



NORTHWEST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

GARDENnotes
WINTER 2020



Iris unguicularis
Photo by Richie Steffen

2020 Spring Symposium

GARDENING for the FUTURE

Diversity and Ecology in the Urban Landscape

Words and photos by Richie Steffen

AS GARDENERS, WE RECOGNIZE THAT what we create through our plantings is enjoyed by more than just ourselves. Many of us started gardening for the beauty, fun and the challenges of growing plants, but the end result is so much more and often has a greater impact on our surrounding environment and community. Many studies have proven that urban gardens provide essential habitat for wildlife and can serve as an oasis for pollinators.

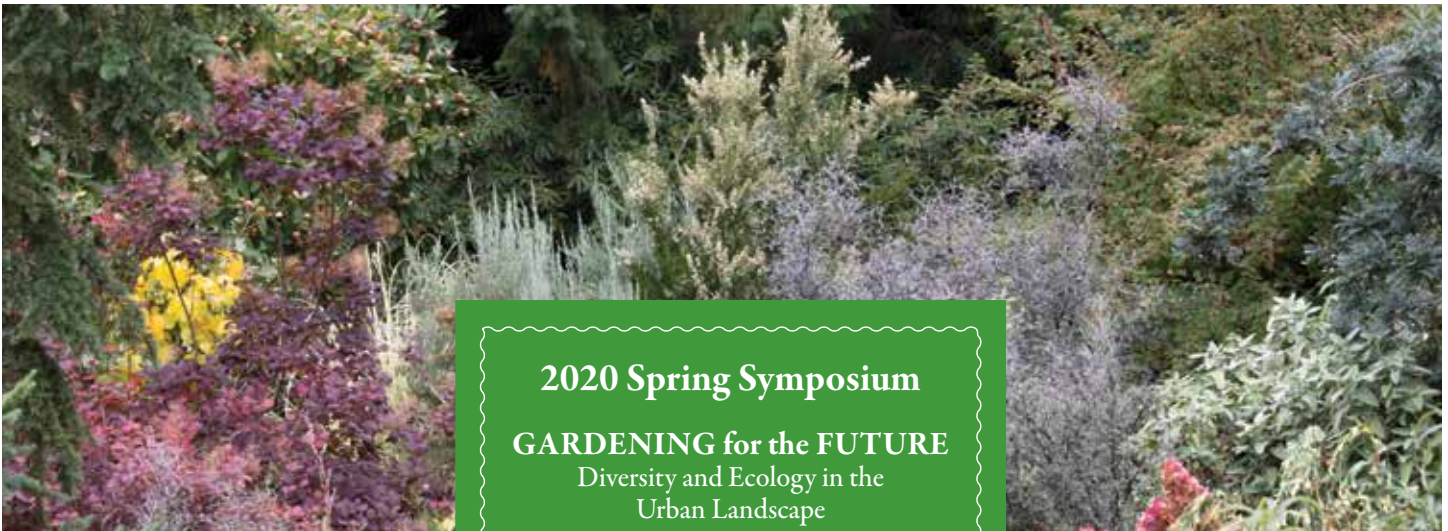
There is little doubt that gardening has a positive influence on the urban landscape. There is also little doubt on the benefits of gardening on society. Gardening can cut through social barriers and bring communities together. Plants can link generations together; who doesn't know of someone with grandma's daylily or an African violet that has been passed from family member to family member.

NHS has long recognized this and has provided grants to community gardening programs like GruB (Garden-Raised Bounty) or the Seattle Children's PlayGarden. Looking at our impact in the world and how we can make a difference in

our community is the goal of this year's NHS spring symposium, *Gardening for the Future: Diversity and Ecology in the Urban Landscape*. Our speakers represent a view of our gardens through a holistic vision, social politics, environmental impact and, of course, floral richness.

Diana Beresford-Kroeger is an Irish botanist, medical biochemist and author of several books including her newly released *To Speak for the Trees: My Life's Journey from Ancient Celtic Wisdom to a Healing Vision of the Forest* which will be the focus of her lecture. Beresford-Kroeger embarked on a change in her life's work in the early 1980's beginning with an expansion of her private research garden and arboretum, Carrigliath. Rooted in her experiences and research at Carrigliath, she has published over 200 articles and five books on nature and gardening. Recognizing that the scientific community lacked the ability to present research in an effective manner and seeing an absence in addressing the degradation of nature, Beresford-Kroeger embarked on a career in





writing, broadcasting and lecturing.

Our gardens are nothing without the plants. Ross Bayton, botanist and taxonomist for Heronswood Garden, will be sharing his vast knowledge in his lecture, *From Scotland to Seattle: Making the Most of Maritime Gardens*. Bayton has become a familiar face in the local plant community showing a tremendous passion for the plants we can grow. Using his experiences both from the United Kingdom and the Pacific Northwest, an array of plants will be presented that will thrive in our changing climate.

Today's botanic gardens and arboreta offer physical, mental and social benefits for everyone, regardless of race or ethnicity. However, despite efforts to racially diversify, public garden staff and visitors remain overwhelmingly white. Eve Rickenbaker, NHS board member, collection manager of the Otis Douglas Hyde Herbarium at the Center for Urban Horticulture and University of Washington PhD student, will speak about her research, *Uprooting the Garden's Past to Understand Racism Today*. Eve will discuss how four centuries of botanical history help us understand the complex connection between African Americans and plants and nature. She will propose that gardens must reconcile with their past before they can fully embrace all communities.

2020 Spring Symposium

GARDENING for the FUTURE

Diversity and Ecology in the
Urban Landscape

Saturday, March 21, 2020

Bastyr University Auditorium

Members: \$85.00 Non-members: \$105.00

Price if paid by January 31, 2020

Members: \$75.00 Non-members: \$95.00

SPEAKERS

ROSS BAYTON

Botanist, Heronswood Garden

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

DIANA BERESFORD-KROEGER

Irish Botanist, Medical Biochemist and
Author

*To Speak for the Trees: My Life's Journey from
Ancient Celtic Wisdom to a Healing Vision
of the Forest*

EVE RICKENBAKER

Collection Manager of
Otis Douglas Hyde Herbarium

*Uprooting the Garden's Past to Understand
Racism Today*

CLEVE WEST

Garden Designer
The Garden of Vegan

Cleve West, proprietor of the award-winning design studio Cleve West Landscape Design, has recently re-envisioned his way of life and way of business. West has a diverse style ranging from contemporary urban spaces to large country estates. He has created numerous award-winning gardens in both the Chelsea Flower Show and Hampton Court Flower Show. After a complete reevaluation of his way of life, West has refocused his work on creating spaces that minimize environmental impact from design to maintaining the landscape and pledged to live and garden with a vegan lifestyle. He will share his thoughts and the challenges of this change in his lecture which shares the title of his soon to be released book, *The Garden of Vegan*.

We are grateful to the Pendleton and Elisabeth C. Miller Charitable Foundation for providing an educational grant to fund this event. The symposium will be held March 21st, 2020 at Bastyr University in Kirkland, Washington. Registration is already in progress and space is limited so do not

wait to sign up for this exciting and informative event. ☺

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

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Words by Daniel Mount

Hosta plantaginea – Wikipedia Commons

WINTER COMES WITH ITS CHARMS: chilling rains, sodden soils and low light levels. But they don't compare to the sensual pleasures of summer. This time of year, the darkness almost forces me into a waking dream. I dream of summers past, one just months ago and others lurking off in the hazy distance of my youth.

It was a humid Milwaukee evening. Late August shadows settled onto everything as my new love and I jumped the wrought iron fence of Holy Cross Cemetery. We were taking a shortcut through the century-old tombstones on our way to a friend's house when the scent hit us. It lent both a captivating and a sick-

ening sweetness to the hot air. We slowed down to drink it in, then sought its source. Behind a tall granite tombstone, a large plain green hosta with stalks of white flowers like miniature Easter lilies grew. We bent over, our noses right in the flowers, and sucked the delicious scent up.

My new love didn't last, but I will always feel the stirrings of new love in me whenever I smell the fragrance of *Hosta plantaginea*, the fragrant plantain lily.

Hosta plantaginea was the first hosta to reach European gardens. In the 1780s seed was brought from China to the *Jardin des Plantes* in Paris. This fragrant, night-blooming hosta quickly became popular in public gardens and parks throughout the city. It garnered the common name "Parisian funkia" as its cultivation spread rapidly throughout Europe.

The generic name *Hosta* was coined in 1812 to honor Austrian botanist Nicholas Thomas Host, yet didn't get applied officially until 1905. Throughout the 19th century hostas were called *funkia*, for the German botanist Heinrich Christian Funk. It was also lumped in the genus *Hemerocallis* (daylily) for a while. Today, the common name funkia is still used in parts of Europe.

This hosta's specific epithet, *plantaginea*, actually means "like a plantain" — *Plantago*, not the banana. It does look like an oversized version of that common weed.

Because it was the first hosta in Europe, it became the type specimen for the genus, meaning it was used as the template for naming and classifying all other hostas. Yet, it is the most atypical of the hostas.

Japan is the hub of wild hostas. *Hosta plantaginea*, the southernmost member of the genus, is found far from this hub in southern China. It is the only wild hosta with fragrant flowers, which are also the largest in the genus.

In its native China the fragrant plantain lily is known as Yu-san

and in Japan, where it has been grown for centuries, as *Maruba Tama-no-Zashi*, both names meaning "the round-leafed jewel of the hairpin," a rather cryptic name unless one imagines a beautiful Chinese girl with a fragrant white flower tucked into her hair.

Generally, *Hosta plantaginea* is not widely available in the trade so the closest we gardeners can get to having it in our gardens is the cultivar 'Royal Standard', a cross with *H. sieboldiana*. Slightly more robust than the species, it performs better in the north than its heat-loving parent.



Botanical Illustration of *Hosta plantaginea* – Wikipedia Commons

Hosta 'Royal Standard' was the first hosta cultivar to be patented, registered by Wayside Gardens, who bred it in 1965. Luckily for us, the lovely fragrance of *H. plantaginea* has also been bred into many modern cultivars like 'Fragrant Bouquet', 'Guacamole' and 'Fried Green Tomatoes'.

This time of year, I eat a lot of chocolate to give me that tingly sensation of new love. But, I'd much prefer a hot August evening bent over a fragrant plantain lily. ☺

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.



2020 Wednesday Evening Lecture Series

Center for Urban Horticulture

Members: \$5.00 — Non-members \$10.00

Three FREE lectures in this series with membership

January 8, 2020

The New Botanical Experience in Seattle's Future
Waterfront Park

*Richard Hartlage, Landscape Designer and Principal/CEO
of Land Morphology*

*Heidi Hughes, Executive Director, Friends of Waterfront
Seattle*

February 12, 2020

Is it a Zoo or is it a Garden: Tales of Zoological
Horticulture

Bryon Jones, Horticulturist, Point Defiance Zoo

April 8, 2020

The Earth in Her Hands: 75 Extraordinary Women
Working in the World of Plants

*Jennifer Jewell, Founder of Jewellgarden and Host of
Cultivating Place*

May 13, 2020

Out with the Azaleas, in with the Agaves: Remaking a
Portland Garden

*Loree Bobb, Garden writer, Author and Creator of Danger
Garden Blog*

June 3, 2020

Life is Too Short for Boring Plants: The New, Rare, and Just
Plain Weird

Mark Weathington, Director of the JC Raulston Arboretum

October 14, 2020

African-Americans and Ornamental Horticulture

*Abra Lee, Public Horticulturist, 2019-2020 Longwood
Fellow*

November 11, 2020

Garden Treasures from Asia

*Kelly Dodson and Sue Milliken, Proprietors of Far Reaches
Nursery and Founders of Far Reaches Botanical Conservancy*

2020 EVENTS CALENDAR

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER, PLEASE GO TO WWW.NORTHWESTHORT.ORG

Wednesday, January 15, 10:00 AM–12:00 PM

Seeing Color in the Winter Garden

Lorene Edward Forkner

Dunn Gardens

Members: \$35.00 — Non-members: \$45.00

Sunday, January 26, 1:00 PM–3:00 PM

Ferns in Rare & Old Books

Sue Olsen - Brian Thompson

Miller Library, CUH

Members: \$30.00 — Non-members: \$40.00

Sunday, February 9, 1:00 PM–3:00 PM

Winter Arboretum Walk

Ray Larson

Washington Park Arboretum, UWBG

Members: \$30.00 — Non-members: \$40.00

Saturday, March 7, 9:00 AM–3:00 PM

Spring Plant Sale—CUH

Thursday, March 12, 10:00 AM–12:00 PM

Growing Cactus & Succulents

Karen Summers

Volunteer Park Conservatory

Members: \$30.00 — Non-members: \$40.00

Wednesday, March 18, 10:00 AM–12:00 PM

Botanical Latin

Daniel Sparler, Miller Botanical Garden

Members: \$30.00 — Non-members: \$40.00

Saturday, March 21, 9:00 AM–4:00 PM

Spring Symposium

Bastyr University, Kenmore

Saturday, April 4, 10:00 AM–2:00 PM

Tropical Orchids

Michael Cory

Volunteer Park Conservatory

Members: \$30.00 — Non-members: \$40.00

Wednesday, April 15, 10:00 AM–12:00 PM

Seeing Color in the Spring Garden

Lorene Edward Forkner

Dunn Gardens

Members: \$35.00 — Non-members: \$45.00

**Thursday, April 16,
10:00 AM–12:00 PM**
Planting for the Seasons –
Winter to Spring
Richie Steffen, Miller Botanical Garden
Members: \$30.00 — Non-members: \$40.00

**Tuesday, April 21,
10:30 AM–12:30 PM**
Backyard Birds
Keith Geller
Geller Garden, Seattle
Members: \$30.00 — Non-members: \$40.00

**Thursday, April 23,
10:00 AM–12:00 PM**
Fascinating Plants for Shade
Del Brummet
Sabo Garden, Seattle
Members: \$30.00 — Non-members: \$40.00

**Tuesday, April 28,
10:30 AM–3:30 PM**
Meet the Designer
Keith Geller
Gardens in Madison Park & Phinney Ridge
Members: \$60.00 — Non-members: \$80.00

**Wednesday, May 12,
10:00 AM–4:00 PM**
Puyallup to Orting: Four Private Gardens
Members: \$60.00 — Non-members: \$80.00

**Thursday, May 14,
1:00 PM–3:00 PM**
Spring Arboretum Walk
Ray Larson
Washington Park Arboretum, UWBG
Members: \$30.00 – Non-members: \$40.00

**Thursday, May 21,
10:00 AM–12:00 PM**
Rare & Unusual Native Plants
Del Brummet, Miller Botanical Garden
Members: \$30.00 — Non-members: \$40.00

**Saturday, May 30,
10:00 AM–1:30 PM**
Rock Fauxmation Workshop
Justin Galicic, Kruckeberg Garden
Members: \$60.00 — Non-members: \$80.00

**Thursday, June 4,
10:00 AM–12:00 PM**
The Blooming Best of Soos Creek
Botanical Garden
Soos Creek Botanical Garden
Members: \$30.00 – Non-members: \$40.00

**Thursday, June 11,
10:00 AM–12:00 PM**
Planting for the Seasons –
Spring to Summer
Richie Steffen, Miller Botanical Garden
Members: \$30.00 — Non-members: \$40.00

**Wednesday, June 17,
11:00 AM–1:00 PM**
Creating a Garden Masterpiece
Joanne White
White Garden, Redmond
Members: \$30.00 — Non-members: \$40.00

**Thursday, June 25,
10:00 AM–12:00 PM**
Tour of Bainbridge Island Gardens
John van den Meerendonk
Members: \$65.00 — Non-members: \$85.00

**Saturday, June 27,
10:00 AM–12:00 PM**
Making a Garden:
Thirty Years & Going Strong
Clay Antieau
Antieau Garden, Seattle
Members: \$30.00 – Non-members: \$40.00

**Thursday, July 9,
10:00 AM–12:00 PM**
Propagating Plants from Seeds & Cuttings
Del Brummet, Miller Botanical Garden
Members: \$30.00 — Non-members: \$40.00

**Thursday, July 9,
10:00 AM–12:00 PM**
Haute Hydrangeas
Nita-Jo Rountree
Rountree Garden, Bellevue
Members: \$30.00 — Non-members: \$40.00

**Wednesday, July 15,
10:00 AM–12:00 PM**
Four Season Gardening
Denise Lane
Lane Garden, Medina
Members: \$30.00 — Non-members: \$40.00

Sunday, July 19, 6:00 PM
Plant Nerd Night Garden Party
Bellevue Botanical Garden

**Tuesday, July 21,
10:00AM-12:00PM**
Small Suburban Collector's Garden
Mary Ellen Asmundson
Asmundson Garden, Seattle
Members: \$30.00 – Non-members: \$40.00

**Sunday, August 9,
12:00 PM–5:00 PM**
Meet the Board Garden Tour
FREE TO MEMBERS
Bothell – Kirkland – Redmond

**Thursday, August 13
12:00 PM–2:00 PM**
How to Engage Youth in the Garden
Annie Reading
Green Plate Special, Seattle
Members: \$30.00 – Non-members: \$40.00

Friday, September 18, 9:00 AM
Fall Plant Sale–CUH

**Thursday, October 1,
10:00 AM–12:00 PM**
Planting for the Seasons – Fall to Winter
Richie Steffen, Miller Botanical Garden
Members: \$30.00 — Non-members: \$40.00

**Wednesday, October 7,
10:00 AM–12:00 PM**
Seeing Color in the Fall Garden
Lorene Edward Forkner, Dunn Gardens
Members: \$35.00 — Non-members: \$45.00

**Thursday, October 8,
1:00 PM–3:00 PM**
Autumn Arboretum Walk
Ray Larson
Washington Park Arboretum, UWBG
Members: \$30.00 – Non-members: \$40.00

Wednesday, November 11, 6:30 PM
NHS Annual Meeting and Lecture

There will be more events added as 2020 progresses so be sure to check the NHS website often!

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- A full year of membership from the date that you join
- Three FREE lectures in the Wednesday Evening Lecture Series
- A subscription to *Garden Notes*, the quarterly NHS newsletter
- Discount rates on all symposiums, workshops, and classes
- Discount rates on local and regional garden tours
- Exciting volunteer opportunities
- Camaraderie, collegiality and countless new ideas for your garden

Classic & Contemporary Gardens of Normandy and the Loire Valley

September 6 - 17, 2020



Join Thomas Hobbs, Vancouver, BC, plantsman, author and garden designer, and NHS escort Gillian Mathews as we discover some of France's exceptional gardens in Normandy and the Loire Valley. Begin your journey in the lovely village of Chantilly, a perfect spot from which to drive into the verdant countryside of Normandy, stopping first at Monet's famous gardens of Giverny. Make your home base in Rouen, a delightful Norman town. Enjoy daily excursions to an array of different gardens and the charming village of Honfleur. You'll also visit the remarkable Mont St Michel, and stay four nights in the Loire Valley, home to magnificent, royal chateaux and gardens. And we'll visit the International Garden Festival at the Chateau de Chaumont! Join NHS on this remarkable journey that will be the perfect blend of beautiful gardens, historical highlights, culinary specialties and the French *joie de vivre*!

JOURNEY AT A GLANCE

1 Night Chantilly | 4 Nights Rouen
1 Night Norman coast
1 Night Mont St Michelle area
4 Nights Amboise

JOURNEY HIGHLIGHTS

International Garden Festival, Chateau de Chaumont | Gardens of Chateau de Villandry and Chenonceau | Monet's Gardens, Giverny | Jardin Plume | Wine and cheese tastings, Loire Valley | Honfleur | Mont St Michel | Omaha Beach and American Cemetery

Tour arranged by Earthbound Expeditions, please contact them to join the tour:

Earthbound Expeditions Inc.
POB 11305, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110
800 723 8454 / 206 842 9775
www.EarthboundExpeditions.com

An Evening with James Alexander-Sinclair Thursday, February 27, 2020

NHS Hall Center for Urban Horticulture

Wine & Hors d'oeuvres Reception: 6:30 PM

Lecture: 7:30 PM

Fee: Members: \$65.00 – Non-members: \$85.00

Limit: 150



Please join us for a special lecture and wine reception with James Alexander-Sinclair.

Lecture:

Dancing through Borders

Gardens in the country do not always have to be all about twining roses and banks of lavender. Just because they settle into the bucolic

delights of the country, it does not necessarily mean that they need lack edge or excitement. The idea of this talk is to have a good look at some sharply attired country gardens (both their structure and their planting) and see how what works for them can also work for you.

The Northwest Horticultural Society is pleased to join the Northwest Flower & Garden Festival this year in welcoming James Alexander-Sinclair to the Pacific Northwest.

2020 NWFGF Show Judge; Award-Winning Designer, Writer, Speaker, Radio & TV Star

James Alexander-Sinclair is one of the foremost garden designers in the United Kingdom. In addition to his garden design business, he is an award-winning writer, a compelling speaker, frequent broadcaster and an elected member of the Council of Royal Horticulture Society. He has had a regular column in *Gardeners World* magazine for eleven years, and has written features for *The Daily Telegraph*, *Financial Times*, *The Garden*, *Gardens Illustrated* and many others. He was also a regular blogger for *Fine Gardening* magazine. James is one part of the hugely popular *Three Men Went to Mow* film series that covers many aspects of gardens and gardening, described as "not terribly serious." A lively speaker, James regularly serves as host for awards ceremonies for the Society of Garden Designers, The Garden Media Guild, and the RHS, along with the BBC Gardeners' World Live. James is an accredited Gardens judge for the Royal Horticulture Society (judging all RHS Flower Shows), and internationally, James helped set up the Moscow Flower Show in 2012 and continues to chair their judging panel. www.jamesalexandersinclair.com

JAPANESE MAPLES

PART II

Words and Photos by Richie Steffen (unless otherwise noted)

Acer palmatum 'Viridis'

THIS PAST AUTUMN WAS A BEAUTIFUL TIME to take in the color of Japanese maples. Many of us have enjoyed the flaming reds, burnt oranges, buttery yellows and golds of these beautiful and useful trees. The first part of this article on Japanese maples (*Garden Notes* 2019 autumn issue) discussed the colorful foliage of Japanese maples and several of the distinct groups maple

enthusiasts use to separate this large, diverse group. This article will focus on horticultural groups that divide *Acer palmatum*, *Acer japonicum* and *Acer shirasawanum* by their leaf shapes or unusual bark and twigs. For those that missed the first article, the "Group" classification is a horticultural term developed to help horticulturists and gardeners divide up large collections of culti-



Acer palmatum 'Crimson Queen' – Miller Garden

Acer palmatum 'Tamuke yama' – Miller Garden

vars with similar traits. Other botanical Latin terms such as species, subspecies and variety refer primarily to variations that can be found in the wild. The "Group" designation is primarily given to plants having genetic and superficial similarities.

Groups showing varying leaf shape:

Dissectum Group: Out of the dozens of Japanese maples readily available to gardeners in the Pacific Northwest, one of the most notable and the most easily recognized are the lace leaf selections. The Dissectum Group is often thought of as the most desirable of Japanese maples and is distinguished by the deeply divided leaves that are divided again and have deeply dissected lobes which gives a feathery, lacey appearance, usually on a weeping, shrubby tree with gracefully twisted branches. Commonly called lace-leaf maples, these are the queens of the species. Well grown specimens are to be treasured and provided ample space to fully develop. Some of the most widely available forms are the red leaf cultivars with 'Crimson Queen', 'Tamukeyama' and 'Garnet' leading the pack. Frankly, I would be hard pressed to tell them apart, but who cares, any of them would be a masterpiece in the garden. The standard for a green laceleaf maple is 'Viridis'. Its fine green foliage turns a bright mix of

reds and oranges with undertones of gold in autumn. 'Viridis' is a moderate grower and will quickly outgrow all but the largest of containers. Elegant and graceful, trees from the Dissectum Group only improve with age. The weeping branches develop into sculptural masterpieces over time and are best carefully pruned to not ruin their attractive form.



Acer palmatum 'Seiryū' – Lynne Harrison

There are also several slow-growing selections from the Dissectum Group that make striking container plants. An excellent choice is 'Filigree'. The extra fine leaf

divisions of this cultivar are especially beautiful and contribute to its slower growth rate. This selection is best grown in bright open shade or with morning sun. One of the most unusual cultivars of the Dissectum Group is 'Seiryū'. It has gracefully divided green leaves, but grows with an upright, open vase-like habit reaching 15 feet tall and as wide at maturity. It is one of the only cultivars in this group to grow as an upright tree.

Linearilobum Group: I find the Linearilobum Group to be one of the most appealing groups and it is defined by their narrow strap-like leaves divided to the base. Some of the most commonly available are 'Fairy Hair', 'Koto-no-ito' and 'Villa Taranto'. One trait of many cultivars in this group is that young or vigorous growth can have leaves that are much wider than typical; however, once growth slows and matures, the foliage will become finer and strappy. 'Koto-no-ito', commonly known as the harp string maple, illustrates this point well. Young plants with strong growth have leaves that may make you think it is reverting; but, if you wait until next year, those branches will produce leaves that are fine and delicate in texture. 'Fairy Hair' will produce similar juvenile leaves when young, but older branches produce some of the narrowest foliage of all Japanese maples.



Acer palmatum 'Villa Toranto'



Acer palmatum 'Trompenburg' – Miller Garden

Surprisingly, the fragile appearing 'Fairy Hair' is actually an easy to grow cultivar making a wispy vase-shaped tree 6 to 8 feet tall in ten years. 'Villa Taranto' has been a favorite of mine since I first laid eyes on it as a nursery worker in the early 90's. This cultivar is a small tree, 8 to 10 feet tall, with a broad vase-shaped crown and lush green leaves tipped on the end with red-blushed foliage. All three of these cultivars have great fall color with a mix of reds and oranges. My favorite from the Linearilobum Group is 'Red Pygmy', a slow growing tree from 12 to 15 feet tall with a lacy, delicate rounded crown. The new growth emerges bright red and fades to a red blushed leaf by early summer, then becomes a flaming crimson in autumn.

Convexum Group:

This group is noted by the unusual way the margins of the leaf turn down, giving each lobe a puffy and bowed convex shape. Interestingly, many of the cultivars in this group are

likely hybrids showing a strong influence from *Acer shirasawanum*. There are few cultivars in this group that are widely available, with one exception: 'Trompenburg'. Typically listed as *Acer palmatum* 'Trompenburg', it is probably better written as *Acer* 'Trompenburg' to acknowledge its hybrid origin. This cultivar is noted for its deep burgundy

stately gem in the landscape.

Crispum Group: Another relatively uncommon group is the Crispum Group whose members have five lobed, crinkled leaves, often smaller than typical for a Japanese maple. There is only a single cultivar of this group that has gained wide appeal, *Acer palmatum* 'Shishigashira'.

Commonly called lion's mane maple, this upright grower has its leaves in tight, congested bundles surrounding the branches. This slow growing variety has been chosen as a Great Plant Picks selection and makes a very useful plant in the smaller garden. The narrow vase-like form allows easy placement in most garden spaces. In ten years, it can reach 6 to 8 feet tall, but older trees can be 15 to 18 feet tall with time.



Acer palmatum 'Koto-no-ito'

Acer palmatum 'Red Pygmy' – Miller Garden

red foliage that holds well through the growing season followed by blazing scarlet autumn color. Mature trees show a majestic, rigid branching structure, definitely a

Sessilifolium Group: I find the cultivars of this group mostly unattractive and having a messy appearance, but they defi-



Acer palmatum 'Sango kaku' – Miller Garden

Acer palmatum 'Shaina'

nately top the list for weird and unusual. Each of the leaves lacks a petiole (leaf stem) and each leaf lobe has a reduced base giving a petiole-like attachment to the branch. Often the leaves have a tufted and twisted look. The effect is eye-catching, but it is not going to win a beauty queen pageant. You will rarely find cultivars from this group available outside of specialty growers.

When I do find the occasional tree at local nurseries it is often the cultivar 'Sessilifolium'. There is also an interesting selection called 'Hanezu hagoromo' with golden new growth that could be an attractive addition to the garden.

Groups with unusual bark or habit:

Pinebark Group:

The foliage of this and the following group have little difference from a typical seedling Japanese maple. Where they excel is in the bark. Cultivars of the Pinebark Group develop a rough bark in

their second or third year of growth that generally continues to become more furrowed and plated as it matures. Selections from this group are popular choices for bonsai. Two of the most commonly available choices are *Acer palmatum* 'Arakawa' and *Acer palmatum* 'Nishiki-gawa'. Both become small rounded trees 15 to 18 feet tall in twenty years.

orange bark fall into this group with the coral bark maple being the most popular selection. Although the coral bark maple is widely planted for its beautiful bark, this cultivar has narrow, weak branching and as it matures branches become very susceptible to breaking in snow and ice storms. It is best planted under conifers which can spare the heavy snow loads

from hanging on the maple's branches. Another selection gaining popularity is *Acer palmatum* 'Bihou' with golden yellow and orange bark on its younger branches. This too seems to share the narrow form of the coral bark maple, but time will tell.



Acer palmatum 'Shishigashira'

Acer palmatum 'Arakawa'

Witches Broom

Group: The final group recognized by the Maple Society is the Witches Broom Group. The traits shared by these

cultivars is slow compact dwarf growth along with a shortened central lobe on the majority of the leaves. Often, they will have a rounded dense habit. The

Red Wood Group: Who does not marvel at the brilliant red stems of *Acer palmatum* 'Sango-kaku', the coral bark maple? Cultivars with bright red and



- | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1 'Sango Kaku' | 4 'Red Pygmy' | 7 'Osakasuki' | 10 'Peaches n' Cream' | 13 'Koto-no-Ito' |
| 2 'Hogyoku' | 5 'Kiyohime' | 8 'Villa Torrantó' | 11 'Shishigashira' | |
| 3 'Garnet' | 6 'Sister Ghost' | 9 'Umegae' | 12 'Suminagashi' | |

Great Plant Picks selection *Acer palmatum* 'Shaina' is an excellent example of these traits. 'Shaina' has bright burgundy red leaves that turn crimson in the fall. Its tight and slow habit of growth make it great for containers and it is easy to find a place for it even in the smallest garden.

All of these groups have a wealth of great cultivars for Northwest Gardens and it is a great time to explore your options for

new and exciting selections. When you are dealing with a large number of cultivars such as we have with Japanese maples you can see the value in using a group designation to help separate similar selections. Hopefully, in the future more nurseries and websites will embrace adding the group designation to the botanical names. Winter is a great time to do a little research and find the perfect maple for your garden.

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

NEW MEMBERS

Becky Chan & Pat Gariety
Michael Coussens
Alison Driver
Dan Everts
Pamela S Keeslar
Janet McCammon
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GARDENnotes

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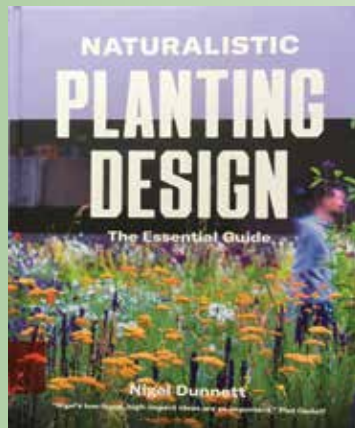
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LITERARY NOTES

from the Miller Library

by Brian Thompson

In March 2019, Nigel Dunnett was the final speaker at the NHS Symposium on *Designing for the Seasons*. While it is always difficult to keep an audience's attention after a delicious lunch, I thought Nigel was very successful at capturing our collective imaginations with images of his many garden plantings across England.



At the time, he referred to his newest book being released in his home country that week. We in America had to wait until this summer to see *Naturalistic Planting Design: The Essential Guide*, but the wait was well worth it. Reading the book is a great refresher for symposium attendees and an excellent introduction to his creative principles for everyone.

Dunnett uses two contrasting slogans in his work: “planting design is an art form” and “planting design is essential.” The former captures the impact a successful design has on our emotions. The latter expresses the necessity to create healthy human environments, especially in cities.

He defines naturalistic planting design as inspired by nature, but not a recreation of a particular ecosystem. The book goes deeply into the historical development of this practice, while also providing pragmatic step-by-step guides. Examples are shown in all stages from planting – often a mix of seeding and starts – to the succession of the gardens through the seasons and subsequent years.

Dunnett's gardens won't appeal to everyone. He's very limited in his use of woody plants and his herbaceous plantings are mingled rather than in solid blocks. Imitating nature, his projects grow and change, meaning there is no single climax or season when everything is in bloom. Instead, he aims to have something of interest year-round, using a general rule that no more than three plants need to be at a peak at any one time.

I recommended enjoying the exuberance of the photographs first, and then read the text. To Dunnett, “the future is all about planting that's exciting, uplifting, dramatic, beautiful, breath-taking, bold and adventurous. Wild too, and not just in the sense of it being natural but wild because it has an edge to it, it's challenging, it's not safe, and it's not always tasteful.”

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

President's Message



Dear NHS Garden Friends,

This year marks my second year as NHS Board President, and it is amazing how quickly time passes when you are having fun. This past year I have seen firsthand how lucky we are to have such an amazing committed community of members and board volunteers that help run and support our organization with both their time and resources. Here are a few of the great examples that wouldn't have been possible without our member's involvement and dedication: last year, we had some amazing educational events including the NHS Spring Symposium at Bastyr University and the Meet the Board Tour on Vashon Island. Members also helped host and run the NHS Spring Ephemeral Plant Sale attended by the best local growers in the Seattle area. As mentioned before, we couldn't do all this without you – so, a big “Thank You” for your time, donations, and dedication. Since we can never have enough volunteers, this may be the year that you decide to become more involved with like-minded gardeners and horticultural enthusiasts at one of our events, or even become a member of one of our committees. We certainly would love to have you.

I know that when this newsletter arrives we will all be nesting at home reading about gardens, planning a few new planting schemes with beautiful, rare, and exotic new plants, or dreaming about (perhaps also going on) a trip to sunnier and warmer climes when the cold, dark days of Seattle's winter finally get to us. But don't fret, we'll have some exceptional and amazing offerings in the coming year, courtesy of the creative planning work of our board and committees. They all have been extremely busy lining up our coming events, so be sure to mark your calendars.

I am excited to announce that we will be returning to the Northwest Flower and Garden Festival, formerly known as the Northwest Flower and Garden Show, in late February 2020 with three special and separate offerings. We will be hosting an NHS booth on the seminar floor staffed with board members and volunteers all week to educate and promote our organization to a greater audience. We are also sponsoring a special guest show judge, James Alexander-Sinclair, who is a noted garden designer, writer, and speaker from the United Kingdom and a Royal Horticultural Society Council member. Like all guest judges, James will be speaking on the main stage for the festival attendees. Finally, NHS will host a special evening reception and lecture with James at the Center for Urban Horticulture on Thursday, February 27th, 2020. This will be a great opportunity to hear a unique lecture that guarantees to be great.

Luckily, when you receive this edition of *Garden Notes* we will be past the winter solstice and our days will be getting longer again! This makes me look forward to the NHS Spring Symposium 2020 on March 21st at Bastyr University. This year's theme is *Gardening for the Future: Diversity and Ecology in the Urban Landscape*. The speaker line-up this year is equally exciting: Ross Bayton, botanist from Heronswood Garden; Diana Beresford-Kroeger, Irish botanist, medical biochemist, and author; Eve Rickenbaker, Collection Manager of the Otis Douglas Hyde Herbarium, and Cleve West, UK garden designer.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, I am wishing you all a great start into 2020. Happy gardening! 🌿

Jason Jorgensen
NHS President



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Every gardener knows under the cloak of winter lies a miracle — a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to light, a bud straining to unfurl. And the anticipation nurtures our dream.”

— Barbara Winkler, American author and editor

Cyclamen coum
Photo by Richie Steffen