

GARDEN GAZETTE

October – December 2015

John Christianson, Editor

CHRISTIANSON'S Nursery & Greenhouse

An Enticing Selection of Common and Uncommon Plants . . . Friendly Service . . . Expert Advice

Glad Tidings of Joy



The first Christmas season after the Schoolhouse was moved to the Nursery it looked very forlorn; surrounded by a field of mud and a desolate landscape. The stately backdrop of Douglas firs seemed to embrace the forsaken little structure that had been saved from destruction the previous March. The firs were all that spoke to our future plans for the building. The Schoolhouse had no lights or heat, the walls were not painted, it did not have a proper stairway, the wind whistled through it and, true to Christianson form, we decided to have our staff Christmas party in it. Knowing our staff and friends to be adventurous souls and not strangers to inconvenience, we were hopeful this setting would work for a Christmas celebration. It turned out to be magical. The bleak landscape and muddy field were covered with a deep snowfall a few days before the party and, as guests walked to the steps of the schoolhouse, the dark gray building was silhouetted against the forty foot firs which

were draped in heavy snow. All eight windows were lit with candles so the room felt warm and welcome. Bob Harper was playing seventeenth century music on his auto harp and the entire setting seemed, out of necessity, to be much like it would have been one hundred years ago when the schoolhouse would have been used for just such a community celebration. Our newborn, Emma, looking like a porcelain doll, was sleeping in her vintage bassinet, the Harper's two sons with wonderful shades of red hair and hundreds of freckles looked like a Victorian Christmas card and our friends Carl and Waverly looked like they had just walked off the pages of a Dickens' novel. Waverly was dressed all in black with a vintage hooded cape and a sprig of holly in her hair. Carl also was dressed in black with a Santa hat atop his dark curls. I am sure I have seen that very image in a picture form "A Christmas Carol." The only thing that contradicted this picture was their 1942 pickup truck with its twinkling white Christmas lights dancing around the edges of the back window. Santa Claus was the last guest to arrive and, although he was dressed in work clothes, the children still recognized him because he kept forgetting to disguise his merry laughter. So, as we all settled into the evening, we were treated to great food, great music, great conversation and mirth and, best of all, wonderful friends. Kathy May played her guitar while we sang Christmas carols, Bob played music for Victorian line dances, the children skipped around and under and sometimes over the adults and the whole party seemed like a glad time from a past century with the Schoolhouse again providing shelter for a joyful celebration.

Toni Christianson

Reprinted from the November – December 1999 issue Garden Gazette

Festival of Family Farms

Saturday, October 3

Fresh Cider Pressing

12:30 - 2:00 p.m.

You are welcome to watch, help turn the crank or just have a glass of cider during this throw-back celebration to an earlier time when an old oak cider press was used to make cider for the Autumn Season. John Christianson will be making the cider from a varietal mix of our own organic apples. We have found that a mix produces better flavored cider and we love experimenting with different types of apples. Come to visit our magical Skagit Valley, drink some cider and then go on to tour neighboring farms, including La Conner Flats, Hedlin's Farm and Gordon's Pumpkins, during the Festival of Family Farms scheduled for the same weekend.

Also, later in the season, we will be serving our fresh pressed apple cider with the addition of homemade, complimentary molasses cookies during our Holiday Open House, November 7 & 8 and the day of our Holiday Tea, November 28. There is nothing better than the combination of homemade molasses cookies and fresh pressed cider...a wonderful Fall tradition.

Holiday Open House and Arts Alive!

November 7 & 8

A crisp, Autumn day (we hope) with music in the air, complimentary fresh apple cider and molasses cookies, artists with whom to visit and artwork to see plus the first day of our Holiday Open House sounds like great fun. Plan to be here!

In Primrose

Whether you like to give classic, antique or practical presents to those on your gift list, we hope you will find our gift shop to be a delightful experience; filled with ideas for both gift giving and decorating for a joyous Holiday Season. As always, we will have both a new and vintage assortment of ornaments plus our mohair 'snow' for the glistening, silver frost look so beautiful on trees, mantles, shelves and even firewood. Our new lines of gifts will include items we discovered in England and France including an easy to assemble and take down small herb drying rack, special soaps from Sissinghurst Castle in a beautifully wrapped package (a great hostess gift), and other assorted cards, soaps and candles. Our European container filled with French and English antiques for home and garden is scheduled to arrive in late October. These shipments are always dependent on strikes in France and/or oceanic weather but we always hope for the best. Additionally, the antique French white ironstone soup tureens appearing in so many magazines the last few years will be on center stage as well as beautiful antique French floral quilts and vintage English eiderdowns. Quilts such as these have moved out of the bedroom and into the living room where everyone can enjoy them. They can be thrown over the arm of a sofa, used as a partial slip cover over the seat and back of a chair or sofa or stacked in a cupboard or under a side table. Just being on display they add a sense of warmth and comfort to cold Winter mornings and dark Winter evenings. So gather your friends and ring in the Holidays with a special visit to Primrose where you will find many wonderful ideas for entertaining, gift giving and decorating during this magical season.

Arts Alive

We love being a part of La Conner's Arts Alive even though we are located in the countryside and not in the town proper. With La Conner's history of famous artists who moved here because of the 'light' in the Pacific Northwest we are fortunate to be able to add this art walk to all the wonderful events associated with our tiny town. And, in keeping with this history, we welcome artists to our Nursery this first weekend in November; **Rochelle Anderson**; vintage and steampunk jewelry designer, **Debra Lacey**; fiber and textile artist, and **Laura Campbell**; vine and rose hip wreath designer. We will also have musicians **Laurel Bliss** and **John Clark** with Cajun and bluegrass music plus **John and Toni Christianson's** famous combination of just pressed apple cider and homemade molasses cookies.

Holiday Tea and More: November 28

Saturday, November 28, is a special day at Christianson's Nursery and we hope you will be part of our festivities.

Twentieth Annual Holiday Tea: Noon - 5 p.m.

John and Toni Christianson extend their appreciation to customers with this complimentary Holiday Tea to celebrate the start of the Holiday Season. Come enjoy tea, cider and assorted delicacies in our 1888 Schoolhouse, decorated with a forest and holiday theme and listen to the live music of auto harpist **Bob Harper** and violinist **Dennis Burkhardt**. We have four seatings; make your reservations for what has become a Skagit Valley tradition.

Donations will benefit Friendship House in Mount Vernon



Arrival of Father Christmas: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Father Christmas will be in his red sleigh nestled among the trees in our South Greenhouse. He is excited to greet children of all ages and listen to their Christmas wishes. Come in your holiday finest and bring your cameras to take your own keepsake photos.

Holiday Wreath-Making Classes: 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

reservations required; class fee is \$8.

Deck the halls with ease by using our wreath-making machine and getting the inspiring and practical help of designer **Karen Harper**. These are one-hour classes (starting at 11 a.m., noon, 1 p.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m.). We provide a delightful array of greens (sold by the pound); but feel free to

bring your own. The cost of one wreath form is included in the class fee. Wear warm clothing and bring your own pruners and garden gloves.

Mark Your Calendars! Northwest Flower and Garden Show



NORTHWEST
FLOWER & GARDEN
SHOW

The Northwest Flower & Garden Show will be held in Seattle on February 17 – 21, 2016. The theme is **'America the Beautiful.'** Tickets for the show will be available for purchase at our Garden Store starting December 15 (ticket prices are \$17 for early bird tickets and \$22 during the dates of the show).

As always, we will be offering 'Flower Buses' so you can gather your friends and enjoy going to the show without the stress of driving and parking. The Flower Buses will be going to the show on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, February 17, 18, and 19, leaving the nursery at 8:30 am and returning at approximately 6:00 pm. The cost of a combination show ticket and bus ride is \$52. Call the nursery to make your Flower Bus reservations (360-466-3821).

***Tickets to the Northwest Flower and Garden Show make
perfect holiday gifts and stocking stuffers for all the gardeners on your list!***

Christianson's Autumn Class Calendar

Water Conservation In A Permaculture Landscape

Saturday, October 3 11 a.m. - noon
reservations required class fee: \$8

Climate extremes of drought followed by excessive flooding make it increasingly difficult to maintain a beautiful and stable landscape. **Kathy Anderson** of *Bountiful Landscapes* is a Water Ecologist who will illustrate how to use Permaculture principles to catch and hold water in your landscape. Create a Foodscape, Rain Garden, or Hugelkultur to enhance what your garden already has to offer. Bring a sketch pad to get started!

Adapting Japanese Garden Principles For Your Garden

Saturday, October 10 11 a.m. - noon
reservations required Class Fee: \$8

Learn about the heart of Japan's design traditions and practices and how to adapt them to your garden. **Hans Wressnigg** of *NIWA Japanese-Inspired Landscapes* will show examples of how to overcome challenges frequently encountered when working in western-style gardens. He will also cover how to gracefully introduce Japanese garden style elements that evoke the atmosphere experienced in authentic Japanese gardens.

Hedgerows & Habitats

Saturday, October 17 11 a.m. - noon
reservations required class fee: \$8

Join **Ani Gurnee** of *Aulos Designs* as she covers the different hedging plants commonly used and some that are uncommon, their benefits and the types of wildlife they attract.

Digging, Dividing and Storing Dahlias Made Easy

Saturday, October 24 11 a.m. - noon
reservations required class fee: \$8



Learn quick and reliable ways to expand your dahlia collection from year to year from **John and Kathy Willson** of *Swede Hill Dahlia and Sunflower Farm*. They will teach you how to dig, divide and overwinter your dahlias with special emphasis given to methods for retaining seasonal plant vigor and potency.

Fall Color Walk with John Christianson

Saturday, October 24 1 - 2 p.m.
reservations requested complimentary

Join **John Christianson** on an ever popular tour to enjoy and learn about the fabulous fall colors of leaves and berries in the Nursery's display gardens and at the adjoining La Conner Flats. Make sure to dress for the weather and wear good shoes that can take the mud. Meet in front of the Schoolhouse.



Winterizing Houseplants

Saturday, October 31 11:00 a.m. - noon
reservations required class fee: \$8

Yes, even though houseplants spend their lives indoors, they still need specific care suitable for the winter home environment. Join **Eric Andrews**, our indoor houseplant expert to discuss the best way to care for your houseplants through the Winter months. Topics include humidity control, light conditions, watering and what not to do during these darker, colder days.

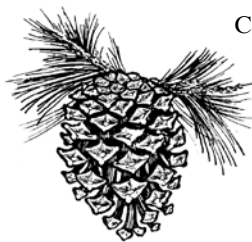
Rocks and Plants In Japanese Gardens

Saturday, November 14 11 a.m. - noon
reservations required class fee: \$8

Rocks and plants play a pivotal role in the Japanese garden. **Hans Wressnigg** of *NIWA Japanese-inspired Landscapes* will teach you the fundamental principles of making a powerful statement with the combination of rocks and plants used to evoke the natural beauty and essence of the Japanese garden.

Conifer Walk with John Christianson

Saturday, November 14 1 - 2 p.m.
reservations requested complimentary



Conifers add so much variety and interest to our year-round gardens; join **John Christianson** on a casual tour to enjoy and learn about many great conifers in the Nursery's display gardens and at adjoining La Conner Flats. Dress for the weather and wear good shoes for muddy spots.

To make your reservations for classes and events, please visit the Nursery or call us at 360-466-3821 or 1-800-585-8200.

Christianson's Autumn Class Calendar - continued

Rosehip Wreath-Making Workshop

Saturday, November 21 1 – 2:30 p.m.

reservations required class fee: \$49

Join wreath-maker extraordinaire, **Laura Campbell** in this hands-on workshop to learn how to create a beautiful rose hip wreath for your Holiday decorations. All materials are included in the class fee. Students need to bring pruners, gloves and enthusiasm. Be sure to wear warm clothes and long sleeves as the materials can be somewhat prickly.

Holiday Wreath-Making with Karen Harper

Saturday, November 28 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

reservations required complimentary



Deck the halls with ease by using wreath-making machines and getting the practical and inspiring help of designer **Karen Harper**.

These are one-hour classes (starting at 11 a.m., noon, 1 p.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m.).

Greens are sold by the pound or feel free to bring your own. The cost of one wreath form is included in the class fee. Wear warm clothing and bring your own pruners and garden gloves.

Swans of the Skagit

Saturday, December 5 11:00 a.m. - noon

reservations required class fee: \$8

The majestic beauty of fields filled with white swans, both native trumpeter and tundra swans, is virtually at Christianson's doorstep in December, January and February. Come hear wildlife biologist **Martha Jordan** describe these amazing birds – the largest waterfowl in the world – and Skagit Valley's best places to view them. Jordan is the Executive Director of the *Northwest Swan Conservation Association*. Make your reservations early; this was a wildly popular talk last year!

Snow Geese of the Skagit

Saturday, December 12 11:00 a.m. - noon

reservations required class fee: \$8

Huge numbers of snow geese migrate to Skagit Valley farmlands from Alaska and Wrangell Island, Russia. Come learn more about their fascinating life history and challenges with wildlife biologist **Martha Jordan**, who is Executive Director of the *Northwest Swan Conservation Association*. Make your reservations early for this popular class!

Fall Bulbs Are In!



A colorful Spring garden planted in tulips and daffodils requires planning and planting in October and November. Our Spring flowering bulbs that require planting now are being stocked in our Garden Store as we write this. Tulips and daffodils can be planted for a succession of color by choosing by bloom time. Information is on the boxes about early, mid-season and late flowering varieties that will make it possible to extend the season from late March to May. We also have sought-after fritillaria, galanthus, bearded iris, hyacinths, narcissus and crocus. The giant allium flowers blooming in the Schoolhouse Garden during June and requested by so many people are also in and need to be planted now. Don't procrastinate with Spring bulbs. They absolutely do not provide instant gratification like blooming annuals and perennials but they do pleasantly surprise you when you have forgotten about having planted them and they come up just when you need hope that Spring is on its way. If you don't plant them now and you really want them when you start noticing them in neighborhood gardens in the Spring, you will need to pay four or five times as much for potted, blooming bulbs or go without for another year. Quick note: This is also the time to force paperwhites, crocus, hyacinths and some varieties of daffodils and tulips into bloom for the Holiday Season. These out of season blossoms are welcome Christmas and hostess gifts. Our staff will help with advice on forcing bulbs for Winter bloom.

Autumn Planting

We encourage all our customers to plant in the Fall. Trends have moved away from this but a tree, shrub or hardy perennial put into the ground in Autumn to early Winter will put on some root growth and settle in before it begins to put on above ground growth in the Spring. In

fact, the roots will continue

to grow throughout

the winter whenever

the temperatures

are above 42

degrees. These

Fall plantings

will have a

head start on

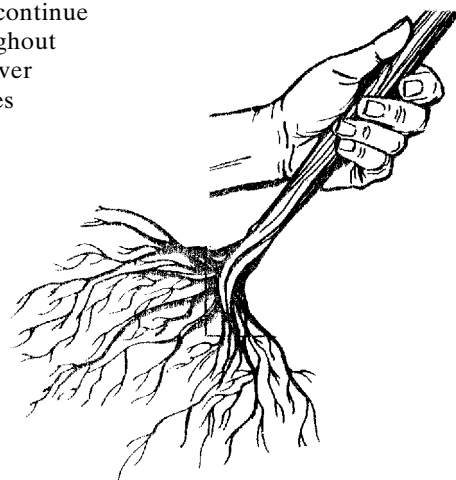
plantings made

next Spring and

will need less

water during the

coming season.



October – December Specials

October 2 - 18

Conifer Sale

tall and dwarf evergreens, including spruce, fir, cypress, pine and junipers
25% off

November 1 - 15

Ground Covers

Kinnickinnick, ivy, juniper, salal, Cotoneaster, Vinca, Pachysandra and Euonymous
25% off

November 16 – 30

Camellias

Winter and Spring flowering Camellias in bud or bloom
1-gallon to 5-gallon sizes
20% off

October 19 – November 1

Hedging Sale

laurel, boxwood, photinia, Japanese holly, Leyland cypress, privet and arborvitae
25% off

November 2 - 30

Roses

end-of-season sale
many varieties still available
50% off

December 1 - 31

Christmas Holly

(1-gallon to 6-foot sizes)
20% off

Christmas Hellebore (in bloom!)

20% off

Stay in Touch

Website: www.christiansonsnursery.com

Garden Notes: Our monthly emailed newsletter
<http://www.christiansonsnursery.com/whats-happening/newsletters/>

Facebook: Like us on our website

Pinterest: <http://www.pinterest.com/primrosegifts>

Weekly Radio Broadcast

The Garden Show

Sunday Mornings

With John & Mike

AM 660 KAPS • 10:30 a.m.

CLASSES & EVENTS

Saturday, October 3

Water Conservation 11 a.m. – noon
Fresh Cider Pressing 12:30 – 2 p.m.

Saturday, October 10

Adapting Japanese Design Traditions for Your Garden
11 a.m. – noon

Saturday, October 17

Hedgerows and Habitats 11 a.m. - noon

Saturday, October 24

Digging, Dividing and Storing Dahlias Made Easy
11 a.m. – noon
Fall Color Walk With John Christianson 1-2 p.m.

Saturday, October 31

Winterizing Houseplants 11 a.m. - noon

Saturday & Sunday, November 7 - 8

Arts Alive! & Holiday Open House

Saturday, November 14

Rocks & Plants in Japanese Gardens 11 a.m. - noon
Conifer Walk 1-2 p.m.

Saturday, November 21

Rosehip Wreath-Making Workshop 1 – 2:30 p.m.

Saturday, November 28

Arrival of Father Christmas 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Holiday Wreath-Making Classes 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Twentieth Annual Holiday Tea noon – 5 p.m.

December 1 – 24

Independent Wreath-Making 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. daily

Saturday, December 5

Swans of the Skagit 11:00 a.m. – noon

Saturday, December 12

Snow Geese of the Skagit 11:00 a.m. – noon

Fall Hours
Daily 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Beginning November 1
Open until 5 p.m.

From Bellingham: Take EXIT 230. Go 5 miles west on Hwy. 20 to Best Road. Turn left. Head south past the roundabout. Nursery is on the right.
From Everett: Take Exit 221, go over I-5 and take the first right at Fir Island roundabout (Conway). Head 8.5 miles, cross river to Best Road. Continue North on Best Road. Nursery is 1 mile north of the Chilberg Road intersection.



CHRISTIANSON'S
Nursery & Greenhouse
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www.christiansonsnursery.com

360-466-3821 • 1-800-585-8200