



NORTHWEST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

GARDENnotes
AUTUMN 2020



Parthenocissus henryana
Photo by Richie Steffen

Garden Greek for Garden Geeks

Words & Images by Daniel Sparler



Callicarpa bodinieri var. *giraldii* 'Profusion'

INCIPIENT GARDENERS AND VETERAN HORT-HEADS ALIKE have almost certainly, at some point, felt overwhelmed by the often bewildering, seemingly inscrutable polysyllabic nature of scientific binomial nomenclature, aka botanical Latin. These days, vanishingly few plant lovers and growers can boast of having completed a course of Latin in high school or college, which explains much of the frustration many of us express when confronting this necessary but formidable reality. While sighing, crying or swearing may provide temporary relief, a more edifying approach can be employed—even in small doses—with a spoonful of study.

For the purposes of this article we shall consider only the generic (genus level) names of plants. It may come as a surprise, if not a consolation, to learn that a whopping proportion of lexical elements in botanical nomenclature is not even of Latin origin. Many generic names honor a person, either real (as in *Fuchsia*, *Lewisia*, *Magnolia*) or mythological (*Iris*, *Narcissus*, *Euphorbia*). However, the plurality—if not an outright

majority—of generic names originates in **Greek**, although these are treated grammatically as Latin and are subject to minor spelling changes so that they conform with the latter's rules. These generic names in one way or another are descriptive, sometimes in an obscure way that only a professional botanist could love, although others are straightforward and helpful to us ordinary mortals. Let's consider a few **Greek-derived names** in the latter category, those of several of our most commonly grown and beloved plants, with the aim of learning patterns that can help us better appreciate them—and more easily remember their names—as well as lower our levels of stress.

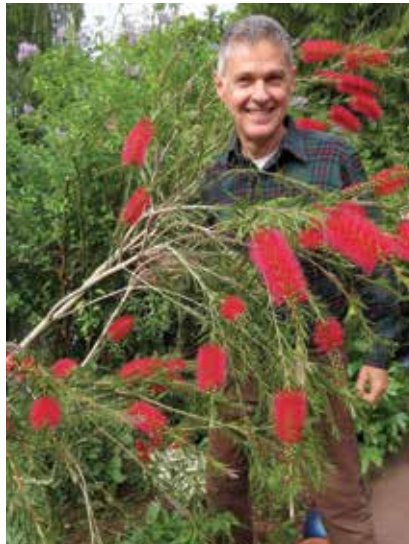


Acanthus mollis 'Hollard's Gold'

Let's begin softly with the tried and true ***Rhododendron*** (rhōdōn = "rose" + dēndrōn = "tree"), which is refreshingly self-explanatory. Back in the day, the Greeks themselves used this exact term, although they applied it to the pinkish red oleander shrub.

What could be a more appropriate topic

for this lesson than the Greek term *anthōs*, which means “flower”? We see this in the alluring tropical *Anthurium* (*anthōs* + *oura*), the latter component meaning “tail,” a description of the prominent, cylindrical spadix that emerges from the shiny spathe. More commonly *anthōs* is found in word terminal position as in *Agapanthus* (*agape* = “love”; the plant is thought to have aphrodisiacal properties), *Galanthus* (*gala* = milk; an allusion to snowdrops’ white color), *Helianthus* (*hēlios* = “sun”; put the two together and you get, you guessed it, “sunflower”), *Melianthus* (*mēli* = “honey”; you can actually see the delicious nectar trickle down the tall floral stalk), *Osmanthus* (*ōsmē* = “fragrance”; almost all species offer this appealing quality), and *Miscanthus* (*miskos* = “stem”; the silvergrass inflorescence rides high atop the tall stems). A variant of *anthōs* is *anthēmōn*, as seen in *Chrysanthemum* (*chrysos* = “gold”; or together, “golden flower”) and the Shasta daisy’s *Leucanthemum* (*leukos* = “white”).



Callistemon and the author

We should note that the similarly spelled, spiny *Acanthus* has a different derivation: (*akantha* = “thorn”), which is also found in *Pyracantha* (*pyr* = “fire”; a reference to the shrub’s flame-colored berries as well as its wicked thorns).

Who among us is not drawn, moth-like, to pretty things that brighten our days, if not our nights? Such are reflected in *Callicarpa* (*kalli-* = “beautiful” + *karpōs* = “fruit”; aka Japanese beautyberry) and *Callistemon* (*kalli-* + *stēmōn* = stamens; this refers to the sumptuous, generally red bottlebrush blossoms of these Australian natives). In word-terminal position we have the same concept in the classic, yet ephemeral daylily, *Hemerocallis* (*hēmēra* = “day” + *kallōs* = “beauty”).



Hemerocallis ‘Apple Tart’

In a similarly positive vein are plants that begin with the prefix *eu-*, meaning “good.” Among common plants that we grow in the Pacific Northwest, the best example of this root word is *Eucomis* (*eu* + *kōmē* = “hair”; if you’ve grown these, you are well aware of their “good hair,” that is, the attractive tuft of

leaves atop the pineapple-like inflorescence). More obscure and mysterious are *Eucryphia* (*kryphiōs* = “covered”; the sepals of the buds on these fragrant, summer-flowering white-blossomed trees cohere at the tips before opening), and *Eucalyptus* (*kalyptō* = “to cover with a lid”; the calyx and petals form a lid over the stamens that is shed when the flower opens).

To round out this brief lesson on an even higher point, let’s ascend to the acme of excellence with a reference from the *Princeps botanicorum*, the Prince of Botanists himself, Carl Linnaeus, the father of modern taxonomy. In 1760, in order to distinguish the regal grouping of American succulent century plants from African and Asian aloes, Linnaeus coined the term *Agave* from the Greek word *agauōs* for “illustrious, noble and admirable.” These accolades refer both to the handsome, architectural and geometrically perfect basal rosette of leaves as well as to an agave’s breathtaking tower of power, the candelabra-like peduncle of flowers the plant shoots skyward in a final blaze of glory prior to death.

Feeling exhilarated, but exhausted, at the end of this lesson? If so, you’ve earned a reward. How about a chocolate treat? When the botanical source of this deliciousness, the Mesoamerican cacao tree, came up for classification by Linnaeus in 1753, he refused to accept the Mayan term as the generic name and instead coined *Theobroma* (*thēōs* = “a god” + *brōma* = “food”), an assuredly poetic, if somewhat condescending assessment. To his credit, he did retain “cacao” as the specific epithet, and to this day the divine “dendron” that sources our chocolate is known as *Theobroma cacao*. On that note, we wish you all an Olympian gardening experience. May Athena smile on your endeavors. ∞

Daniel Sparler is a retired teacher and NHS board member plus he has taught a popular botanical Latin class for NHS.

The Edges of a Garden

Words & Images by Jonathan Hallet (unless otherwise noted)

IT WAS A LUMPY IVY MONOCULTURE GARDEN that made me feel something more than the rest. I hesitate to include the picture because it will likely cause you to question my judgement. Alas, judge away! This garden had what few others in its neighborhood did — a quality of seamlessness, a candid moment of urban nature letting its hair down. It was a break from a more Northwest-typical patchwork of lawn, curvy path, and shrubby perennial borders, all smooshed into a small lot. My eyes could rest here.

Gardens have a lot of edges within and around them and, to me, the success of a garden depends significantly on how its edges are arranged and resolved. Let's start with Merriam-Webster's most apt definition for "edge" which is "the line where an object or area begins or ends." Another tempting (and too often fitting for many a garden) definition is "the threshold of danger or ruin." A garden itself is an edge, mediating a house and whatever is beyond. Gardens also contain edges, some inherent, and some that we add. An inherent edge is, for example, the transition from a low boggy area to a higher sunny area. Edges we

add include lawns, paths, planting beds, structures and walls. Architects must design houses with edges that provide not only transitions, but also structural integrity, which forces careful planning. In a garden, where there are fewer structural and functional constraints, it's easy for

things to get a bit lax.

Whether or not there was a plan to begin with, things tend to accumulate over time - a path to a new seating area or a planting bed to accommodate purchases made during a spontaneous nursery visit.

As we layer more and more elements into the garden, it begins to look crazy, and we wonder why. These additional edges create visual noise that muddy the garden's structure (or intentional lack of structure). The garden may become confusing to navigate, and beautiful garden moments can lose their impact when there's too much to take in.



The garden, a green monster, considers eating the house.



Here a path cuts through a spontaneous-feeling seeded planting. It looks like the angular path was cut through pre-existing wildness, and that contrast heightens the appearance of natural exuberance. 'Merton Borders' by James Hitchmough in the Oxford Botanic Garden.

Nature always wins the "Who Wore it Better" contest when it comes to edges. You never feel in nature like, "Oh, this looks too busy." And much of this comes down to edges. There is a natural logic to everything that lends visual coherence. Changes in geology and climate correspond with the plants you'll find growing in the wild. On a wet north-facing slope, you might find a mossy forest. Water percolates through, gathering downslope in a stream; and, there in the marshy land created, you find more riparian plants. You round the slope to a western aspect and start to see



A diaphanous edge between wild and garden – where is the garden vs. nature? Garden design by Story Wiggins at Terremoto. Photo by Caitlin Atkinson.

drier plants and more bare earth. This creates a gradual edge. But, natural edges can also be abrupt, like at a cliff-edge or between a forest and an adjacent meadow. Recommended homework: go to a place in nature, preferably not human-designed, and look for edges and how they work.

So, how can we apply more visual logic to garden edges? First, cut the clutter. Minimize edges, delete what you don't need, and make multiple things happen along one edge. The remaining edges can help express a garden's story. One timeless story to engage in is the relationship of the built world to nature. Which is dominant? What is the dynamic? Is nature the almighty force that your house is settled in? Is nature rushing up from the borders and consuming the house, like an Olson-Kundig moment? Or, is the garden a complement to the architecture, repeating and extending architectural

lines into the landscape, like at the iconic modernist Miller Garden in Columbus, Indiana, designed by Dan Kiley.

A hard edge softened by wild plantings, might appear as architecture carved out from a pre-existing natural setting. Whereas a straight path lined with rows of plantings will express a more architecture-centric story. Having some sort of conversation between the built and natu-

ral helps resolve and settle the inherent complexity of a garden—and your edges are where this story will be most explicitly told. The Bloedel Reserve famously blends its edges with the surrounding forests so that it's unclear where the garden begins. Native species from the forest are repeated in the garden, blurring the borders. It makes the already large garden feel limitless.



Edgelessness - A gravel ground plane allows for free planting and circulation without the conspicuous edges of paths, for a limitless and spontaneous feel. Garden design and photo by Story Wiggins at Terremoto.

Gardens are a unique medium, a conversation connecting you, architecture and nature. The conversation begins with the design, but it doesn't stop there. Listen to where in your garden the story is strong and where it is fuzzy. Pull the narrative along and across edges. You can tell a story through how you treat your edges, and it's up to you what that dynamic is. ∞

Jonathan Hallet is a Seattle-based landscape architect and his practice, Beautifier, aims to make gardens with feelings. www.beautifier.us



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Words by Daniel Mount & Images by Richie Steffen

PORTLAND IS STARTING TO FEEL LIKE A FAR-OFF EXOTIC locale these days.

Yet, when I visited in March, it felt so close. I had a lot of time to kill that day. After touring the Japanese garden, which always transports me away from the day-to-day world like none other, I popped over to the nearby Hoyt Arboretum to look for signs of spring. Maybe an early cherry or the gaudy sunshine of a forsythia would be blooming.

Unfortunately, it was a cold and windy day, spitting all the time and totally unpleasant. So, I hung close to the visitor's center, enjoying the alpine rock garden where I came upon a small Wollemi pine (*Wollemia nobilis*). It was the first time I saw this strange, other-worldly conifer from Down Under, though there are four in our own Washington Park Arboretum.

Wollemia is in the Araucariaceae or Kauri-tree family; it is also one of the rarest trees on the planet. When it was discovered in 1994 in a shady canyon deep in Wollemi National Park northwest of Sydney, Australia, it was considered the "Botanical Find of the Century." Up to that point, it had only been known from 90-million-year-old fossils and from sites as far afield as Antarctica and New Zealand. The location of the living population, about 40 adults and 200 seedlings, is kept highly secret for fear of poachers or the introduction of disease. The fires that ravaged Australia in the summer of 2019/20 nearly took out the small population, save for a heroic fire-fighting effort. They remain the only patch of green in a charred landscape. Since its discovery, it has been propagated and distributed around the world which might be what saves it from certain extinction.

The strange name *Wollemia* does not come from someone named Wollem, like you might expect of a generic name ending in *-ia*. Remember *Fuchsia* comes from Fuchs and *Dahlia* from

Dahl. But *Wollemia* comes from the Aboriginal word "wollemi"—also the name of the park where they are found—which means "look around you, keep your eyes open, and watch out." A particularly fitting name for a tree listed as critically endangered.



Wollemia nobilis

And, it would be easy to see how this venerable living fossil might have earned the specific epithet of *nobilis*, meaning "notable," "celebrated" or "noble." There are a good dozen or more plants with this "noble" epithet. You probably recognize *Laurus nobilis*, the bay laurel, which was used to crown victors of battle or poets in ancient Greece. Or, the more diminutive *Hepatica nobilis*. I can only speculate where the nobleness of hepaticas lies: In their early flowering? Their tough nature? Or, their once-believed liver-healing properties?

Wollemia, as it turns out it, was discovered by a National Parks service agent named David Noble, so the name honors the discoverer this time. From the pictures I can find of mature specimens on the web, it does have a rather noble profile at maturity, akin to its close relatives, the monkey puzzle tree (*Araucaria araucana*) and the Norfolk Island pine (*A. heterophylla*). It has already entered the cannon of must-have rare plants for botanical gardens and private collectors alike.

Yet, you probably won't be able to pick one up at Home Depot for a few more decades. Still, they are available. I'm going to order one; it seems a noble act to try to increase this rarity's range.

And, of course, it would be nice to have a little bit of exotic Australia in my own backyard, since I won't be traveling there, or even Portland, for a while. ☺

Daniel Mount is a former NHS board member and a frequent contributor to GardenNotes and other publications. You can read his blog at mountgardens.com.

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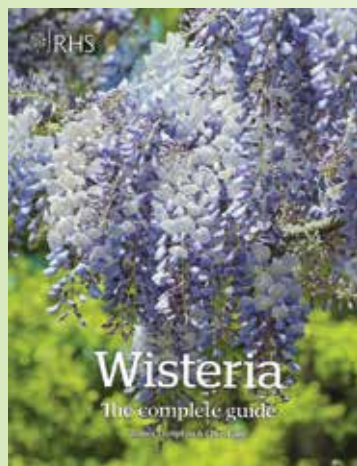
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LITERARY NOTES

from the Miller Library

by Brian Thompson

WHEN I WAS NINE, our family moved to a new home in the Sammamish Valley that included a wonderful, if somewhat overgrown, garden that fostered my interest in horticulture. Near the back door, plopped in the middle of the lawn, was a strange, dense thicket of a plant that was a perfect place to hide, mere feet from where my mother was calling for me.



It was some time before I learned this monstrous green blob was a wisteria, left to its own devices with nothing to climb up. The new book, *Wisteria: The Complete Guide* by James Compton and Chris Lane, has enlightened me that wisteria can indeed be grown in a pleasing, shrubby form but only with careful pruning that the specimen of my childhood never received.

Of course, wisteria are much better known as climbing vines magnificently draping from buildings, arbors, or even large trees. This book walks you through the many selections available with excellent photographs to distinguish the many close shades of blue, lavender, and purple; and, it will help you manage one of these labor intensive, but oh-so-spectacular prima donnas.

This is the third in a series of excellent Royal Horticultural Society monographs on garden-worthy genera; and, like the other titles, the natural history and environmental niche of the plants are extensively examined. “As befits a vigorous and twining climber, *Wisteria* has a rather tortuous taxonomic history” and includes, as principle players, the great Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus and Thomas Nuttall after whom *Cornus nuttallii*, the Pacific dogwood, is named.

The cultural history of wisteria, especially in China and Japan, is another highlight while other chapters profile spectacular specimens – they can live for hundreds of years – from around the world. There is one notable example in Sierra Madre, California. Planted in 1894, it “took over the house it was originally planted on and now spreads through the gardens of two neighbouring houses.” It covers about 1.25 acres and “has entered the Guinness Book of World Records as the largest blossoming plant.” I never realized the peril that threatened my childhood home! 🌸

Brian Thompson is the manager and curator of horticultural literature for the Elisabeth C. Miller Library.

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A VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM

GARDENING FOR THE FUTURE: Diversity and Ecology in the Urban Landscape

Recorded lectures available October 8th – 16th

Live Panel discussion, Saturday, October 17th, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM



The Virtual Symposium begins on October 8 with links available to the 5 recorded lectures. On Saturday, October 17 from 10:00 AM to 12:00PM there will be a live panel discussion via Zoom Webinar.

Price: Members: \$50.00, Non-members: \$70.00

As gardeners, we know that diversity in our gardens is the key to a healthy ecosystem in our neighborhoods. It is not a leap to say the same for our society. Join us for a day of dynamic and thought provoking lectures that explore these relationships. This fresh take on horticulture in our region is designed to challenge our traditional views and expand the way we view our gardens and the world we garden in.

This year's virtual symposium will include five recorded lectures and a live panel discussion with the five speakers.



Ross Bayton

*From Scotland to Seattle:
Making the Most of
Maritime Gardens*



Wambui Ippolito

*Immigrant Gardens &
Their Socio-ecological
Impact*



Abra Lee

*African-Americans
and Ornamental
Horticulture*



Riz Reyes

*The Northwest's Asian
Gardeners*



Cleve West

*The Garden of Vegan:
How Plants can Save the
Animals, the Planet and
Our Health*

On October 8, 2020 as a symposium registrant you will receive an email with links to recordings of the five symposium lectures below to view at your convenience prior to the panel discussion on October 17, 2020 at 10:00 AM. There will also be a link for you to submit questions for the live panel discussion with all five speakers. To allow the moderator to be prepared, it may not be possible to include questions received after October 14.

When you register you will receive the link for the live Zoom webinar panel discussion on Saturday, October 17 10:00 AM 12:00 PM. In addition, the week following the panel discussion registrants will receive a recording of the panel discussion session.



CHOICE BLUEBERRIES, BILBERRIES, HUCKLEBERRIES AND WHORTLEBERRIES

Words & Images by Richie Steffen (unless otherwise noted)

Vaccinium ovatum – fruit

BLUEBERRIES HAVE LONG BEEN A TRADITIONAL CROP to grow in the Pacific Northwest. Not only are they delicious, but they have brilliant fall color and red stems adding a bright note to the winter landscape. But what is a blueberry? What we typically think of as a blueberry in the Northwest is a selection or hybrid of the species *Vaccinium corymbosum*, northern highbush blueberry. Even though these have many ornamental features, the irregular and often leggy plant habit leaves much to be desired in the landscape. The genus *Vaccinium* can be found around the world through hundreds of species from tropical climates to the Arctic Circle. In this article, I will look at our native species and a handful of other species that can be found in nurseries with some searching.

In North America, there are about 25 species with several different species making up the commercial blueberry crop along with many selections and hybrids to suit the various climates of our

large continent. The Pacific Northwest is home to 10 native species. Most are found at mid- and higher elevations in the Cascade and Olympic Mountains along with a few lowland species that can be very useful in our landscapes. The two most widely encountered in our gardens are *Vaccinium ovatum*, evergreen huckleberry, and *Vaccinium parvifolium*, red huckleberry.

Evergreen huckleberry is a stellar ornamental native, and its beauty and adaptability have made it a popular choice for our gardens. Red huckleberry, also well loved, is less available in nurseries and more difficult to establish in the garden. For those lucky enough to have it seed in and grow freely, it should be cherished and enjoyed. Evergreen huckleberry can grow in sun or shade and can be quite drought tolerant, but plants grown in full sun do benefit from some additional summer watering. The small leaves are dark green and have a clean delicate appearance. In spring, the new growth can range from soft reddish bronze to flaming



Vaccinium ovatum - flowers



Vaccinium membranaceum –
Wikipedia Commons – Katja Schulz



Vaccinium parvifolium –
Wikipedia Commons – Walter Siegmund

orange tinted red with the best color always with some sun. The pink blushed white flowers are subtle in bloom, typically producing an abundance of blackish purple berries that can either be shiny or covered in a glaucous blue bloom. The ripe berries are tasty and enjoyed by wildlife and people alike. There are several cultivars selected for superior fruit, but they are rarely available and often difficult to distinguish from a nice seedling of the regular species. A few dwarf forms have been found over the years with the latest being the recently introduced cultivar *Vaccinium ovatum* 'Vacsid1' SCARLET OVATION™. This compact grower is supposed to stay around 3 feet tall and wide with scarlet new growth.

Red huckleberry will also tolerate sun or shade. In the shade, stems are bright green and are a showy addition to the winter landscape; in sun, they can range from bright green or deep burgundy creating a striking display. The pea-sized alizarin crimson berries are dotted across the bush in mid- to later summer and are hard to miss. A painter's touch to the summer garden! A rare white berried form was found in the garden of the accomplished plantswoman, the late Rae Berry of Portland, Oregon. This unique form is occasionally found in the gardens of savvy collectors (yes, we are growing it at the Miller Garden) and is a treasured gem that must be grown in rotted stumps or logs for it to survive.

Another very important *Vaccinium* of the West is *Vaccinium membranaceum*, given multiple common names: mountain huckleberry, tall huckleberry or thin leaf huckleberry. But where

it is commonly picked, it is simply known as the huckleberry. Mostly harvested from the wild for commercial use, this delicious, tart and sweet, and intensely flavored juicy berry puts the occasionally bland *V. corymbosum* to shame (high-bush blueberry of the Eastern US). Although *V. membranaceum* does occur in the Cascade Mountains, its popularity lies in the colder Western states of Idaho, Montana, and Colorado as well as Canada. This berry is so popular that it has been proclaimed the state fruit of Idaho. In the garden, it is slow-growing and resembles a smaller fruited blueberry bush. It is best for the wilder garden due to its irregular growth habit and twiggy branching. It does have beautiful fall color in shades of red and orange.



Vaccinium deliciosum – Mt. Rainier National Park, Washington

Some of our other natives in the genus *Vaccinium* can be appealing, but sometimes challenging additions to our gardens. The two easiest are *Vaccinium ovalifolium*, Alaska blueberry and *V. uliginosum*, bog bilberry.

Alaska blueberry can be found in the Pacific Northwest, over much of Canada and, of course, Alaska. Appearing much like a smaller and more compact version of the cultivated blueberry, plants can have a pleasing layered branching pattern. We have an old plant of this at the Miller Garden. It is not the loveliest plant, probably from being in too much shade, but has a certain charm to it none-the-less. The low and mounding bog bilberry *V. uliginosum* has beautiful blue-green foliage and great fall color. This wide-ranging plant is found in New England, the Western United States, most of Canada and into Alaska as well as northern Eurasia from Japan to Spain. Grow this in half day sun to full



Vaccinium ovalifolium –
Wikimedia Commons – Walter Siegmund



Vaccinium scoparium –
Eagle Cap Wilderness, Oregon



Vaccinium arctostaphylos

sun for the best and most compact growth. It can look a bit wild, but the birds will love the fruit!

Not as easy to grow are the native high elevation dwarf species, *Vaccinium caespitosum* (dwarf bilberry), *V. myrtillus*, (bilberry), *V. deliciosum* (Cascade bilberry or Cascade blueberry), and *V. scoparium* (grouseberry or littleleaf huckleberry). These are quite endearing in the wild, forming charming colonies as low, compact shrubs. Expect them to be very slow in cultivation. They are best tried using alpine plant conditions such as giving them gritty, well-drained soil with some coarse organic matter mixed in. These plants do not like to dry out and do not like hot sun, so plan to water regularly during dry weather.

A more cultivatable dwarf blueberry would be the Eastern North American species *Vaccinium angustifolium*, the lowbush blueberry. There are several selections that are widely available and can easily be cultivated as a one to two feet tall shrub in the garden. As an added bonus, the fruit on this species is born in abundance and is tart and tasty.

I think two of the most interesting *Vaccinium* of Europe are large growing species from the southern part of the continent: *Vaccinium arctostaphylos*, Caucasian whortleberry and *V. padifolium*, Maderian blueberry. The first can be found in the Caucasus Mountains of Georgia and the Pontic Alps of northeastern Turkey. Caucasian whortleberry is a deciduous species with long lasting flaming red autumn color. This shrub can grow to 5 to 6 feet tall over time and has a gracefully layered branching pattern. Rare and hard to find, it is worth seeking out. The Maderian blueberry is endemic to the islands of Madeira and Porto Santo,

Portugal and can be marginally hardy for the maritime Pacific Northwest. It is best grown in a sheltered location in open shade to morning sun in rich, well-drained soil with regular watering during summer. This evergreen species has large edible berries that are tasty, but seedy. Over time, this shrub can reach 5 to 6 feet tall.



Vaccinium uliginosum –
Wikimedia Commons – Florian Grossir

There are several Asian species that would be interesting in the garden, but only a few of these are readily available from nurseries; of these, all are evergreen. The tiny leaves of *Vaccinium delavayi*, Delavay's blueberry, *V. moupinense*, Himalayan blueberry and *V. nummularia*, coin whortleberry or Himalayan whortleberry are quite attractive. All of these thrive best in open shade to morning sun with sandy rich soil and regular watering. *V. delavayi* is low and compact, generally staying under 12 inches tall and forms a mounding spreading shrub. *V. moupinense* grows slightly higher to about 2 feet tall and stays more compact, only spread-

ing to about 2 to 3 feet. Both have clusters of tiny white flowers, but the fruit production on both species is disappointing in our region. *V. moupinense* does have bronzy new growth which can be quite attractive. The small leaves of *V. nummularia* are dark green and shiny and quite eye catching. The flowers are also quite attractive even though they are small in size. The blooms are in clusters with each flower being a candy colored reddish pink and white. The flowers are often complimented with bronzy red new growth. Unfortunately, this species can be a bit tender and should be sited in a protected location with open to bright shade.

One of my favorite Asian species is *Vaccinium glaucoalbum*, gray-white huckleberry or Himalayan huckleberry. This low shrub has



Vaccinium nummularia



Vaccinium glaucoalbum



Vaccinium 'Sunshine Blue'

rounded leaves that are larger than most species of *Vaccinium* and reminds one more of salal than a blueberry. What is so unusual about this plant is the color of the leaves; the new growth emerges a chalky pale blue-green and matures to a soft blue-green. This is complimented by its lovely pink blushed white flowers and the powder blue berries later in summer. These handsome evergreen shrubs can be slow to harden off in the fall, making it occasionally prone to winter damage, but it is well worth the effort to cultivate.

The popularity of some complex hybrids has increased over the years because they combine beauty in the landscape with a tasty larger berry. One of the first hybrids to become commonly used is the Great Plant Picks selection, *Vaccinium* 'Sunshine Blue'. This somewhat compact grower has semi-evergreen foliage with an attractive blue cast. The new growth is especially a bright pale blue and in the fall and winter purple and red tones add to the garden interest. In early to mid-summer abundant blueberries cover 'Sunshine Blue' and, based on personal experience, they are quite delicious! With the success of 'Sunshine Blue', other hybrids have followed including cultivars with unusually colored pink berries!

Vaccinium 'Pink Lemonade' was the first of the pink-berried "blueberries" to be introduced. Bred at the Philip E. Marucci Center for Blueberry and Cranberry Research and Extension in Chatsworth, New Jersey by Mark K. Ehlenfeldt, it used mostly southern North American species in the crosses. Although we can grow it in the Northwest, it can be slow and not show much vigor. *Vaccinium* 'MNPINK1' PINK POPCORN™ is a recent introduction and was developed in Minnesota with much greater

hardiness and better vigor for northern climates. Whereas 'Pink Lemonade' is evergreen to semi-evergreen, PINK POPCORN™

is deciduous with great maroon autumn color. PINK POPCORN™ is a hybrid between the highbush blueberry, *V. corymbosum*, and the lowbush blueberry, *V. angustifolium*, creating a moderately upright growing shrub that will mature at around 4 feet tall with a slightly wider spread. I have not tasted the fruit, but friends who have grown it commented on its good blueberry flavor.



Vaccinium padifolium – Wikimedia Commons – Omar Hoftun

A new hybrid I saw for the first time last year as small plants is *Vaccinium* 'VacBri1' CABERNET SPLASH. An unusual branch sport from the popular blueberry cultivar *V. corymbosum* 'Toro' showed dark purple new growth that became a mottled purple and green as it matured. Discovered at Briggs Nursery, a wholesale nursery in Elma, Washington, this cultivar should bear the same enjoyable fruit as 'Toro' but on a

colorful shrub. I hope to see this at local nurseries in the spring of 2021 and look forward to adding it to the garden.

Of course, there are many more *Vaccinium* than this that are garden worthy. This is only a great place to start and expand beyond the common fruit bearing selections. I hope you try a few of these species and cultivars and find a few I missed to add to your garden. ☺

Richie Steffen is Executive Director of the Elisabeth C. Miller Botanical Garden and a board member of NHS.



Thank you to our patrons. The Lecture Series would not be possible without the tremendous support of our patrons. Their generosity helps NHS provide an outstanding educational program for Northwest gardeners. In light of the current events limiting gatherings, these generous contributions allow NHS to explore and implement new options and forums for the dissemination of horticultural information. Thanks for you continued support!

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President's Message



Dear NHS Members,

Autumn is undoubtedly my favorite time of year. It is a time to enjoy and relax in the garden before the leaves are falling, collect seeds, and enjoy the bounty of all our hard work. Autumn for me is also a time for personal reflection which is something I know everyone has been doing a lot this year. This year, of course, is not like most and probably one of the most challenging many of us have encountered in our lives. We will get through this together. This year is most definitely a time for looking forward to the new year for ourselves, our gardens, and our futures. I have mentioned before, gardeners are eternal optimists that keep gardening, try new plants, and handle adversity in stride. I am encouraged by the words of a good friend who has told me many times: "One must try a plant in three different locations in one's garden before one can truly say one cannot grow it!" I keep that thought in mind as I reflect on our new digital offerings that the NHS has produced so far. I am proud of the new programming we have accomplished in a short amount of time. I know from the volume of attendees

at our virtual events that you are as well. We most certainly are tackling the new challenges our organization faces while creating quality content for our new adventure into online programming.

An important part of our organization's mission is to educate about and promote horticulture. With that in mind, I am excited to announce a great autumn line-up. On September 30th, Dan Hinkley will give a talk about his new book *Windcliff: A Story of People, Plants, and Gardens*, a fundraising collaboration with Heronswood. As mentioned before, our delayed spring symposium is now a reality. The timely and relevant topic of *Gardening for the Future: Diversity and Ecology in the Urban Landscape* will be available starting October 8th as a pre-recorded lecture series (watch on your own schedule!), culminating in a live panel discussion on Saturday, October 17th. We will continue to offer our lecture series, educational webinars, and virtual events online, available to members and non-members. Please watch for emails from NHS with updated information about our expanded offerings or visit the NHS website. I hope you will join us for those events.

Thank you all again for whole-heartedly embracing our new adventure into digital programming. Please be patient as these events require an additional layer of technology which, in turn, take a little longer to produce. Not all our in-person events translate into the digital world and we are experimenting with new and different offerings that we hope you will enjoy. As I have mentioned to our board members, we are basically starting a production company from scratch and it takes time, energy, and financial support to accomplish great programming. If your membership has expired, please renew it. If you are not a member yet, please join; and, if you are at all interested in volunteering to help produce online content, please contact us.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, be safe and be strong and we will get through this together. ☺

Happy Gardening,

Jason Jorgensen
NHS President

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“Gardening is a metaphor for life, teaching you to nourish new life and weed out that which cannot succeed.”

— Nelson Mandela

Rhus trichocarpa
Photo by Richie Steffen