



## Garden Borders From Dull to Drama

Pam Felts, Education Chair

How do we give existing boring borders the “wow” factor? Sue Goetz shares her inspired ideas on Sunday, January 16th, as she talks about updating, editing and stylizing mixed borders. Plant textures, colors and layers all define what a mixed border is. The look can be fabulous, but the planning is daunting. Where to start? What to keep? What to compost?



Sue Goetz is a well-known garden designer and writer. Through her design business, Creative Gardener, she helps clients personalize their garden spaces. Sue especially likes working on renovations because “sometimes gardeners just get stuck.”

Join Sue as she shows how to peel back the layers of plantings. Discover what is missing and where to add puddles and pockets of color, texture, and drama. Photos, ideas and easy step-by-step design notes will help you become a plant mixologist in the garden.

They know all the plants, all the names, the cultivation and bloom time, but they just need a different perspective. One small change can make all the difference. Turning a straight path into a meandering one, or adding texture and layering, can change a tired garden (or gardener) into an energetic one.

Sue’s work has earned gold medals at the Northwest Flower & Garden Show and the Point Defiance Flower

and Garden Show, as well as the *Fine Gardening* magazine “Best Design” award at the 2005 PDFG show. She is certified as a professional horticulturist (CPH) with the WSNLA, a board member of the Northwest Horticultural Society and a member of the Garden Writers of America. She is also the author of the Creative Garden Guide series: *Herbs to See, to Smell, to Taste*; *In Love with Lavender*; *The Stillroom*; and *Floribunda*. Sue lives and gardens in Gig Harbor, Washington. Visit her website [www.thecreativegardener.com](http://www.thecreativegardener.com).

### NPA January Lecture

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 16, 2011, 1:00 PM**  
**DOORS OPEN AT NOON FOR**  
**PLANT & SEED SALES**

**NPA MEMBERS FREE / NONMEMBERS \$10**  
**CENTER FOR URBAN HORTICULTURE**  
**3501 NE 41ST STREET, SEATTLE**

## March Mania Plant Sale Moves Indoors

March Mania, the first big plant sale of early spring, will be held indoors at the Bellevue Hilton on **Sunday, March 20, from 10 to 2 p.m.** It will include the Hilton’s breakfast service, selling coffee, hot chocolate and pastries to morning shoppers. So get ready to release some of that pent-up plant lust while you shop in comfort.

March Mania features spring ephemerals, which are plants that are unique to early spring. You won’t see these beauties at later sales—as we all know, spring is fleeting. We’ll also have hellebores, those evergreen stalwarts

beloved by Northwest gardeners, along with an exciting assortment of companion plants.

This sale brings together a dozen outstanding specialty nurseries from all over Puget Sound, each one featuring its best of the season. If you’re a collector, come discover what’s new and different; if you’re starting a new garden, shop for the tried and true favorites.

The Bellevue Hilton is at 300 112th Avenue, Bellevue. Please join us for the fun, lots of plant talk and shopping—and bring your friends!

Volunteer for the sale. Volunteers get in early to scope out the best plants. To sign up, email [volunteers@northwestperennialalliance.org](mailto:volunteers@northwestperennialalliance.org).

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# NPA EVENTS

## Calendar

- JANUARY 16** NPA Lecture, "Garden Borders from Dull to Drama," with Sue Goetz, Sunday, 1 pm, CUH 3501 NE 41st Street, Seattle. Details on page 1.
- FEBRUARY 23-27** Northwest Flower & Garden Show, volunteer for NPA and get in for free! See page 11.
- MARCH 12** Potting Up Party, Saturday, 10 – 2 pm. With George Lasch at the Bellevue Botanical Garden, 12001 Main Street, Bellevue. Free plants for volunteers!
- MARCH 13** Nicolay Lecture, Sunday, 1 pm, CUH, 3501 NE 41st Street, Seattle.
- MARCH 20** March Mania Plant Sale, Sunday, 10 – 2 pm, Bellevue Hilton, 300 112th Ave., Bellevue. Details on page 1.
- APRIL 9-10** Spring Garden Fling, Saturday and Sunday, tour of Seattle & Eastside gardens. Details about all the Spring Fling Gardens and driving directions will be mailed to all members in March, 2011.
- APRIL 16** Spring Garden Fling, Saturday, South Sound gardens.
- APRIL 17** NPA Spring Plant Sale, Sunday, 10 – 3 pm, North Seattle Community College, 9600 College Way North, Seattle.
- APRIL 23** Spring Garden Fling, Saturday, Snohomish county and Whidbey Island gardens.
- APRIL 30** South Sound lecture at Lakewold Gardens, Saturday, 1 – 4 pm.
- APRIL-OCTOBER** Docent led tours every Saturday and Sunday, 2 pm, Bellevue Botanical Garden.

## IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR NPA MEMBERSHIP

Now's the time to renew your NPA membership for another year of inspiring garden tours, classes & workshops, lectures and gardening fun. Memberships run from January through December. If you've joined or renewed anytime after September 2010, you're good for all of 2011.

It's easy to renew online at [www.n-p-a.org](http://www.n-p-a.org). Either use your credit card to pay online, or download a membership form and mail it with a check. You can include your spouse or significant other for free when you join.

There is no better value in the gardening community than NPA. While many clubs charge an extra \$20-\$45 for one day of tours, with NPA you can enjoy free garden tours almost every weekend from April through September with your Open Gardens book. NPA also offers free



lectures, *The Perennial Post* and nursery discounts. As one member exclaimed this year, "The money I saved on nursery discounts paid for my membership!"

We're holding our membership dues steady at \$35, but we hope you'll show your support for NPA and make an extra donation when you renew. NPA is an IRS-approved 501(c)(3) nonprofit, so your gift above the \$35 membership level is tax deductible. Donations help

support our educational programs, scholarships and the amazing NPA Border, which is NPA's gift to the gardening community.

NPA gift certificates also make thoughtful gifts for your gardening friends, so you can enjoy touring our many wonderful Open Gardens together.

# 2011 Classes & Workshops

Sunday, February 6, noon – 5 pm  
**Glass Art for your Valentine**  
at Art by Fire, Issaquah  
Fee: \$60 Class Limit: 30

Make a glass flower or a heart for your special someone—or sign up together for a hot date! Wear cotton clothing, closed-toe shoes, and bring sunglasses. Class fee of \$60 includes all materials and instruction. Note: Registration deadline for this class is Monday, January 17. We will not be able to give refunds for cancellations after January 21.

Saturday, February 12, 10 – noon  
**Pruning with George Lasch**  
Fee: \$20 Class Limit: 15

Do you fear total garden meltdown from a few bad snips? Relax! Spend a few hours in a wonderful Bridle Trails garden learning the principles of pruning. We will go over the basics of how to manage different types of shrubs and small trees. Bring your bypass pruners and enjoy a winter day gaining confidence in your ability to cut. Held in the Garvey garden, Bellevue.

Wednesday, March 9, 10 – noon  
**Hydrangeas with George Lasch**  
Fee: \$20 Class Limit: 15

Hydrangeas are one of the most asked about and questioned plants in the Border. We have a wide selection of different types— growth habits and blooming will help us determine how they are pruned in late winter. Bring your bypass pruners. The NPA Border at Bellevue Botanical Garden.

Saturday, April 9, 10 – noon  
**Garden Health with Walt Bubelis**  
Fee: \$20 Class Limit: 15

Learn how to ascertain the health of a garden. Are there obvious problems, hidden or potential issues you need to be aware of? What can you do or not do to make a garden an environmentally friendly place for plants and beneficial fauna? We will analyze a member's garden, looking at soil issues, garden pests, and the local climate. Don't miss this opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge from Walt Bubelis, the popular head of the Horticulture Department at Edmonds Community College for 30 years. Held in the Williamson garden in Steilacoom.

Wednesday, April 13, 10 – noon  
**Dig In! with George Lasch**  
Fee: \$20 Class Limit: 15

Got overgrown grasses? Dwindling Iris? A quick course in how to dig and divide perennials, with demonstrations and tips from Border Supervisor George Lasch. Participants will leave with a freshly divided plant for their own garden. Come prepared to dig in! The NPA Border at Bellevue Botanical Garden.

Saturday, April 23, 1 – 4 pm  
**Spring Ephemerals**  
with Glenn Withey & Charles Price  
Fee: \$40 Class Limit: 15

Glenn Withey and Charles Price, famed landscape designers, show you how to jumpstart your garden with a lively show of color by mixing springtime ephemerals with more 'permanent' plantings. This class will be held at Dunn Gardens, a horticultural gem that is drop-dead gorgeous in April. Class includes general spring gardening tips and maintenance how-to's. The afternoon wraps up with hors d'oeuvres & wine.

Saturday, May 7, 10 – 1 pm  
**SWOT Your Garden with Sue Moss**  
Fee: \$40 Class Limit: 15

Well-known landscape designer Sue Moss will teach two methods to enhance your grasp of garden design. We'll begin by discussing the SWOT method, which teaches you how to analyze a garden in terms of its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Next, we'll apply classic landscape design principles as we brainstorm solutions to the needs and possibilities identified in our real-life laboratory, the lovely Redmond garden of Joanne White. The morning concludes with lunch in the garden.

Saturday, May 14, 10 – noon  
**Making More with George Lasch**  
Fee \$20 Class Limit: 15

Propagation basics. "Can I have a piece of that wonderful plant?" Wouldn't it be nice to have a few ready? Learn the many vegetative ways of duplicating your favorite plants. Participants will leave with inspiration and cuttings. Held in the NPA Border at Bellevue Botanical Garden.

Wednesday, May 25, 10 – noon  
**Chai & Chat with Chitra Parpia**  
Fee: \$35 Class Limit: 15

Chitra teaches you how to prepare her fabulous Chai tea and accompaniments, including spinach paneer kebabs, veggie chutney sandwiches, spicy Indian style pretzels, cracked wheat upma (pilaf), sprouted moong salad, traditional dessert and more! A feast for the senses, beautiful, aromatic and delicious. Class will be taught in Chitra's kitchen, in her waterfront home in Kirkland.

Saturday, June 4, 1 – 2 pm  
**My First Garden Class (For children k-3)**  
with Gayle Richardson  
Fee: \$10 per child Class Limit: 20

Legendary Children's Librarian Gayle Richardson weaves together stories and activities in a one-hour program designed to introduce your children or grandchildren to the joys of gardening. Each child will receive several goodies to take home. Held in the NPA Border at Bellevue Botanical Garden.

Wednesday, June 15, 10 – noon  
**Herbaceous Pruning Secrets**  
with George Lasch  
Fee: \$20 Class Limit: 15

How to manage your perennials to get the most out of them all season long. Pinching and pruning will yield results that will help your plants earn their keep. Learn the tricks of the trade to help you enjoy them more. Class held in the NPA Border at Bellevue Botanical Garden.

Saturday August 6, 10 – 2 pm  
**Seed Safari in Snohomish**  
with George Lasch & friends  
Fee: \$50 Class Limit: 15

Join our guides on an expedition to three wonderful gardens in the wilds of Snohomish. At each stop we will hunt up some seeds to bag, while learning about different types of fruits and the when, how and what of collecting them. Our final stop will be where the treasures of the day will be discussed and shared over a glass of wine.

Saturday, September 17, 10 – noon  
**10 Secrets for Using Lavender**  
with Kathy Gehrt  
Fee: \$35 Class Limit: 15

Join cookbook author Kathy Gehrt in her own Seattle kitchen for a hands-on workshop to discover ten secrets for using lavender to create flavorful seasonings, infused sugar and fabulous gifts. You will learn the best lavender cultivars for culinary use, growing techniques, and how to harvest lavender, dry it, and package buds to flavor everything from lemonade to Latin salsa. Take home samples of Lavender-Ginger Sugar and Latin Lavender Seasoning. Discover packaging techniques to give your homemade gifts that special touch.

Wednesday, November 9, 10 – noon  
**Gifts from Your Kitchen**  
with Kathy Gehrt  
Fee: \$35 Class Limit: 15

Looking to save time and money, and still give unforgettable gifts to friends and family? Join Kathy Gehrt, cookbook author, in her Seattle kitchen for a demonstration of five of her favorite gifts you can make at home.

## CLASS REGISTRATION

*We urge you to sign up early for the classes you want, since class sizes are limited.*

*Register online at [www.n-p-a.org](http://www.n-p-a.org)*

*Or contact the NPA Office at 425-647-6004 or [classes@northwestperennialalliance.org](mailto:classes@northwestperennialalliance.org)*

*Details and driving directions for each class will be sent following your registration.*

# Unforgettable Books

Gayle Richardson

It won't be long before the garden has been put to bed for the winter, but the catalogs haven't started arriving. Lots of time, therefore, to sit down before a roaring fire with a glass of wine and a great book.

The titles below are sure to please, and if they're not available at your local library system, or the reserve queues are too long, they can be found online from a penny to just a few dollars.

***The Defence Diaries of W. Morgan Petty***  
by Brian Bethell

Various publishers and editions. 1984.

Maybe it's because I'm from Berkeley, a town that has declared itself a nuclear-free zone—or maybe it's just because this charmer of an epistolary novel is so darn funny in a reserved, oh-so-proper English way—that I've read it at least four or five times.

It starts with a quote from the Duke of Wellington, on reviewing his troops: "They may not frighten the enemy, but by God they frighten me." Surely an allusion to Roger, W. Morgan Petty's part-time garden help, who is dragooned into his employer's elaborate plans to declare his garden at Number 3, Cherry Drive, Canterbury, a nuclear-free zone.

Stymied at first by Roger's use of "the last of the envelopes for storing his Brassica seeds," Mr. Morgan Petty is soon involved in an extensive correspondence with actual parties on the front line of Britain's defense establishment: Margaret Thatcher, the Ministry of Defence, British Aerospace, Marconi Space and Defence Systems, etc., etc., etc. Replies to his earnest and naive requests come back on letterhead paper (long before the days of easily computer-generated fakes), all proving that the British have an incredible tolerance for, and appreciation of, eccentrics.

Woven into this correspondence is the day-to-day struggle by gardener and



Legendary librarian Gayle Richardson is also NPA Vice President

helper to secure the compound. If you read this hilarious novel, you'll recommend it, and end up buying lots of copies, as I have, for gifts. Completely unknown, and not to be missed.

Note: For best access, track this one down using the author's name. Some editions use the British spelling 'defence' and others the American 'defense.' Confusion can result.

***Radical Prunings: A Novel of Official Advice from the Contessa of Compost***

by Bonnie Thomas Abbott

Published by Emmis Books, 2005.

Two years' worth of opinionated garden advice and inadvertently revealing glimpses into the life of a garden newsletter writer make up this engaging, funny and touching novel. Mertensia Corydalis, supremely confident and horticulturally capable, happily solves all the problems her readers write in with (just DON'T inquire about lawns or chemical spray programs—her wrath is then dreadful to behold). Two of this reviewer's favorite observations were: "T.C., it is easier to produce a human baby than it is to get a potted orchid to rebloom (although if you are of an advanced age, the odds might favor the orchid). But have hope." and "Just as there is no such thing as leftover lobster, there is no such thing as too many lilies in the garden."

Harder to solve are her personal

problems: ever-more-attractive employee Tran, Iron Maiden office assistant Miss Vong and a particular thorn in her side, ex-husband (and incompetent gardener) Norton Doyle, who has gone on to fame and fortune on a cable TV garden show. His pseudonymous annoying letters asking for garden help don't fool her for a second. But all ends well, if not completely satisfyingly. You just wish for another two years' worth of advice.

An added bonus is a choice piece of bookmaking whose cover and comfortable shape provide almost as much pleasure as the contents. More from this author, please.

***Green Grows the City*** by Beverley Nichols  
Published by Antique Collector's Club, 1997.

More than a few of us, I hazard, have found ourselves living next to the gardening neighbor from hell. Beverly Nichols, on moving to a London house and taking a 999 year lease, found himself with such a neighbor who wanted to control his every garden move and choice by virtue of sharing one foot of property line with him. Their barbed, yet ever-so-polite, exchanges are one of the highlights of this piece of novelized non-fiction. The other part of the book that inspires the reader is his successful conquering of a seemingly insurmountable garden design problem. Through attempt after attempt to defeat the triangular shape of the property, with maps and drawings provided, he gives readers the confidence that they, too, can solve their own garden design problems.

Nichols' arch tone may not appeal to all readers. You have to like mannered British social comedies to enjoy his style, but if Noel Coward and Evelyn Waugh are up your alley, Nichols will be as well.

Next issue: Murder and mayhem in the mulch—Horticultural Mysteries.

## Of Slugs & Cyclamen: Gardening in Winter

Glenn Withey

After a strange spring into summer, who knows what sort of winter awaits us? As I type this, it is cool, yet sunny out. The last of the autumn leaves are glorious. But, will we end up with one of the worst winters since 1955? I guess we'll find out next spring.

No matter the winter, there are still lots of things one can do between now and next March.

First of all is cleanup. How much or how little? We used to be very anal



Glenn Withey in the NPA Border.

retentive when it came to tidying the garden. There are some valid reasons for doing this, as slugs and snails will hide in the debris, and a plant that suffered from disease could have overwintering pathogens.

However, nowadays we try to strike a compromise. The worst of the slimy offenders are cleaned up, but not

everything. Birds enjoy hunting around for things to eat, and a too-tidy garden won't offer as much. As far as slugs, applying slug bait year round is the answer.

While the two of us try to be as organic as possible, we are pragmatic. We will use a product, such as Sluggo, which is eco-friendly. Initially the slug population will be decimated, but the few that aren't attracted to this product will multiply. After several months there will be a much larger population of slugs that will say, "Thanks, but no thanks." That is when we get out the trusty old metaldehyde-based slug baits. One carefully applied dose will knock down the population, and we then go back to using the more eco-friendly types of bait.

We do try to mulch relatively early on, where there are existing flower bulbs (daffodils, snowdrops and other early bloomers) within the bed. While bulbs generally wait until the right time to emerge, their growing points can be just under the surface, or even at the surface, come mid-December. Mulching does necessitate a more thorough cleanup. However, we've sited bulbs in certain parts of the garden, so not everything has to be mulched at the same time.

And, speaking of pathogens, if you have a plant that is problematic, consider taking it out! You've had all year to observe it. A one-time outbreak can be okay, but if a plant repeatedly has problems, it is telling you something. Neither of us have any patience for ugliness, as there is far too much out there in the general world. Besides, if you rip something out, then you might go out and purchase a new plant. The nursery industry has been in a severe slump,

and we know that the owners would be extremely happy to sell you just what you need.

When we don't ache too much, we do quite a bit of garden renovation during the winter months. Remember, early blooming perennials won't look that good if dug up in February. Later flowering ones won't miss a beat. If you do need to move spring or early summer flowering plants, try to do it in the autumn (early winter at the latest).

Photographs are always helpful in documenting what you have, how large it grows and so on, when it comes time to shuffle plants about. Even after thirty years of gardening, I can still site things too close to one another if I don't have some visual reminder. The gratification of planting too close is welcome the first year, but then you have to dig them up the following year. Of course, in general men have more problems in accurately determining length and width.

Winter bloomers, such as *Cyclamen coum*, are excellent additions. We use them to mark the snouts of various peonies, especially the woodland types, such as *P. mlokosewitschii*. This also works well with trilliums. While the peony growth points are usually visible, dormant trilliums are far stealthier in appearance. Far too often we've felt a crunch underfoot, realizing too late that we've just obliterated another one. With *C. coum* planted around them, there is no excuse to make this mistake.

Pruning. There are people who are good at this, and there are those who just aren't. If you fall into the latter category, admit to it and then hire a professional. Plant Amnesty offers good referrals, if one doesn't know where to

(Continued on page 11)

# NEIGHBORHOOD *Groups News*



The Dirty Divas neighborhood group, photographed by David McDonald.

NPA has 19 neighborhood groups throughout the Puget Sound area. If you belong to one, you can share your photos and adventures anytime on the NPA Facebook pages. If you'd like to join one, check our list at [www.n-p-a.org](http://www.n-p-a.org). To find out how to start your own group, contact our Membership Chair, Kathryn Highland, at [kathrynhighland@msn.com](mailto:kathrynhighland@msn.com).

## **The Dirty Divas** *Cindy Combs*

The Dirty Divas know how to have a good time! This neighborhood group of Ballard, Magnolia and Queen Anne members shared their expertise with each other during monthly meetings on timely topics including green walls and ornamental edibles. They dug into the shady world of Rhodies, Pieris and Kalmia, and followed the fascinating story of the hummingbirds who raised their family in a member's garden. Guest speakers included David McDonald on garden photography (see his photo of the Dirty Divas at a member's garden during Wisteria season!) and Laura Crockett on water features. Satur-

day tours included members' gardens, the incredible Streissguth garden and a Wallingford garden which showcased Pacific Coast iris at the height of the season. The Divas will finish up 2010 with their annual workshop, where they share greenery and good cheer while creating winter decorations for indoor and outdoor displays.

## **The Lilies of the Valley** *Beverly Hutchinson*



The Lilies of the Valley at Bassetti's.

What a great year! We started out with a presentation by Dave Hunter, a Mason bee expert, who convinced most of us to partner with him in raising Mason bees. He provided us with a wooden house, straws with bees in hibernation, and empty straws for when they hatch and begin building new nests for the next generation. It was quite easy. If you are interested in finding out more about his bees, check out his new website, [www.crownbees.com](http://www.crownbees.com).

The next few months included a hay ride and tour at Remlinger Farms, and visits to many gardens, including an estate garden by Daniel Mount, Mark Henry's garden in Snohomish, and Susie Egan's Cottage Lake Gardens. In October we visited Bassetti's Crooked Arbor Gardens in Woodinville, an experience in itself. It has a serene Japanese garden, a spectacular perennial garden, and a large herb and vegetable garden. The artwork throughout the garden is unique and spectacular, and the gift shop is full of interesting items at reasonable prices.

And here we are into November, planning the schedule for our next exciting year.

## **Eastside Morning Glories** *Jan Drummond*

In the late spring, the Eastside Morning Glories experienced a 1½-hour tour of Flower World behind the scenes. Our guide was the owner. We were amazed at how many plants they raise themselves for sale. I highly recommend this as a field trip for garden groups! This is a local, family-run business that has done well and is expanding into wine, vinegar and other offerings. Also, for lunch, consider the nearby Maltby Cafe, a local favorite. Reservations required for both the Flower World tour as well as the lunch stop (it is very busy at lunch time).

## The South Sound Group Toni Smith

We've had fun monthly gatherings this year. We had a great demonstration from Joe at the Oriental Garden Nursery in Federal Way on pruning Japanese Maple trees. Nancy gave a very inspiring talk on container gardening at Van Lierop's Garden Market in Sumner. We went to the Portland Ave. Nursery for a talk on propagating primulas from seed. Steve and Nancy gave a great talk on new plants/great plant picks at Vasse's Nursery in Puyallup. We went to the Lake Tapps Rhododendron nursery for a talk by Stuart Imrie on Rhodies, azaleas, hydrangeas and Japanese maple trees. We went to Todd's Nursery in Puyallup for a talk on water gardening and ponds in October. Several of the group went

to The Old Goat Farm on the Orting Kapowsin Hwy. for their open gardens, and a few drove to Oregon for the Hardy Plant sale. Our attendance has varied from 23 to 6 with an average of 10. We have chosen the third Saturday of the month for our NPA events.

### Other group activities



The Growin' Wild group took a garden photography class with Brian Page.



Mercerbelles' members enjoyed a mini garden workshop with Janit Calvo.

*You can share your group's photos and adventures anytime on the NPA Facebook pages.*

# Addicted to Open Gardens

Katie Padwick, Open Gardens Chair

Ever opened your garden for a tour? A local charity? Or, for NPA? If you have, you know it can be addictive! Six years ago, when I took over the Open Gardens directory, it seemed like a good thing for us to open our own garden, so we would understand what the NPA Open Garden hosts go through. Yes, it was a lot of work and our garden was very young. Although my husband, Gordon, and I had both gone through the Master Gardener program, we didn't think of ourselves as green thumb people. Before retiring, our gardening experience was limited to a few rose bushes, four fruit trees and a small vegetable garden.



Gardens small and large, modest and spectacular, are included in NPA Open Garden tours.

The garden fever came after our first year on tour for NPA. The visitors who came to see our fledgling efforts were kind and encouraging, and it was helpful to see our garden through objective eyes.

Garden design didn't really occur to us for another year or two. When the plant collecting bug first hit me, it was a matter of, "Oh! I've gotta have that!" and it went into the garden wherever there was an open spot. By then, most of the garden was in place, so it meant revising, moving, and visiting other NPA

gardens for ideas and inspiration.

We opened the second year because our previous visitors had been so kind, we wanted to see them again. We made more changes to the garden, and knowing we were going to be open on a particular date meant we had to get outside in the spring and work in the garden instead of going shopping or playing computer games. Digging, planting, weeding and raking proved to be a lot healthier, too.

Our garden isn't pretentious, and we really don't know what style it is, but visitors are generous with their compliments, and being on tour each year is now something we look forward

to. After talking with other members who have opened their gardens, I can see we aren't the only addicts. It's truly fun to share your unique creation with other gardeners who come from far and wide to visit. Some lovely people will come back each year to see what changes we've made.

If you have ever thought about opening your garden, but dismissed the idea because "it isn't ready" or "no one will come to see it," please rethink the idea. People will come, you will have a wonderful time, and you may even become addicted!



# BORDER Report

As the newly planted Border heads into its first winter of full beds, fingers are crossed! From NOAA to the almanacs to even the non-gardeners, everyone's talking up La Nina. All fronts promise a winter season with "above average precipitation and below normal temps." Let's hope it means snow! Lots of it would insulate the plants and buffer them from the cold, unlike two years ago, when we were just starting the renovation of the Border, only to see our freshly set perennials and shrubs decimated by fierce winter winds. The cloud of harsh weather arriving any week now makes me reluctant to cut back everything in the fall. The stalwart perennials that are established will be cut down, but anything new or marginal will be deadheaded and left to overwinter. I also want to see the reaction to more winter interest in a garden that is not just evergreen.

An army of trowels and hands added drifts of bulbs throughout the Border last month. Spring is entrenched and ready to strike as soon as the snow melts. We have added only bulbs that are known to perennially return rather than those that



shrink away after a year or two. Several cultivars of Narcissus were selected, including some old standbys and some new hybrids to try out. I have never met one I didn't like, and am looking forward to seeing how our diverse group of volunteers did with spreading them around.

Alliums have always been a signature of the Border and many more were added this fall for early season drama next summer. The big question will be how the hundreds of *Eremurus* or "Foxtail Lilies" look dancing across the whole place. We have also relocated a few of the huge pink ones from behind the bench in the old West Border, where they have thrived in rather a lot of shade that's well drained, but on the dry-ish

side. A few of the more vigorous growers planted two years ago have been divided and spread into areas where other things just didn't succeed.

Some of the large corms of *Cyclamen hederifolium* bloomed up a snowstorm along the stairs this fall, while the *Cyclamen coum* selections are just starting to peek out from under their shrubby neighbors. With flowers mostly in bright pinks, the *C. coum* will be magnets for attention in winter, little garnets glowing through the snow for visitors. Do come by this winter to see what is growing on in the Border and let us know what you think. Enjoy the quiet season.

**Potting Up Party**  
**Saturday, March 12th from 10-2**  
*Bellevue Botanical Garden*  
*12001 Main Street, Bellevue*

My fears of not having enough plants to pot up for our sales carts and plant sales have been allayed. Generous members have shared many good plants with us, and some of those first plants are big enough to divide and share. Join us in March for a day of potting up and sharing.

## A warm welcome to our new members!

Louise Abbott  
 Kathleen Anderson  
 Judy Bilanko  
 Karin Bollard  
 Ivy Bolm  
 Judy Boxx  
 Angie Bradbury  
 Grace M Brady  
 Kate Bratude  
 Karen Brighton  
 Caroline Brinkley  
 Charles & Susan Bryant  
 Susi Bryer  
 Frances Camber  
 Connie Carroll  
 Annette Clark  
 Annette Clingman  
 Shari Cummins  
 Jim & Melanie Currier

Barbara Curry  
 Diane Deering  
 Patti Denman  
 Karen DuBose  
 Ruth Edwards  
 Mitch Evans  
 Simone Farris  
 Lincoln & Margaret Ferris  
 Miriam Faubion  
 Beth & David Fine  
 Will Fletcher  
 Gayle Forslund  
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## FROM KATHY'S KITCHEN

Kathy Gehrt's passion for lavender, cooking and good food led her to experimenting with cooking with lavender—and ultimately to writing and publishing her own cookbook. *Discover Cooking with Lavender* is an ideal guide for seasoned chefs, foodies and novice cooks, as well as lavender and gardening enthusiasts.

Readers will learn about buying, growing and harvesting lavender. Cooks will discover the varieties of lavender best for culinary use, how to harvest lavender buds and new techniques for bringing this herb's exotic flavor into drinks, savorys and desserts.

From seasonings to drinks, savory dishes to sweets, *Discover Cooking with Lavender* features 75 recipes, including: Lavender Ginger Lemon Sugar Bruschetta with Tomatoes and Roasted Lavender Strawberries with Lavender Yogurt Cream Honey Ginger Lavender Lemonade Roasted Halibut à la Provence And don't forget Josephine's Hot Chocolate. Lavender is the secret ingredient in this nightcap that Josephine created to put Napoleon in a "romantic" mood!

We are happy to announce that Kathy will offer two classes in 2011 exclusively for NPA members. Please check our Classes & Workshops schedule on page 3 for details—and sign up early, since Kathy's classes will undoubtedly fill up quickly.

### **Strawberries with Lavender Yogurt Cream**

*This delicious recipe was adapted from "The Provence Cookbook" written by Patricia Wells. Lavender brings out the sweetness of the strawberries.*

1 pound fresh strawberries, rinsed, stemmed and cut lengthwise into sixths  
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar  
1 tablespoon lavender sugar

### **Lavender Yogurt Cream**

1 cup Greek style yogurt  
2 tablespoons crème fraîche or heavy cream  
1 tablespoon lavender honey  
6 sprigs of lavender (for garnish)

1. Chill 6 dessert goblets by placing in the refrigerator.
2. Combine the strawberries, vinegar and lavender sugar; stir gently. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

### *For Lavender Yogurt Cream*

1. Just before serving, combine the yogurt and crème fraîche in a bowl and whisk gently, adding 1 tablespoon of lavender honey to taste. The mixture will remain quite firm.
2. Spoon the strawberries into the goblets and top with the lavender yogurt cream.
3. Garnish each goblet with a sprig of lavender.

Serves 6



## Seeds of Drama

Gayle Richardson, Seed Exchange Chair

*If you've collected seed from your garden this year, NPA would love to have some. Whether from plants rare and exotic or old garden favorites, the Seed Exchange welcomes it all.*

Every year, NPA reminds its members to donate seed from their gardens, and in it comes to get packaged up. Sounds like a pretty humdrum transaction, but you might be interested to know that there's plenty of drama and excitement behind the scenes. Just a few months ago, a desperate researcher at a university in New York State contacted us for *Fedia cornucopia* seed. She hadn't been able to locate it anywhere else in the world and had to have a project using it completed in nine



months. Before that, it was the Botany Department of a major California university that could find no other source than NPA for an Arizona native marigold—not even in its home state.

Another research project saved! And then there were the dozens of packets that went off to an Indiana university to be stored in a seed bank for study and comparison purposes. Sales to private gardeners reach from Thailand to Sweden, with many U.S. states in between.

So keep the cycle going—it may not be just another NPA member's garden that you enhance with your donated seed. Bring it, cleaned or uncleaned, to any NPA event, or email [seeds@northwestperennialalliance.org](mailto:seeds@northwestperennialalliance.org) to arrange transfer.

# Q&A Gardening

GEORGE LASCH

**Q:** "Is it too late to plant?"

**A:** The question came in the first week of November, when autumn had definitely arrived but the days were still warm and pleasant.

"Too late." Where does this idea of a set calendar being imposed on living things come from? Does it come from ancestral crop planning or something more recent in our relationship with growing things? Perhaps it's that omnipresent European heritage of gardening in a classic manner, when everything had a place and a time. This would still be true if we were living in a sub-tundra place like the upper Midwest, where indeed the window on reasonable planting is slammed closed pretty much on schedule. But we live in what is often referred to as a tempered climate – not



It's not too late to plant in Northwest gardens, as long as the soil can be worked.

too hot, not too cold. The soil seldom freezes more than a few inches and for a few days, if that. So the answer from the climate is: No, not too late. As long as the soil can be worked.

"What about heaving?" is the next query. The answer is to mulch well to help prevent the roots from heaving

out of the soil. In places where the soil freezes then thaws repeatedly, by early spring hapless small plants are tossed to the surface. This brings us to the size of the plant – wee little ones will indeed be unable to hold themselves in if we get more than a few freeze/thaw cycles. So yes, mulch things that need some help getting established, just like you would in April.

"Depends on what it is." What kind of plant is it? Bulb? Shrub? Huge bare-root tree? Some things are more durable and able to withstand the vagaries of fall planting. Does it have a nice established root ball that will hold it upright when the winds come? Or should you stake that wiggly tree that followed you home from the discount corner at the nursery? Establishing and maintaining root-to-soil contact is the key, no matter what or when. Got bulbs? Still in the garage? Plant them today, please! Generally, the rule for depth is three times the height of the bulb. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule. To the unlucky gardener who claimed, "My *Eremurus* came up the first year and never came back – it's not hardy!" I reply, it was just buried too deeply and rotted away in "average" soil. Fuchsias add so much color and grace to the summer garden, but they are best added in the spring when they have a chance to settle in before dying back the first year. Regardless of when they are planted, you should set them in a deep hole and let the backfill slowly fill in around the base and up the stems. They will root out into it, and the growing points will be deeper and more insulated in the event of a cold winter. The same goes for Clematis and tree peonies—plant deeper than you think and let the rest fill in.

Is it too late? I say only if the plant is dead—in that case yes, too late!

**Q:** When should I divide my ornamental grasses?

**A:** Spring. Generally the species of grasses added to the garden for their decorative foliage and flowers fall into two groups, those that lose their leaves and those that don't. The truly deciduous ones are more forgiving of human inter-



Ornamental grasses are best divided in spring.

vention. You could divide *Miscanthus* or *Hakonechloa* almost anytime of year with little harm. Fall is considered one of the best times to dig and divide most hardy plants, and replanting them in the still-warm soil aids with root establishment. If they are going into heavy, poor draining soil it would be best to wait until spring so they do not rot over winter. Of course, autumn is when these plants are in their glory and it is difficult to cut them down.

The larger growing grasses (*Miscanthus*, *Cortaderia*, etc.) need to be divided fairly often, just to keep them a manageable size. So, perhaps the "when" is this year not next, when they will be even bigger and heavier!

Often one of the reasons that a plant needs to be lifted is that it has gotten thin in the center as the new growth is ever expanding outward. One can just carve out the center and refill with compost to get better growth if needed.

Species that retain their leaves through the winter are evergreen for a reason, they need their leaves. Don't try to cut them all off unless it's really necessary. However, a plant can only keep so much leaf surface hydrated with the

roots it has. If it loses roots, it needs to lose some leaves, too. So when a clump is lifted and torn into smaller pieces, sometimes it needs a haircut. Often the question of cutting back evergreen grasses comes up in late winter, when they have been ravaged by cold winds and precipitation. I say wait until there are signs of life down in the crown, then hack back. The plant will be putting up new leaves anyway and will soon be full with fresh growth.

Again, it depends on what the plant is – fast growing *Carex* as a ground cover can be mowed off, whereas a marginally hardy Chilean bunch grass should be treated a bit more gently. Blue Fescue, one of the most commonly planted evergreen grasses, does need regular dividing to stay looking good. After just two or three years, it needs to be split and replanted to regrow fresh, clean leaves in that signature urchin habit.

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## Visit us at the Northwest Flower & Garden Show

Our passion for plants will be on full display at the new NPA booth (#2510) at this year's Northwest Flower & Garden Show. Stop by to see a beautiful display of spring ephemerals created by George Lasch. While you're there, sign up for a chance to win a new garden book. The show is coming a bit later this year, February 23-27 at the Convention & Trade Center in Seattle.

### Free tickets available for volunteers.

Every NPA member who volunteers to work a three-hour shift in the NPA booth gets a free admission ticket. Volunteers have the happy job of talking to people about NPA and all it has to offer. We assign two people per shift, and provide written instructions and a coordinator for each day, to show you how to sign up new members. To volunteer, contact the NPA office at [info@northwestperennialalliance.org](mailto:info@northwestperennialalliance.org) or 425-647-6004.

## Advance Reservation Tickets Required for Garden d'Lights

The dazzling display of lights at Garden d'Lights gets bigger each year, and so do the crowds--more than 150,000 people now flock to this holiday event at Bellevue Botanical Garden. This year, for the first time, advance reservation tickets are required to limit attendance to 5,000 a night. Volunteers of the Bellevue Botanical Garden Society hope that limiting the number of visitors will allow for a more quality experience for those who attend. Tickets are \$5 for adults, with children under 10 free. Garden d'Lights runs now through January 1, every evening from 5 – 10 pm. For tickets and more information, visit [www.gardendights.org](http://www.gardendights.org).

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## Of Slugs and Cyclamen...

*(Continued from page 5)*

turn. Far too often we've seen an otherwise nice planting ruined by improper pruning. And the lack of any pruning can be as damaging. Yes, it costs money to hire someone, but if budgeted once a year, it can be doable.

If you have somewhat tender shrubs, don't prune in the autumn, since winter damage may do all the pruning that is needed.

Most of all, take time to enjoy the garden. Between interesting bark, winter flowering plants and beautiful foliage—there is no reason why your garden can't be pleasurable year round. Obviously the plants that focus your attention in early January will most likely be subtler than a perennial border in the full-tilt boogie of late June. Books, or better yet, a walk on one of our rare, sunny days will inspire you to try new things. Our mantra is, if your garden isn't fun, do something about it!

*Glenn Withey and Charles Price are the resident curators of Dunn Gardens.*

## 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 2010 Officers:

Michele Cournoyer, President: 425-868-5541  
Gayle Richardson, Vice President: 206-632-2735  
Ellie Sanchez, Secretary: 425-828-6820  
Karen Herman, Treasurer: 253-508-8519

### 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)

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### **Follow NPA on Facebook**

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### **See The Perennial Post in full color**

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### **A Comment From Our Survey:**

"I joined the NPA to learn more about gardening techniques—which tools to use, what to do when, how to reduce maintenance, what plant combinations work best and how to place plants in the garden. I also joined to meet new people and make new friends that have the same interest as myself. That's what I like about the neighborhood groups. We see each others' gardens, discuss issues in the gardens and enjoy each others' friendships."