed to create their own satisfying garden spaces. We are excited to welcome Val and learn more about her new garden. 🌸

## NPA Lecture

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1:00 PM  
DOORS OPEN AT NOON  
FOR PLANT AND SEED SALES  
NPA MEMBERS FREE / NONMEMBERS \$10  
CENTER FOR URBAN HORTICULTURE,  
3501 NE 41ST STREET, SEATTLE

Charles Price and Glenn Withey have been designing gardens together since 1985 and are known for their bold use of color, extravagant container gardens and knowledge of perennials. Since 1997 they have served as curators for the Olmstead-designed E.B. Dunn Historic Garden. Their work has been featured in *Sunset*, *Horticulture*, *RHS 'The Garden'*, *Metropolitan Home* and *Fine Gardening*.

In 1991 Charles and Glenn were tapped to co-design the original NPA Border at the Bellevue Botanical Garden, along with Bob Lilly and Carrie Becker. They led the development and care of the largest volunteer-maintained

# WITHEY/PRICE SHARE DESIGN SECRETS

Pam Felts, Education Chair

perennial border in the US until 1998. In 2008 they returned to the Border to design the major renovation of the Border now underway. The renovation is unfolding in stages, with Phase 1 completed and Phase 2 in progress. It is the first bold step in the execution of the updated BBG Master Plan. The overarching theme of the renovation is a healthy, dramatic demonstration of good horticultural practices. In addition to being beautiful, the Border and its maintenance will support the education mission of NPA and BBG, and inspire people to try these



concepts in their home gardens. The entire process is an education in how to renovate an established garden.

At their November lecture, **"Renovating Gardens of All Sizes,"** Charles and Glenn will be sharing some of the design tips and techniques and plant virtues that they incorporated in the Border renovation. Since over 10,000 plants in the collection had to be judged on their value, health and star qualities, a lot of tough decisions had to be made. Invasive and toxic plants got the heave-ho, while good plants will be included in the new Border. They will share which plants made the cut, and why, and how home gardeners can use some of these same principles to help them tackle their own garden challenges. 🌸

# Hardy Plant Study Weekend

JUNE 18 – 21, 2010

Janet Endsley, Study Weekend Chair

It's back! The most anticipated gardening conference each summer is returning to the Bellevue Hilton next June for four days of inspiring lectures, unforgettable garden tours, plant sales, book sales and a lot more. Dubbed by garden writer Debra Prinzing as "horticultural camp for grownups," the Plant Study Weekend is an unbeatable combination of garden talk and tours. So what's the big deal? For those who are not familiar with Study Weekend, think of it as a mini flower show, where you can hear top notch speakers, tour beautiful gardens, shop for plants and books, and talk lots of garden talk for four full days with friends from all over the Northwest.

Our conference theme **Four Season Splendor: Design for Year-Round Beauty** will be dedicated to contemporary design and plant influences to create a year-round visual feast. Our speakers will meld design philosophy with wise plant selections, illustrating the many ways you can create garden beauty in all our temperamental Northwest seasons that never seem to behave.



## Speakers

The team has been working for months organizing the weekend's highlight events. Our speakers include England's **Adrian Bloom**, author and president of Blooms Nurseries; **Rosalind Creasy**, the doyenne of edible landscape design; Atlanta author and landscape architect **Mary Palmer Dargan**, ASLA; **Joe Eck and Wayne Winterrowd**, the celebrated designers of Vermont's North Hill Garden; the Northwest's own colorful design duo,

**Charles Price & Glenn Withey**; and **Nicholas Staddon**, Director of New Plants for Monrovia Nursery. **Steve Lorton**, former editor of *Sunset* magazine, headlines our Saturday party, and rising star horticulturist and nurseryman **Riz Reyes** will be our moderator.

## And Much More

The Open Gardens committee has been scouting exceptional gardens for you to visit Friday through Monday. We will also have specialty nurseries bringing you their finest plant selections, author book signings and a festive Summer Solstice Celebration that is sure to be entertaining. For those who want to tap into their creative side we will have two outstanding optional workshops: **'Introduction to Garden Writing'** with Steve Lorton and **'Introduction to Botanical Illustration'** with artist Louise Smith.

Registration begins in February, but don't delay, because in 2006 we sold out in less than five weeks! And contact us at [info@northwestperennialalliance.org](mailto:info@northwestperennialalliance.org) to volunteer to be on the team producing this fabulous event. ❁

## A warm welcome to our new members!

Karen Allen  
Lacia Lynne Bailey  
Philip Bloomquist  
Constance Bollen  
Renagene Brady  
Beverly Bream  
Margie Breuning  
Cynthia Brocha  
Lilian Broekhoven  
Robin Bruins  
Suzanne Canning  
Diana Carew

Tammy Carter  
Sandra Clarke  
Constance Dunn  
Henne Queisser &  
Ed Freedman  
Mary Gilman  
Julie Alene Gimbel  
Susan Hedrick  
Cindi Herrera  
Catherine  
Hillenbrand  
Barb Hines

Marji Lynn &  
Sue Hopkins  
Joyce Howard  
Alison Hurley  
Scott & Sylvia Isaac  
Margaret &  
Dale Iverson  
Karen Johnson  
Nancy Lechner  
Brenda Fillipi &  
Ian MacGowan  
Cheryl Maplestone

Roswitha May  
Dorothy & Richard  
Mehrer  
Teresa Minato  
Mary Ann Moore  
Lisa Nowak  
Jennifer Odom  
Jane Paulson  
Jan Peterson  
Elaine Pinkerton  
Jim & Barbara Rogers  
Rosmarie Ruf

Naomi Sakamoto  
Marie Lincoln &  
Bill Schlicht  
Christine Simonton  
Jean Stewart  
Cynthia Tencick  
Pamala Theriault  
Carol Van Winkle  
Kendra Williams  
Gail Cunningham &  
Sara Wood

# TROWELS & *Tribulations* Art, or Performance Art?

Dianne Ferris

Gardens tend to be like pets—more often it is the owner who is owned. There is no way I can deny the look of expectation in my dog's eyes every morning of the year, no matter what the weather or the condition of my knees. Likewise I cannot walk by a weed without the compulsion to stop and pull it out.

When my hound grabs the sunny spot on the porch couch I actually feel guilty about shoving him over so I can have the sun. And a hole in my garden beds (reminiscent of my Hebes dying—or worse—half-dying) is like a missing tooth. The gap absolutely has to be filled, and there is no peace in my soul until it is. Nevertheless, there are many gardeners among us who are, so to speak, owned, and that is what this is about.

Humphrey (a lovable Wheaton terrier mix) and I have our established walking routes and one route takes us down 80th St. and then left onto 20th Ave. It is my favorite because we stroll by one of the most beautifully designed gardens I have ever seen, with a massive silk tree shading it all. The front path curves with consummate grace to a stoop which is roofed and exactly in proportion to the dimensions of the house. Between the house and the street there's not a scrap of grass. Instead, to the right of the path is a semi-circle of rounded boxwood, and behind this hedge are the best behaved Viburnums I have ever seen and an intermediate layer of dark, pointy plants. (I'd love to know what they are but I've never had the courage to go up close enough to see.)

## Less is Better

This principle of using only a few plants beautifully arranged, to provide

order in the midst of variety, carries throughout the garden. There is one brilliant orange rose on a tall metal pyramid. It stands behind two purple ninebarks (*Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Diablo') which are carefully trimmed in May so that they form dense wide-mouthed urns. The Japanese forest grass (*Hakonechloa macra*) is lush and provides the edging of the curved path. (Yes, they have a watering system.) Well, you get the idea. The design is subtle but infinitely satisfying. I never tire of looking at it. But now that I have looked at it over several years, I have awakened to one salient fact— whoever owns that garden can never, ever go to a plant sale!

Think of it—never, ever go to a plant sale? You might as well be told you can't eat any more ice cream for the rest of your life. I, for one, adore plant sales and what do I do when I get there? I buy one of this and one of that and occasionally, three of something. I'm lucky to have a garden big enough to accommodate my appetite. But even if it were small I would still be saying, "Oh that's fetching" or "Oh I must have that." And I know plenty of folks who are just like me. They buy plants and then figure out where to put them. What we have is politely called a "collector's garden," and if there is design here and there we take a bit of pride, but that in no way diminishes our appetite for new plants.

## Or is it?

So there you have it. The Cezanne garden and the Performance Art Garden; is there nothing in between? Well yes, there is. Some people manage

to keep their garden looking well designed and still shop at plant sales and nurseries. I know because whenever I see their gardens they are always aesthetically wonderful and yet always with new elements.

Two of my favorites are the gardens of Dan and Darlene Huntington in Snohomish and Linda and Roger McDonald in Kenmore. Part of their magic

**"Think of it  
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ice cream."**

is structure. Their trees are long established, they have arches, patios, and steps that were correctly placed, all of which provide a backdrop for luscious new plant arrangements. But a bigger part of the magic is the sure eye, the right touch in choosing plant combinations. Another part is never losing sight of the whole. Changes, even large ones, still conform to the original design vision. It all adds up to pleasure which never goes stale.

There are times when I think that if I just read more garden books I would unleash some hidden talent for design. But I know it isn't so. When areas in my garden look 'designed' it is pure serendipity. But that's okay. I don't mind not having talent as long as someone else has it and will share the results with me. Besides, who am I to ask for more than a garden, a sunny spot on the couch, and a dog that is good-natured about who really owns whom? ❁

*Dianne Ferris has been a member of the NPA board for eight years and gardens with her dog Humphrey in her Ravenna area garden.*

A summer escape, that is what the NPA Border feels like to me sometimes. It has all the hallmarks of a classic garden get-away: beckoning benches, an abundance of fragrant blooms, varied areas of sun or shade to suit one's needs and always something new to look forward to. The garden has been very fortunate to have had two new benches donated and placed in the renovated Border this spring, courtesy of Vicki Sween and Bruce Watson, and the Woodinville Garden Club. They are very popular with visitors making their way through the Border on the wide gravel paths.

The early season drought has been a bit tough on a few of the larger transplanted shrubs; some severe pruning was needed in order to save the crowns to flourish again. The long harsh winter is all but forgotten now, as life surges throughout the old and new Border areas. We have many new plants that seem to be settling in well. I am looking forward to seeing how several of the new Echinacea selections perform on the slopes. Lilies are up and growing strong. There are several new varieties, as well as some saved during the renovation last fall, which will be placed as they bloom and their identities can be confirmed.

Unfortunately most of the large Hydrangeas, which were saved from the Shade Border and replanted in the same area, had a lot of winter damage and had to be cut back hard—so there's not much in the way of hydrangea flowers this year. As the summer settles in we change our focus from the hectic digging and moving tasks of winter and spring, to a more relaxed water and weed focus. The new drip irrigation system has been put through its paces and is proving invaluable. The nursery area is a bit more challenging—countless plants needed for the future are stored, either to be replanted in the next renovation phase or sold on the popular sales carts at the Visitor's Center (which we can hardly keep stocked).

As much as I personally enjoy spending a few hours watering plants on a hot day, it appears that not a lot of others do. If you would like to help with the watering let me know. Speaking of volunteers, I am very fortunate to have a steadfast group of people to call upon for a wide variety of tasks from weeding to guiding community volunteer groups. Thank you all!

With the Phase One planting finishing up I am looking forward to having members take 'ownership' of the new beds in the renovated Border—it would be a wonderful experience for our Neighborhood Groups. The new beds are freshly planted and weed free—for now. Some beds are larger than others, but they are all easily manageable with great access using our new paths. Some are in the sun, others quite shady, but all are filled with great plants for you to work with.

Get in now on the ground floor! First come—first choice! One day a month for four hours or so should help keep 'your' area in good shape and give you bragging rights.

Finally, our determined seed saver Gayle Richardson has been making collecting forays through the Border several times this season and will be doing more as the summer and fall progress. It is a fun and easy task that helps the NPA earn money and gets rare seeds into gardens around the world. If you haven't escaped to the best perennial garden in the Northwest recently please do come by and see what we have been working on. 🌸

The NPA Border is a great way to learn about something we all love—plants! Participating in a crew day combines camaraderie and education all in one, in an ever-changing outdoor classroom! Every month there's something new to learn and we welcome volunteers of all gardening skill levels. We have regularly scheduled crews each month on the 2nd Sunday from 11:00 am – 3:00 pm and on the 4th Thursday from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm. Come for an hour or all day. Or let us know if you and your friends would like to come at a different time. We hope to see you!

Join us  
for our  
ice cream social  
on August 9.

## Fall Plant Sale, September 12th

Fall is the best time to plant, so wrap up the gardening year with bargains galore at our Fall Plant Sale, Saturday, September 12th, 11 to 3 pm at the Bellevue Botanical Garden.

Shop for plants that add fall and winter interest to the garden, including perennials from the famous NPA Border and an array of plants from specialty nurseries.



There will be hot coffee and tents in case of inclement weather.

### VOLUNTEER TO WORK AT THE SALE

Make new friends and volunteer to work at the sale. All volunteers get in early and can scope out the best plants. Join the fun, contact Carol Scheuffele, Volunteer Chair, at 206-545-3797 or [volunteers@northwestperennialalliance.org](mailto:volunteers@northwestperennialalliance.org). 🌸



**Anchusa azurea  
'Feltham Pride'**

Here's a perennial I grew from seed (Chiltern Seeds) that has been wildly successful, blooming in May. 'Feltham Pride' is a more compact variety than the species, staying under 3 feet. I read it is short lived, but mine is now 6 years old and going strong. The flowers are truly gentian blue, with a slight purple cast that gives it that electric blue delphinium color that is so captivating. Anchusa wants full sun and a well-drained spot. Mine looked as if it rotted over winter, but it came back this spring. When I tried to move a rare self-sowed seedling, the root went too deep, so I let it stay where it was. It needs staking later on and its bristly hairs can be unpleasant, but they are to the pests also. Keep it deadheaded and it will give you a beautiful blue you long for throughout the summer.



**Orlaya grandiflora**

Also known as "Lace Flower," this annual grows to 30 inches in full sun. The flowers have long stems lovely to use in bouquets. They are touted as easy to grow, but I started them from seeds (Thompson & Morgan) with no success. Now, two years later, a plant came up that I had long forgotten. I went back over my notes to figure out what this little gem might be. Whether it laid dormant in the soil and did not germinate until it endured a cold winter, I don't know. I do know it did not bloom last year. The lacy foliage reminds me of carrot tops. The buds are attractive, a sort of green and white striped bud that droops as if wilted. I have been awaiting their flower since I first spotted the foliage back in March. The flower opened in late May on a warm 72-degree day.



**Phyteuma sieberi—  
Horned Rampion**

This diminutive rock garden perennial is best seen in the front of the border in full sun. Of course, this is a prime location already in use in most gardens, but if you have a spot or lost something last winter, consider this unusual plant. These flowers have curved horn shaped spikes that give them lots of personality. Forty different species of *Phyteuma* exist in colors from this whitish lavender to violet and yellow. They are from the bellflower family and this one grows only about 8 inches tall. When my plant was lost behind neighboring foliage last year I moved it between some new bulbs I planted. It is now blooming behind the bulb foliage that is yet to die back. Gardening is always a work in progress. 🌸

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

**OPEN GARDENS NEEDS YOU!**

The much coveted Open Gardens program is your passport to garden touring nirvana. Mailed exclusively to members every April, it is filled with 75+ gardens along with specialty nurseries that open for your garden touring pleasure from May through October. It is the highlight of many memorable summer weekends as our gracious garden hosts greet members and share the gardens they have created. Now the program needs a new chair to help coordinate the gardens and produce the "little yellow book" so enjoyed by our members. Katie Padwick,

who has done an outstanding job producing the book for the past four years is ready to pass the baton, or mouse, if you will. If you enjoy talking to fellow gardeners and have basic word processing and emailing skills, this is a great, at-home, no-heavy-lifting task for you. It's all put together during the slow gardening months, January through March. A comprehensive instruction manual awaits you, and Katie will be available for mentoring and support. Interested people should contact NPA at [info@northwestperennialalliance.org](mailto:info@northwestperennialalliance.org). 🌸

**Q:** I love my bigleaf hydrangeas, but I'm so frustrated because they always flop over and hide the perennials planted under them. I tried cutting back the leggy branches to make them stockier, but then I didn't get very many flowers. Can you suggest a solution?

**A:** Bigleaf hydrangeas (*Hydrangea macrophylla*) are suckering shrubs that bloom in summer on old wood that grew during the previous summer. As with lilacs, the flowering branches are produced higher and higher on the plant as new stems grow out of the old wood. In time bigleaf hydrangea becomes a huge, congested thicket of ugly sticks; in an effort to bring it under control, the whole mess is usually cut back in spring, removing most of the young wood in the process. That may be why you don't get very many flowers. Nor does it solve the problem.

## Renovation Pruning

Try this: Wade in with loppers and a narrow-bladed pruning saw (and eye protection!) and remove about 1/3 of the oldest wood right to the ground—the thick stems that fork repeatedly along their length. If the plant is old, try to thin out the center, which won't be easy but will be worth the effort. (This is easiest to do in the spring, before the plant leafs out, but you can do it after the shrubs bloom this summer.) Repeat this treatment next spring and again the following year to renovate the plant, removing some of the oldest stems each time. Once the plant has been renovated, you'll only need to take out a few of the oldest stems each spring, and you'll have a constantly-renewed shrub with plenty of smooth, vigorous young stems arising from the base.

In the spring, after you've taken out the old growth, go over the whole plant, cutting back each stem just to

the first or second pair of strong buds; on a well-established hydrangea, these will be somewhere between chest- and waist-high. Don't cut much farther down on the stem—this is the flowering wood. When you're finished, your hydrangea should look neat and well-balanced; it shouldn't look like it just had a crew cut. (This pruning can also be done in the fall after the plants bloom, but I prefer to wait until winter is really over; it helps protect the flower buds from freeze damage.)

## Early Spring Companions

Here's the catch: All that vigorous flowering wood is quite green, and while it stands up straight enough in spring, by summer the enormous flower heads—especially hortensias (mopheads)—are simply too heavy and the stems droop under their weight. This gives bigleaf hydrangeas the plump, blowsy look that is one of their greatest charms. Don't fight it. Instead, try underplanting around the edges of the hydrangeas' root zones with drifts of dainty spring ephemerals that put on their show early in the year, then go dormant just in time for the hydrangeas to let down their generous skirts and cover the withering remains.

Because many spring ephemerals prefer to stay on the dry side during their summer dormancy, success will depend on making sure they are planted in well-drained soil—which, as it happens, is what hydrangeas also prefer. The trick is in choosing ephemerals that can tolerate your summer watering regime, because although they need good drainage, hydrangeas are anything but drought-tolerant and quickly wilt if they get too dry. If you

have micro-drip irrigation, you can place emitters to keep the hydrangea's root zone evenly moist, yet still allow the dormant ephemerals to stay on the dry side. If your irrigation system indiscriminately waters the whole area, choose ephemerals that accept moist woodland conditions during their summer dormancy. Fortunately, most ephemerals that are suited to the conditions that suit hydrangeas are tolerant of at least some summer water. Here are some little woodland charmers that bloom in late winter and early spring:

*Anemone nemorosa* (Wood anemone)  
*Arisarum proboscideum* (Mouse plant)  
*Corydalis* (Fumewort)  
*Crocus tommasinianus* (Tommasini's crocus)  
*Cyclamen coum* (Persian violet)  
*Dodecatheon* (Shooting-star)  
*Erythronium 'Pagoda'* (Fawn lily)  
*Galanthus* (Snowdrops)  
*Leucojum vernal* (Spring Snowflake)  
*Mertensia virginica* (Virginia bluebells)  
*Myosotis* (Forget-me-nots)  
*Muscari latifolium* (Grape hyacinth)  
*Narcissus* (Daffodils—miniature types)  
*Sanguinaria canadensis* (Bloodroot)  
*Trillium* (Wake-robin)



Hydrangeas, like rhododendrons, have shallow, fibrous root systems that are easily damaged by weeding tools and cultivators. Site underplantings around the edges of the root zones and let

them spread on their own, or plant from seeds. To conserve moisture and control weeds, mulch hydrangeas with two to four inches of shredded bark or wood chips (playground chips are a tidier alternative to arborist chips). ❁

*Irene Mills is a former NPA Board member, Master Gardener, and Certified Professional Horticulturist, who misses the opulent Nikko Blue hydrangeas at her old house but has fallen in love with Snow Queen oakleaf hydrangeas.*

# 2009 Scholarship Winners

Janet Endsley, Scholarship Chair

**K**athleen DeMaria and Benjamin Mark are the winners of the NPA's 2009 Scholarship Awards. Each received a \$1500 scholarship to their schools of choice to help further their careers in horticulture.

**Kathleen DeMaria** is well known to NPA members through her many volunteer activities. Since 2007 she has been enrolled at the University of Washington College of Forest Resources, working on her Masters of Environmental Horticulture. She served on the NPA Board of Directors from 2003 – 2008, and was also the Scholarship Committee Chair from 2006 – 2008. Kathleen is also active at Seattle Tilth, and works part-time answering their hotline questions.

Kathleen came highly recommended by her instructors, who praised her limitless energy, enquiring mind, natural talent for writing and her commitment to improving the world around her. Her personal goal is to teach horticulture at the community college level and to develop educational programs to teach gardeners environmentally responsible gardening techniques, along with teaching children about the preservation of the natural world. "To me horticulture is my community; it is my occupation, my education, my lifestyle,"

she said. "I can think of no better venue to comingle my love of science, with my appreciation for art, and my desire to educate others than the field of horticulture."

**Benjamin Mark** has attended the Horticulture Program at Edmonds Community College since 2007, working towards an ATA degree in the new Restoration Horticulture program. Some of you might have asked Ben for advice when he was working in the perennials department or indoor plant department at Swansons Nursery. A colleague there was impressed by Ben's knowledge of and enthusiasm for all types of plants, and his ability to communicate this knowledge to others.

Ben's goal is to go to Evergreen State College to earn a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science and become a designer and installer of sustainable landscaping in urban gardens. Ben has an eye towards helping people create such gardens evidenced when he said, "To me horticulture is at its best when elements of beauty, botany, and environmental stewardship come together in spaces where people love to be."

NPA congratulates our two scholarship recipients and wishes them all the best as they make the world a better place through their education and love of horticulture. ❁

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## Our Warmest Thanks

Louise Schultz, Vice President

**T**wo outstanding volunteers deserve special recognition for all of their contributions to NPA as they step down as committee chairs. They are Julie King and Katie Padwick.

Many NPA members have toured Julie King's exceptional University District garden over the years. As Julie completes her second term on the NPA Board she is also stepping down as Perennial Post editor. Her commitment and involvement in our organization has benefited us all. Julie is well known for her passion for gardening, her plant knowledge, and her design expertise, having taken Second Place in the 2003 Pacific Northwest Gardens Competition. She has shared that passion and design

pro prowess as the editor of the Perennial Post since fall of 2005. Her thoughtful eye and keen sense of purpose have helped guide the Board. In recognition of her many valued contributions over the years, Julie was the recipient of the 2005 NPA Volunteer of the Year award, and we thank her for all her dedication.

Our heartfelt thanks also to Katie Padwick, now leaving as chair of the Open Gardens program and as an NPA Board member. The board has often referred to Katie Padwick as our ENERGIZER BUNNY®, tirelessly working on behalf of us all. Katie attended monthly Board meetings and participated in the day-to-day activities of the board from her Gig Harbor home. She

enthusiastically encouraged others to join our Neighborhood Group program, and shepherded NPA's booth in the Point Defiance Flower and Garden Show. Katie has encouraged many, many people to join NPA since she first became involved! She created and promoted the new Nursery Discount Program and last, but certainly not least, since 2006 she has ably chaired the Open Gardens program, adding the new Spring Garden Fling tours in 2008.

NPA is indeed the better for the involvement of these two exceptional volunteers and both Julie and Katie have our deepest appreciation for all that they have brought to the organization. ❁

# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

*Many thanks to our generous 2009 Donors for supporting NPA's fine educational programs, including the Open Gardens, the NPA Border at the BBG, student scholarships, lectures, workshops and Neighborhood Groups. Membership dues alone do not cover the cost of providing these programs; your gift supports our 25-year tradition of offering quality horticulture education enjoyed by both new and seasoned gardeners alike.*

## PLATINUM PERENNIAL (\$500 AND UP)

Chitra Z. Parpia  
Keith & Janet Patrick

## GOLDEN SHOVEL (\$250 - \$499)

Barbara Bonjour  
Janet & Michael Endsley  
Charles Price &  
Glenn Withey

## SILVER TROWEL (\$100 - \$249)

Mary Ann Byhre  
Darrel & Pam Coney  
Michele Cournoyer  
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Dianne Ferris  
Joe & Kathy Freedman  
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## PEONY (\$75 - \$99)

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Christine Hansen  
Carrie L. Hill  
Leonard & Irene Peyton  
Liz Sanborn

## HELLEBORE (\$50 - \$74)

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Karen Baer  
Lacia Lynne Bailey  
Christa Balk  
Susan Beecham  
Cassandra Fall Benz  
Deanna Berry  
Chris Bigham  
Terri Boehm  
Constance Bollen  
Sandra Booren  
Martha Bosma  
Walt & Dona Bubelis  
Michael Burgett  
Rod Parke & Dale Burke  
Vickie Butterworth  
Jeanne Carpenter  
Dianne L. Carreri  
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Toni & John  
Christianson  
Stephanie Rodden &  
John Cienki  
Ria Claassen  
Laurie Colman  
Cyrilla Cook  
Kathleen Cook  
Eileen Crawford  
Barb Danek  
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Carin Dugowson  
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Carol Van Winkle  
Scott VanGerpen  
Mary L. Walsh  
Susan Wheeler  
Sherri Wilson  
Jenny Wyatt  
Kathy Yerke  
Marcia & Klaus Zech  
Polly Zehm  
Jean Zook

## \*Kudos\*

• **Marilou Rush**, who gardens in Bellevue, was the lucky winner of the NPA's raffle for two hours of design time from designers Glenn Withey and Charles Price.

Marilou tells the *Post* that she and her husband have lived in their house for 22 years. She joined NPA in 1998, but only became an avid gardener after seeing Heronswood in 2002. They have a few areas of their garden where they especially wanted advice. "On the west side of the house, there is a steep hill with just weeds. At the front of the house, there is strip of grass on one side of the driveway, and a rock wall on the other side. During winter, the yard in front is blah. We also have to deal with deer and rabbits!" explained Marilou.

Glenn and Charles visited Marilou's garden on May 16th. They gave her good suggestions for the areas she felt were

problematic and recommended some plants that will help her deal with the exposures and wildlife.

• **The Volunteers of the Quarter** were Janice Reed, Jutta Boltz and Susan Waterford, who each received a pair of Henkles flower shears. Carol Holloway and Janice Reed also earned their 100 hour pins. Thank you all!

• **Bellevue Botanical Garden** was named "Best Park in the Northwest" by King 5's 2009 'Northwest Escapes' contest. The BBG features 53 acres of display gardens, including the famed NPA Border.

• **NPA member Susan Wheeler's** Bellevue garden won Third Place in the 2008 Pacific Northwest Gardens Competition. Congratulations Susan! 🌸

# NEIGHBORHOOD *Groups*

What do the *Dirty Divas*, *Late Bloomers*, and *MercerBelles* all have in common? They are all go-getting **NPA Neighborhood Groups**, three of 19 groups across Puget Sound. It is a perfect way to connect with other NPA members, learn about horticulture, try creative garden crafts, carpool to gardens, nurseries and lectures, improve your gardening skills and stay informed about NPA events. We support members wishing to start a new group, including zip code lists of potential members, meeting ideas, and our "How to Start a Neighborhood Group" handbook that walks you through the process. Be a part of our neighborhood groups! All you have to do is be a current NPA member. To see if there's a group in your area go to [www.n-p-a.org](http://www.n-p-a.org). To start your own group, email Kathryn Highland at [kathrynhighland@msn.com](mailto:kathrynhighland@msn.com) or call or 425-895-1178.

- The **SOUTH SOUND GROUP** went to **Garden-sphere** in April & Travis gave us a wonderful presentation on sustainable gardening. In May we had an extra field trip to **DeGro Nursery** where Melinda showed us many choice new perennials & let us go wild in her greenhouses. For our May meeting we went to **Old Goat Farm** and toured Sue Mulcahey's garden, then on to **Mt. Tahoma Nursery** to get plants for the tufa containers we made in June.

—*Blossom Kroman*

- The **NORTHERN EXPOSURES GROUP** (North Snohomish and Skagit County plus Camano Island) went on a group outing to Olympia with the sole purpose of alleviating our plant lust! We came, we saw, we spent at



**The Plant Place, Fairie Gardens and Steamboat Island Nursery.** In addition to the camaraderie, we found new plants just waiting for a home. Lunch at the McMennamins Spar Cafe was a nice addition to the day which was originally planned as a Port Townsend outing, delayed by the bridge closure. —*Sandy Schumacher*

- The **GIG HARBOR GROUP** and the **GIG HARBOR-TACOMA-FOX ISLAND GROUP** will be getting together for a combined meeting, pot luck and plant swap on August 22nd. —*Katie Padwick*

- The **LILIES OF THE VALLEY GROUP**, located around Snoqualmie Valley (Fall City, Carnation & Duvall) offers up this delightful poem about their recent activities.

The 'Lilies of the Valley'

Don't just stay in the shade,

We travel to sights that astound.

To Umbecks, and Powellwood,

To Dunn and more.

We even cross Puget Sound.

We have pruned a friend's garden

And sharpened our Felcos.

We have lusted after fountains and pots.

We love open gardens,  
(The yellow book is our friend!)

We're eager to learn lots and lots.

We're the 'Lilies of the Valley'

Hooray for NPA!

—*Noma Edwards*

## 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 perennial gardening in the Northwest.

Website: [www.n-p-a.org](http://www.n-p-a.org)  
Phone: 425-647-6004  
Email: [info@northwestperennialalliance.org](mailto:info@northwestperennialalliance.org)

### NPA 2009 Officers:

Michele Cournoyer, President: 425-868-5541  
Louise Schultz, Vice President: 206-784-2565  
Chris Niblack, Secretary: 425-647-6004

### Membership:

The membership year runs from January to December. To join, visit [www.n-p-a.org](http://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, the NPA Border and student scholarships.

### Submissions:

Contact the Post Editor at [post@northwestperennialalliance.org](mailto:post@northwestperennialalliance.org)

**Submission deadline for the Winter issue is November 15, 2009.**

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# PERENNIAL POST—NEW LOOK & NEW EDITOR

Michele Cournoyer, President

You may have noticed that this edition of the Perennial Post is sporting a new look. We've redesigned the Post to make it easier for you to read online, and also to provide more room for the stories about plants and gardening that you like to read. Paging through archived copies of the Post shows it has undergone two major facelifts over the years. The first was in 2001, and again in 2005, when photos were added. Now, with new graphics capabilities and posting an all-color edition online, it was time for another update.

In addition to all the news about upcoming lectures, plant sales and opportunities to connect with fellow plantaholics, we will have feature articles about people, places and plants—especially plants!

Julie King passes on the editor duties (with a very big smile on her face) to Janet Endsley. Most of you know Janet

from her five years as the Seminar Manager for the Northwest Flower & Garden Show, or from her work with NPA as past president and producer of the Open Gardens book for seven years. She has also served two terms on the Arboretum Foundation board and chaired their Pacific Northwest Gardens Competition for ten years. Janet has a BA in Public Communication from the University of Washington and two decades of experience in marketing and public relations.

If you would like to get in touch with your inner garden writer, please feel free to contact Janet at [j.endsley@verizon.net](mailto:j.endsley@verizon.net). I hope you enjoy the new Perennial Post and we look forward to bringing you more great editions. And visit our website at [www.n-p-a.org](http://www.n-p-a.org) for all the latest news and to register for our upcoming events. 🌸