GARDEN notes

SPRING 2026

Northwest Horticultural Society



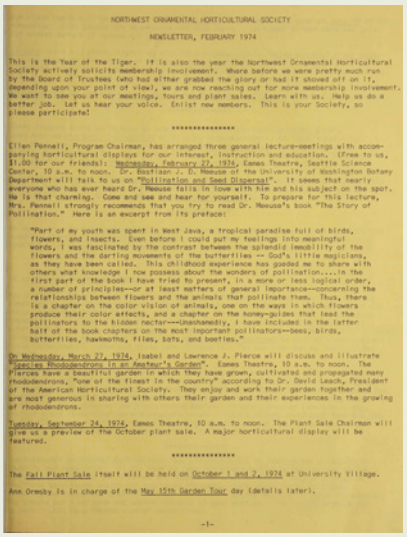
Polemonium 'Golden Feathers'
Image by Richie Steffen

The Northwest Horticultural Society celebrates 60 years!

From the beginning as the Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society to today as the Northwest Horticultural Society (NHS), our organization has grownsubstantially from a small group of passionate gardeners led by Elisabeth C. Miller of Seattle, Washington. The publication of NHS has evolved over time, but still provides pertinent horticultural information to members.

Below are a selection of publication covers over six decades. Watch for a fascinating history of NHS coming in the summer issue.

(Editor's Note: Access full issues of past NHS publications through the Elisabeth C. Miller Library's website or the Biodiversity Heritage Library website where past NHS publications are stored.)


NORTHWEST ORNAMENTAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER, FEBRUARY 1974

This is the Year of the Tiger. It is also the year the Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society actively solicits membership involvement. Where before we were pretty much run by the Board of Trustees (who had either grabbed the glory or had it shoved off on it, depending upon your point of view), we are now reaching out for more membership involvement. We want to see you at our meetings, tours and plant sales. Learn with us. Help us do a better job. Let us hear your voice. Enlist new members. This is your Society, so please participate!

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Ellen Pennell, Program Chairman, has arranged three general lecture-meetings with accompanying horticultural displays for our interest, instruction and education. (Free to us, $1.00 for our friends): Wednesday, February 27, 1974, Eames Theatre, Seattle Science Center, 10 a.m. to noon. Dr. Bastian J. D. Meeuse of the University of Washington Botany Department will talk to us on "Pollination and Seed Dispersal". It seems that nearly everyone who has ever heard Dr. Meeuse falls in love with him and his subject on the spot. He is that charming. Come and see and hear for yourself. To prepare for this lecture, Mrs. Pennell strongly recommends that you try to read Dr. Meeuse's book "The Story of Pollination." Here is an excerpt from its preface:

"Part of my youth was spent in West Java, a tropical paradise full of birds, flowers, and insects. Even before I could put my feelings into meaningful words, I was fascinated by the contrast between the splendid immobility of the flowers and the darting movements of the butterflies -- God's little magicians, as they have been called. This childhood experience has goaded me to share with others what knowledge I now possess about the wonders of pollination....In the first part of the book I have tried to present, in a more or less logical order, a number of principles--or at least matters of general importance--concerning the relationships between flowers and the animals that pollinate them. Thus, there is a chapter on the color vision of animals, one on the ways in which flowers produce their color effects, and a chapter on the honey-guides that lead the pollinators to the hidden nectar---Unashamedly, I have included in the latter half of the book chapters on the most important pollinators--bees, birds, butterflies, hawkmoths, flies, bats, and beetles."

On Wednesday, March 27, 1974, Isabel and Lawrence J. Pierce will discuss and illustrate "Species Rhododendrons in an Amateur's Garden". Eames Theatre, 10 a.m. to noon. The Pierces have a beautiful garden in which they have grown, cultivated and propagated many rhododendrons, "one of the finest in the country" according to Dr. David Leach, President of the American Horticultural Society. They enjoy and work their garden together and are most generous in sharing with others their garden and their experiences in the growing of rhododendrons.

Tuesday, September 24, 1974, Eames Theatre, 10 a.m. to noon. The Plant Sale Chairman will give us a preview of the October plant sale. A major horticultural display will be featured.

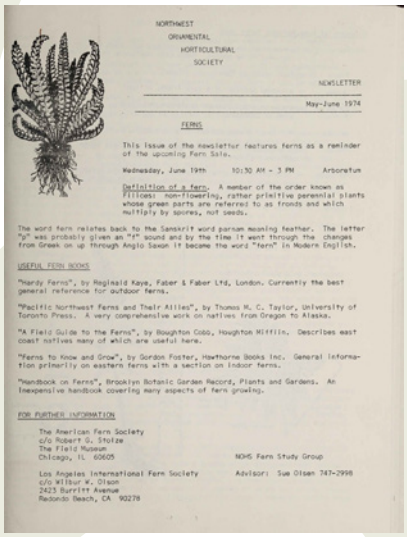
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The Fall Plant Sale itself will be held on October 1 and 2, 1974 at University Village.

Ann Ormsby is in charge of the May 15th Garden Tour day (details later).

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February 1974


NORTHWEST ORNAMENTAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

May-June 1974

FERNS

This issue of the newsletter features ferns as a reminder of the upcoming Fern Sale.

Wednesday, June 19th 10:30 AM - 3 PM Arboretum

Definition of a fern. A member of the order known as Filicesi non-flowering, rather primitive perennial plants whose green parts are referred to as fronds and which multiply by spores, not seeds.

The word fern relates back to the Sanskrit word parnam meaning feather. The letter "p" was probably given an "f" sound and by the time it went through the changes from Greek on up through Anglo Saxon it became the word "fern" in Modern English.

USEFUL FERN BOOKS

"Hardy Ferns", by Reginald Kaye, Faber & Faber Ltd, London. Currently the best general reference for outdoor ferns.

"Pacific Northwest Ferns and Their Allies", by Thomas M. C. Taylor, University of Toronto Press. A very comprehensive work on natives from Oregon to Alaska.

"A Field Guide to the Ferns", by Boughton Cobb, Houghton Mifflin. Describes east coast natives many of which are useful here.

"Ferns to Know and Grow", by Gordon Foster, Hawthorne Books Inc. General information primarily on eastern ferns with a section on indoor ferns.

"Handbook on Ferns", Brooklyn Botanic Garden Record, Plants and Gardens. An inexpensive handbook covering many aspects of fern growing.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

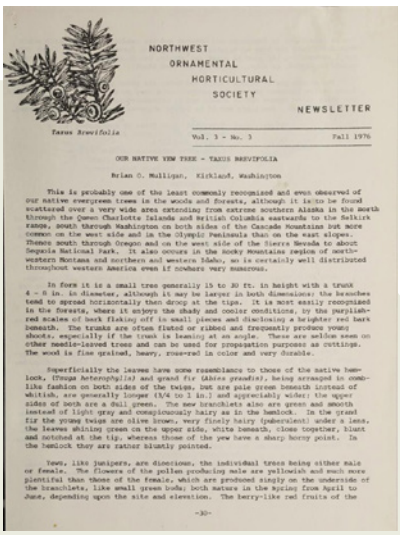
The American Fern Society
c/o Robert G. Stolze
The Field Museum
Chicago, IL 60605

NOHS Fern Study Group

Los Angeles International Fern Society
c/o Wilbur K. Olson
2423 Burritt Avenue
Redondo Beach, CA 90278

Advisor: Sue Olsen 747-2998

May-June 1974


NORTHWEST ORNAMENTAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Taxus brevifolia

Vol. 3 - No. 3 Fall 1976

OUR NATIVE YEW TREE - TAXUS BREVIFOLIA

Brian O. Mulligan, Kirkland, Washington

This is probably one of the least commonly recognized and even observed of our native evergreen trees in the woods and forests, although it is/to be found scattered over a very wide area extending from extreme southern Alaska in the north through the Queen Charlotte Islands and British Columbia eastwards to the Selkirk range, south through Washington on both sides of the Cascade Mountains but more common on the west side and in the Olympic Peninsula than on the east slopes. Thence south through Oregon and on the west side of the Sierra Nevada to about Sequoia National Park. It also occurs in the Rocky Mountains region of northwestern Montana and northern and western Idaho, so is certainly well distributed throughout western America even if nowhere very numerous.

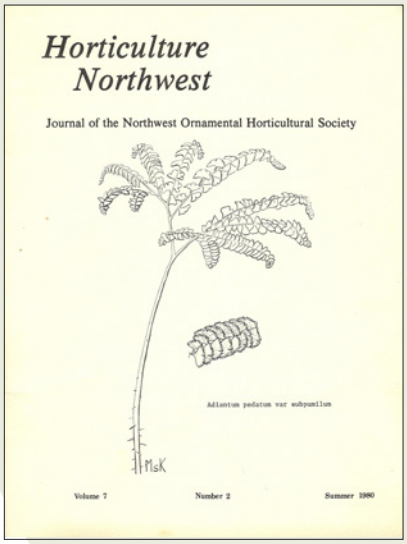
In form it is a small tree generally 15 to 30 ft. in height with a trunk 4 - 8 in. in diameter, although it may be larger in both dimensions; the branches tend to spread horizontally then droop at the tips. It is most easily recognized in the forests, where it enjoys the shady and cooler conditions, by the purplish-red scales of bark flaking off in small pieces and disclosing a brighter red bark beneath. The trunks are often fluted or ribbed and frequently produce young shoots, especially if the trunk is leaning at an angle. These are seldom seen on other needle-leaved trees and can be used for propagation purposes as cuttings. The wood is fine grained, heavy, reserved in color and very durable.

Superficially the leaves have some resemblance to those of the native hemlock, (Tsuga heterophylla) and grand fir (Abies grandis), being arranged in comb-like fashion on both sides of the twigs, but are pale green beneath instead of whitish, are generally longer (3/4 to 1 in.) and appreciably wider; the upper sides of both are a dull green. The new branchlets also are green and smooth instead of light gray and conspicuously hairy as in the hemlock. In the grand fir the young twigs are olive brown, very finely hairy (pubescent) under a lens, the leaves shining green on the upper side, white beneath, close together, blunt and notched at the tip, whereas those of the yew have a sharp horny point. In the hemlock they are rather bluntly pointed.

Yews, like junipers, are dioecious, the individual trees being either male or female. The flowers of the pollen producing male are yellowish and much more plentiful than those of the female, which are produced singly on the underside of the branchlets, like small green buds; both mature in the spring from April to June, depending upon the site and elevation. The berry-like red fruits of the

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Fall 1976

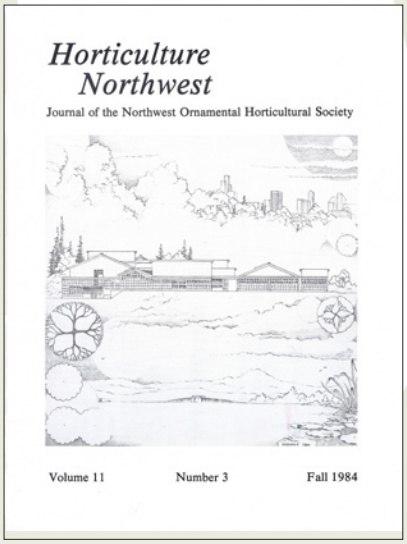

Horticulture Northwest

Journal of the Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society

Adiantum pedatum var subpumilum

Volume 7 Number 2 Summer 1980

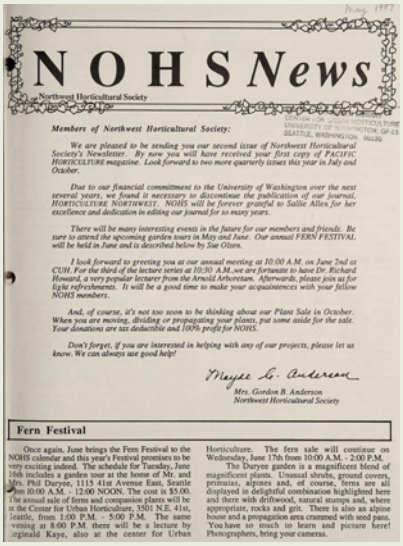
Summer 1980


Horticulture Northwest

Journal of the Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society

Volume 11 Number 3 Fall 1984

Fall 1984


NOHS News

Northwest Horticultural Society

Members of Northwest Horticultural Society:

We are pleased to be sending you our second issue of Northwest Horticultural Society's Newsletter. By now you will have received your first copy of PACIFIC HORTICULTURE magazine. Look forward to two more quarterly issues this year in July and October.

Due to our financial commitment to the University of Washington over the next several years, we found it necessary to discontinue the publication of our journal, HORTICULTURE NORTHWEST. NOHS will be forever grateful to Sallie Allen for her excellence and dedication in editing our journal for so many years.

There will be many interesting events in the future for our members and friends. Be sure to attend the upcoming garden tours in May and June. Our annual FERN FESTIVAL will be held in June and is described below by Sue Olsen.

I look forward to greeting you at our annual meeting at 10:00 A.M. on June 2nd at CUH. For the third of the lecture series at 10:30 A.M. we are fortunate to have Dr. Richard Howard, a very popular lecturer from the Arnold Arboretum. Afterwards, please join us for light refreshments. It will be a good time to make your acquaintences with your fellow NOHS members.

And, of course, it's not too soon to be thinking about our Plant Sale in October. When you are moving, dividing or propagating your plants, put some aside for the sale. Your donations are tax deductible and 100% profit for NOHS.

Don't forget, if you are interested in helping with any of our projects, please let us know. We can always use good help!

Mrs. Gordon B. Anderson
Northwest Horticultural Society

Fern Festival

Once again, June brings the Fern Festival to the NOHS calendar and this year's Festival promises to be very exciting indeed. The schedule for Tuesday, June 16th includes a garden tour at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Phil Duryee, 1115 41st Avenue East, Seattle from 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 NOON. The cost is $5.00. The annual sale of ferns and companion plants will be at the Center for Urban Horticulture, 3501 N.E. 41st, Seattle, from 1:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M. The same evening at 8:00 P.M. there will be a lecture by Reginald Kaye, also at the center for Urban Horticulture. The fern sale will continue on Wednesday, June 17th from 10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

The Duryee garden is a magnificent blend of magnificent plants. Unusual shrubs, ground covers, primulas, alpines and, of course, ferns are all displayed in delightful combination highlighted here and there with driftwood, natural stumps and, where appropriate, rocks and grit. There is also an alpine house and a propagation area crammed with seed pans. You have so much to learn and picture here! Photographers, bring your cameras.

May 1987


NHS News
Spring Issue — Northwest Horticultural Society — March 1991
Winter Injury of Ornamental Plants
By Rob Smith and Sharon Coffman
Types of Winter Injury
1991 Amateur Garden Contest
Announcement and important details inside—
March 1991

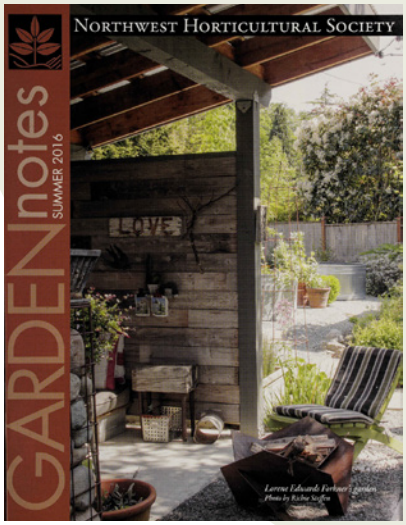

Garden Notes
Northwest Horticultural Society — Spring 1993
Exploring Shade Gardens
Carpeting Your Garden - A Treasure Trove of Groundcovers
Spring 1993


GardenNOTES
NORTHWEST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY — SPRING 1999
THE BEAUTY OF GRASSES
Spring 1999

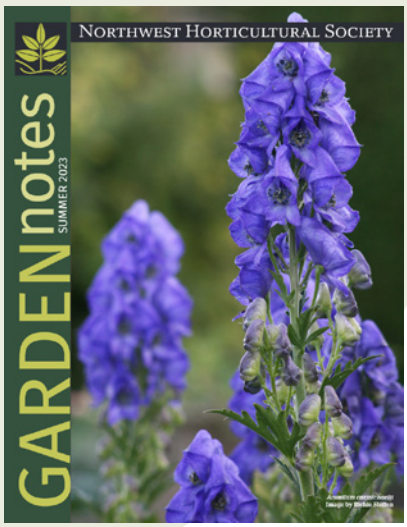

GardenNOTES
NORTHWEST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY — SPRING 2005
SEATTLE YOUTH GARDEN WORKS AND NHS WIN BIG AT THE 2005 NW FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW
By Linda Plato
Spring 2005


GardenNOTES
NORTHWEST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY — SUMMER 2008
~ FOURTH ANNUAL TOUR ~
NHS BOARD MEMBERS OPEN THEIR GARDENS
SUNDAY, JULY 20, 12 – 5 P.M.
SUNDAY, AUGUST 17, 12 – 5 P.M.
Summer 2008


GardenNOTES
NORTHWEST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY — WINTER 2012
~ 2012 SPRING GARDENING SYMPOSIUM ~
Woodland Gardening: Building Beauty from Shade-Loving Plants
Hans Mandy
REGISTER NOW
Winter 2012


GARDENnotes
SUMMER 2016
NORTHWEST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
Summer 2016


GARDENnotes
SUMMER 2020
NORTHWEST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
Lilium martagon
Summer 2020


GARDENnotes
SUMMER 2023
NORTHWEST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
Summer 2023

BOTANY OF A PLOWED FIELD —Green Beans

Text & Images by Daniel Mount


Adobe stock


Collecting bean seeds in late September

Shortly after immigrating to the US from Brazil, my grandfather headed south from Wisconsin to the Rio Grande Valley. With my grandma and a handful of kids in tow, he sought the promise of fertile soils and good climate, good for growing just about anything. He opted to grow green beans, a crop growing in popularity in the 1930s. But to his misfortune, a hurricane hit, flooded the fields, and killed his beans.

He lost everything.

Beans had long been cultivated from Mexico to the Andes of Peru—eight thousand years, archaeologists estimate. They were cultivated primarily for their nutritional seeds, high in minerals, carbohydrates and proteins. When dried, they were easily stored long-term and provided a stable food source for the giant cities of the pre-Columbian Americas. They ate the pods only during famine; they were tough so were boiled a long time before being eaten. There were already many cultivars selected and grown among the indigenous farmers when Europeans arrived. Potentially, there are 40,000 cultivars. Seed Savers Exchange in Iowa is said to hold 4,000 traditional and heirloom cultivars.

Beans were part of the trade economy for millennia in Meso- and South America. The original wild plant, found from northern Mexico to the Andes, is unpalatable and nearly toxic in its wild form. There were two separate selection events of this widespread plant, one in Mexico and the other in Peru. From those, the cultivated forms were distributed throughout the Americas. You can imagine a food so valuable would be seen as a gift from the gods. Beans, along with maize (corn) and squash, known as the three sisters, sustained the first Americans, and was revered in ritual. Beans are still a cornerstone of the Latin American kitchen, starring in traditional as well as new dishes.

Christopher Columbus brought the first beans back to Spain in 1493, after his second voyage to the New World. Europeans



Soaking beans


Planting beans

already had a good base of legumes in their diet: garbanzo beans, lentils, peas and fava beans. All were cultivated for as long as the American bean, if not longer. Originating in the fertile crescent of the Middle East, they were spread as far west as the British Isles and as far east as India, northward to Scandinavia and south into Sub-Saharan Africa. Yet the new bean was welcomed. They gave it the name *fasiolus*, the Greek and Latin name for cow peas, or black-eyed peas, an African legume. It was later latinized to *Phaseolus* with the specific epithet of *vulgaris* (common).

Today, *Phaseolus vulgaris* is grown around the world, not only for its storable nutritious seeds, but for the young tender pods. The eating of green beans, or string beans as they were called due to the long fibrous thread running down the seam of the pod, were not commonly eaten until the middle of the 19th century. The stringless bean, which we are lucky to have today, is the product of one New York hybridizer, Calvin N. Keeney. Burpee introduced his 'Stringless Green Pod' in 1894.

The US produces around 800,000 tons of green beans a year, mostly for canning or freezing, but also as a fresh vegetable. Wisconsin is the number one producer, with nearly 52,000 acres in production, growing 44-48% of the nation's green beans. Our neighbor to the south, Oregon, is fourth in production, cranking out about 8% of the nation's yearly harvest. It was the green bean industry that brought many migrant workers from the south, even the Rio Grande Valley, to Wisconsin in the middle of the last century. Many stayed and created a strong Latino community there, and some of my favorite Mexican restaurants.

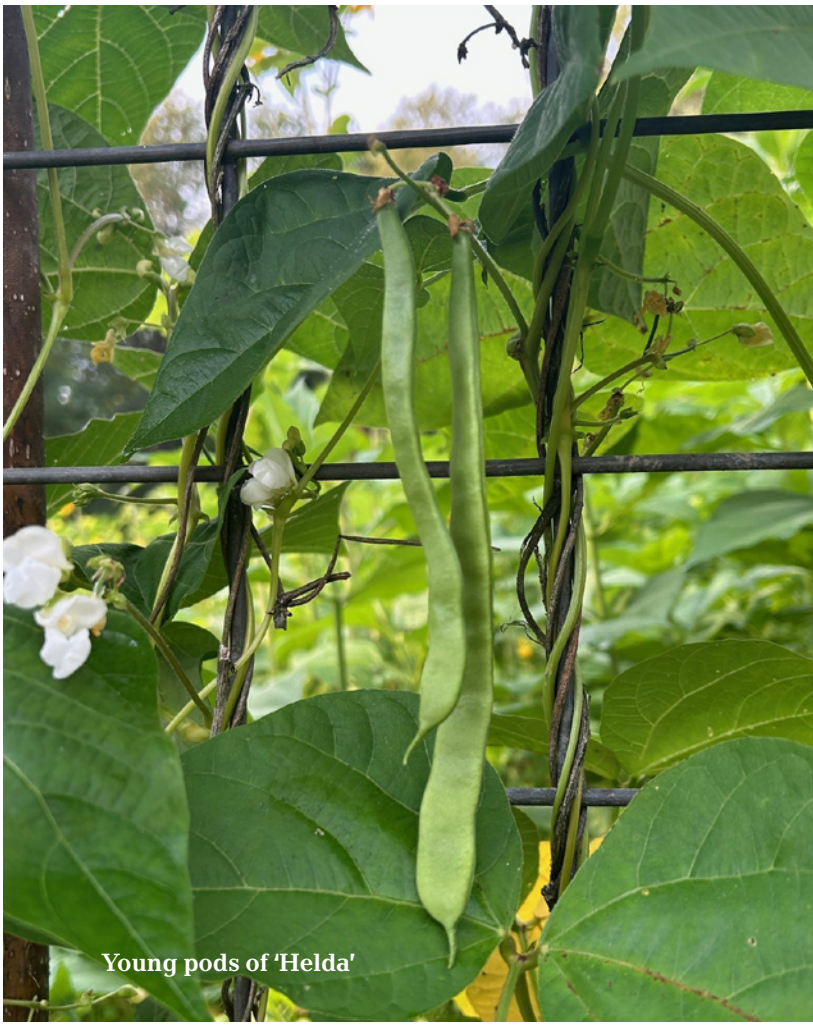
It's unfortunate my grandfather didn't stay in Wisconsin and pursue his dream of being a green bean farmer there, maybe he would have succeeded. After leaving deep south Texas, he worked on a Works Progress Administration project building canals in Arizona, picked apples in the Yakima Valley, but eventually ended up back in Wisconsin, becoming an estate gardener.

A choice that sealed my fate, I might add.

I love green beans and we grow a lot. Maybe too many. They are generally classified by pod shape and growth habit. Pole beans can grow well over 6 feet and need support. Half-runners, sometimes called simply runners, are shorter, maybe to 3 feet, and can be grown with or without support. I planted ours on the edge of our sunflower and buckwheat cover crop and they scrambled into it finding support on the sturdy sunflower stems. Most popular are bush beans, not much more than 2 feet tall and highly productive for their



The tripartite leaf of a pole bean



Young pods of 'Helda'

size. These are the go-to beans for most home gardeners. We usually grow all three types. The bush beans come on early and have a short production time. I usually pull the whole plant up, just as the pole beans start to produce, and strip the pods for pickling or freezing. Legumes are nitrogen fixing, improving the soil. I follow the green beans with a sowing of fall salad greens.

As with all vegetables, it is the balance of flavor and texture that make a vegetable desirable or not. There are three basic types of green beans, with a myriad of cultivars: filet, or *haricot verte*, with thin tender pods, perfect for fresh eating; the "classic' round-podded straight bean which is the most versatile of the lot, holding up well to pickling and freezing; and Romano, a large broad flat-podded type, great for slow cooking.

My grandma used to chop the tough older pods of what she called "Roman beans," sauté them with some bacon, and dump in a jar of last year's canned tomatoes. She boiled it all until the beans nearly fell apart. It was a dish I disliked as a child. The blubbery bacon, the mushy beans smothered in overcooked tomatoes was repulsive. The saving grace was loads of black pepper. I got through it knowing there was a berry pie at the end of the meal. The reward for cleaning your plate.

I recreated this recipe this past summer with some tough Romano beans. I boiled the beans beyond what seemed sane and was excessive with the black pepper. I enjoyed it quite a bit. Even the blubbery bacon went down with delight. I realized I am the same age my grandma was when she made us that dish.

I guess the palette does change with age.

I prefer green beans fresh, preferably the first harvestable handful of the season, walked directly to the kitchen after picking. I blanch them in boiling salt water, douse them with butter, and salt and pepper generously. Sometimes I'll add a squeeze of lemon. I invariably snub the ubiquitous three bean salad which turns up at family picnics, or the classic Thanksgiving casserole made with canned mushroom soup. Any dish, actually, that contains frozen or canned green beans rarely passes my lips.

As the years progressed, green beans revealed themselves to me in new and delicious ways. I adore tempura green beans, especially on top of a bowl of steaming kitsune udon. My



Golden pods of 'Monte Gusto' pole beans

favorite Thai dish by far is salty, sweet and spicy Prik Khing. Traditionally made with tropical yard-long beans—which we can't seem to grow—it's a recipe that adapts well to any green bean. I adore Sichuan dry fried green beans with the tang of pickled mustard greens and excessive amounts of garlic all melded together in unctuous peanut oil.

I'm making myself hungry.

I can dilly beans and Indian achar pickle, both great ways to preserve the summer's abundance. I add green beans and the young, tender seeds plucked from overgrown pods to the first autumn pot of minestrone—and to the latter, our pole beans, which will produce well into October, if the weather is kind.

Growing beans is so easy, and a great way to get kids interested in plants. Remember baby food jars filled with wet paper towels and bean seeds pressed against the glass? We soak and directly sow our beans to avoid disturbing the soft taproot. Since they are nitrogen-fixing, there is really no need to fertilize. And they prefer slightly acid soils, so we add no lime where we plant them. Damp cool weather is the biggest problem, causing seedlings to damp off and die. Rabbits are also a problem—as are chickens, crows, deer and slugs. I am hard-pressed to name a vegetable that we don't have to protect from herbivores, especially in the early stages.



An indigenous runner bean 'Hidatsa Red



Dry pods of 'Helda' Romano pole beans

After many trials, we have settled on our favorites. For filet beans we like 'Emerite' and 'Slenderette'. For Romano we love 'Hilda' (also sold as 'Helga' and 'Helda'). We've been growing it for decades and consider it a must. If left unpicked and the fall is dry, it produces some beautiful white dry beans. Of the wax, or yellow, beans, I love 'Monte Gusto'. And I have no problem recommending the most commonly grown commercial bean, 'Blue Lake'; it's a strong performer, producing beans for all your needs from fresh to frozen, or pickled.

Green beans rank third among the most popular vegetables in this country, topped only by tomatoes and peppers, with which they pair quite well, I think. They surprisingly don't make it on "Most Nutritious Vegetable" lists. They are low in calories and carbohydrates, contain some protein, calcium and iron and don't forget plenty of fiber. Yet they don't measure up to nutritional heavy hitters like kale and broccoli. Still, I love them and can't wait until I can go out in the garden, pick a handful, and chomp them all down before I ever get to the kitchen.

Daniel Mount is a long-time member of NHS and retired landscape designer.



SHIRAZI GREEN BEAN PILAF (Lubia Pulow)

I have been carrying this recipe in my head since the late '90s. I had been cooking in a vegetarian restaurant in Germany at the time and made friends with one of the dishwashers. Azar was a Persian woman who had fled Iran with her family, taking asylum in Germany. She was already a mature woman when I met her, well educated, funny and thoughtful, though full of herself at times. She was proud of her nationality and embarrassed by her country. She was especially proud of Persian food.

She taught me how to make this delicious pilaf.

I tried to conjure the recipe last summer, funny how the past gets dimmer. I can remember her slicing the onion oh-so-thinly with her delicate long-fingered hands. And with a workman's strength, snapping the green beans in half and in half again. I remember her dumping huge amounts of cinnamon into the pot. Cinnamon to me is a sweet spice used in oatmeal cookies and apples pies. I was curious yet skeptical about it going into my dinner. The process and the resulting dish stuck in my mind. What an amazing suite of flavors, which somehow were as comforting as my grandmother's dull boiled beans.

My memory was too shaky to cook from, so I pulled out the only Persian cookbook we have, *New Food for Life* by Najimeh Batmanglij. There was a recipe for *Lubia Pulow*, with lamb, powder rose petals, and saffron. All ingredients I don't remember Azar using.

The recipe that follows is a hybrid of Najimeh's and Azar's recipes. Half memory; half plagiarism. You can use quite mature beans for this, actually it is preferable, as tender young beans would disintegrate in the long, slow cooking process.

INGREDIENTS:

3 cups basmati rice (rinsed and parboiled, do not fully cook rice)

1 large onion, halved and thinly sliced

2 cloves of garlic

2 pounds of chicken, lamb or beef (I made it with lamb last summer, but I think I prefer Azar's meatless version)

1 pound peeled and diced fresh tomatoes, or drained canned tomatoes

1.5 pounds fresh green beans, cut into ½ inch pieces

Cinnamon (Azar used way more than Najimeh suggests, I used almost 2 tablespoons. It's important to this dish but be cautious if you like)

2 teaspoons salt, or there abouts

A few saffron threads soaked in 2 tablespoons of warm water

2 tablespoons of plain yoghurt

4-6 tablespoons of olive oil
(If using meat reduce the oil by half)

DIRECTIONS:

After the rice is parboiled drain and add saffron water and yoghurt, mix well. (It seemed to me Azar added the rice raw and it cooked in the juices of the vegetables, but I followed Najimeh's advice and parboiled it).

- I like to cook in cast iron but use any pot you have that can be put into an oven.
- Sautee onions, garlic and meat (if you are using)
- Add cinnamon, cook shortly
- Once onions are fully browned add green beans and cook just long enough to get them warm.
- Add tomatoes and cook until the pot starts to steam.
- At this point I added a teaspoon of freshly grated lime zest, to compensate for the dried Persian lime power (used in Najimeh's recipe). Not sure if either is necessary.
- Add rice mixture, mix thoroughly, cover with a towel and a tight-fitting lid. The object is not to let the steam escape. (Traditionally this is done by covering the pot with a crust; try it if you like)
- Place in a 350° oven for 45-50 minutes.
- Remove from oven and let rest covered for 5-10 minutes before serving.

Persian pickles are recommended as a side dish; I just made a fresh green salad with a simple vinaigrette.



Gardening with Less H2O

Text and Images by Richie Steffen (unless otherwise noted)

***Arbutus unedo* 'Compacta'**

Gardening and watering often go hand in hand in the Pacific Northwest. Our maritime climate is perfect for growing so many plants from around the world except for one thing, our dry summers. Without irrigation, many plants we grow from Eastern North America, the Midwest prairies, as well as Southeast Asia and Northern Europe would eventually wither away, even as well-established plants. So, how do we use water wisely in our gardens and still grow at least some of our favorite water-thirsty plants? Compromise and planning will go a long way towards water savings.

This year, the Elisabeth Miller Botanical Garden's education program, Great Plant Picks, focuses on *Waterwise Wonders*, drought-tolerant plants for sun and shade. Good plant selection is key to ultimately having a garden that is thrifty in its water use, although it is not the only tool in your box. Choosing the best location for your plants, as well as being aware of how you are watering and how much water you are applying to the garden, is essential.

One of the first steps for thrifty water use is to stop, or at least greatly reduce, watering a lawn. The grass used for turf in our region are cool-season types. This means that they naturally grow fall through spring and enter dormancy during summer. During dormancy, it may look like the lawn is dying by its tan color, but it is merely waiting for the seasonal rains to start to continue growing. Watering during the summer prevents this dormancy and keeps your grass green but at great expense.

Another place we can reduce watering is looking at our garden plants. Most of us have an existing garden, and it is common to have a mixture of plants that tolerate a wide range of watering regimes. One of the first things to do with existing gardens is to assess the water needs of the plants in your garden and then consider creating watering zones throughout the landscape. Look for areas where you may already have tough and drought-tolerant plants in abundance. These areas are easy to convert into low water-use beds by moving or removing any water-thirsty plants and replacing with more drought-tolerant selections. An area of your garden that receives the least amount of attention and care is often already filled with drought-tolerant plants. These more drought-tolerant garden beds are typically along the edges or back of the garden. It can be surprising to see how many plants you have already that do not require weekly watering.

Now, what to do with the water-loving plants we grow? Make focused beds and spaces that concentrate these plants together. It makes watering easier and more efficient. Place your plants that need regular watering near where you spend time, such as walkways and patios. If you are going to water them, I think it is best to have them in locations where you can enjoy them. Also, think about having water-thirsty plants in containers. Try to get as large a container as possible — the larger the pot, the more soil and the more water-holding compacity. Drip irrigation is pretty easy to install in containers and can keep your plants looking lush and full while being thrifty with the H_2O. The Tacoma Public Utilities has a handy PDF for reducing water needs in the garden at https://www.mytpu.org/wp-content/uploads/watering-wisely-june-1.pdf.

If you are looking to add more drought-tolerant plants to your garden, it is important to remember that even drought-tolerant plants need watering to become established. Two rules of thumb to consider are, first, new plants need a minimum of two to three years of regular summer watering to develop a root system extensive enough to withstand our long, dry summers. The second rule of thumb is: the larger the new plant or the poorer the soil, the longer it takes to establish a plant. I generally give larger plants a year of extra water—two to four years total—depending on their growing conditions.

It can be difficult to have a lush look in a drought-tolerant garden. One way to help is to capitalize on evergreen shrubs and unusual texture. We are fortunate to have a number of broadleaf evergreens, natives, and perennials that will tolerate drought and infrequent watering and remain beautiful year-round. Here are a few from the Great Plant Picks' drought-tolerant plant list:

Broadleaf Evergreens:

***Arbutus unedo* 'Compacta', compact strawberry tree –** Fall flowering with beautiful red and orange fruit. Best in full sun.

***Berberis darwinii*, Darwin's barberry –** Stunning orange yellow flowers in early spring. Prickly branches with dark green shiny leaves.

***Cistus* × *hybridus*, white hybrid rockrose –** The hardiest of the rockrose. Extremely tough with bright white flowers in early summer.



Top row left to right: *Berberis darwinii*, *Cistus* × *hybridus* (Rick Peterson)
Bottom row left to right: *Osmanthus heterophyllus* 'Variegatus', *Prunus laurocerasus* 'Mount Vernon' (Rick Peterson)

***Mahonia* × *media*, hybrid mahonia –** Fragrant yellow flowers in early winter. A hummingbird magnet! Striking architectural foliage. 'Charity' and Winter Sun' are two widely available and excellent cultivars.

***Osmanthus heterophyllus*, false holly –** Very fragrant flowers in late autumn. A good plant for screening or hedging. 'Variegatus' and 'Goshiki' are beautiful, variegated cultivars. A good grower in sun or shade.

***Prostanthera cuneata*, alpine mint bush –** a low growing, mounding shrub with minty fragrant leaves. Pretty white flowers in early summer. Best in full sun.

***Prunus laurocerasus* 'Mount Vernon', Mount Vernon dwarf English laurel –** The low growing groundcover shrub is tough tolerating sun or shade. Not invasive like its larger counterparts because it almost never flowers and sets seed.

Pacific NW Natives:

***Acer circinatum*, vine maple –** Our best native landscape tree. Great fall color, especially if it is grown without water.

***Epilobium septentrionale* 'Select Mattole', Humboldt County fuchsia –** A low and slow spreading groundcover with silvery leaves and brilliant orangey red blooms from summer into fall.

***Iris tenax*, tough-leaf iris –** Eye-catching lavender and purple flowers are profusely produced on the tight clumping mounding perennial. Best in full sun to open shade.













Above: *Ribes sanguineum* | Top: *Epilobium* (*Zauschneria*) *septentrionale* 'Select Mattole' | Middle left: *Polystichum munitum* | Middle top right: *Iris tenax* | Middle bottom right: *Oxalis smalliana* | Bottom right: *Vaccinium ovatum*





Left to right: *Achillea* 'Moonshine' (courtesy Blooming Nursery), *Digitalis ferruginea*, *Salvia yangii* (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*) 'Little Spire'

***Oxalis smalliana* (*Oxalis oregana* Evergreen Form) –** This species is native to SW Oregon and California. A choice groundcover that is evergreen and much slower growing than the Washington native (which can be a little weedy). Often with pink flowers or white with pink veins.

***Polystichum munitum*, Western sword fern –** One of our toughest and most adaptable native ferns. Tolerant of dry shade. Lovely evergreen fronds.

***Ribes sanguineum*, flowering currant –** Our best flowering native shrub. Several excellent cultivars are available. It is loved by the hummingbirds!

***Thuja plicata* 'Whipcord', thread leaf Western red cedar –** This thin narrow leafed dwarf form of our native red cedar has an unusual weeping mounding habit. Tolerant of sun or shade.

***Vaccinium ovatum*, evergreen huckleberry –** One of our best native shrubs for the garden. Beautiful dark evergreen leaves with charming pink and white bell-shaped flowers followed by delicious blue or black berries. Slow to establish, but well worth the effort!

Perennials:

***Achillea* 'Moonshine', Moonshine yarrow –** Soft yellow flowers are formed in the summer well above the whitish green foliage. This perennial forms a tight compact crown and will not spread or run around the garden. Best in full sun.

***Artemisia* 'Sea Foam', Sea Foam curlicue sage –** Delicate, lacy, and silvery white foliage forms low mounds in the garden. This is a perennial grown for the foliage and not the rather insignificant flowers. Full sun and well-drained soils are required for this plant to thrive.

***Digitalis ferruginea*, rusty foxglove –** This short-lived perennial is a non-weedy foxglove with tall spires of golden yellow flowers. By leaving the flower stalks to mature you will ensure an gentle self-sowing of young plants the next year. A lovely summer bloomer.

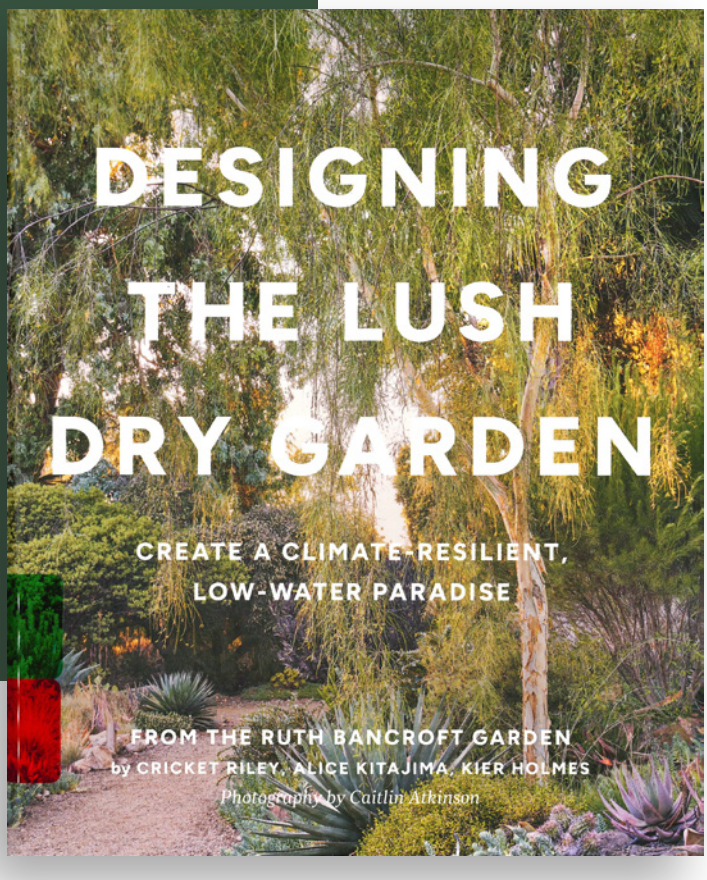
***Eryngium alpinum*, alpine sea holly –** Unusual spiny blue flowers form on this short-lived perennial during the summer. Allow the seedheads to mature for a gentle self-sowing.

***Salvia yangii* (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*) 'Little Spire', Little Spire Russian sage –** A slightly smaller selection of the long-flowering Russian sage. This plant is a pollinator magnet! Best in full sun with well-drained soil.

These are just a few of the drought-tolerant plants on the great plant picks website. To see more check out the new *Waterwise Wonders* lists at www.greatplantpicks.org.

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

LITERARY NOTES from the Miller Library



Brian Thompson

"A fantastic garden can percolate and deeply embed in your soul." This quote, from the new book *Designing the Lush Dry Garden*, describes my reaction when I first saw the Ruth Bancroft Garden in Walnut Creek, California. Part of a semi-private tour in April 2002, I was enchanted by everything I saw, but most remarkable was the two-acre-plus collage of cacti and succulents with amazing forms and leaf textures, dotted here and there with a few brilliant flowers.

Mrs. Bancroft, a spry 92 at the time (she lived to 109!), did not lead the tour but briefly came out of her house to express her welcome. She regarded the flowers amongst the cacti as "the icing on the cake."

I returned to the Bancroft Garden in September 2004 on an NHS trip and was equally impressed at the end of the dry summer season. The garden is still thriving today and is the central focus and inspiration of this new book, by a trio of authors: Cricket Riley, Alice Kitajima, and Kier Holmes, with photographs by Caitlin Atkinson. It brings back lots of memories.

But this is not a garden travel book. Instead, it looks at the nuts and bolts of a garden that has successfully created, as the title suggests, lushness without sacrificing sustainability in its dry climate.

How do you do this? The first half of the book will tell you how. While the 9a zone climate is not an exact match for most of the gardeners in NHS, there is a lot to gain from studying these chapters. This includes a deep analysis of design principles and practicalities, with lots of zone-pushing planting recommendations. For inspiration, the last half of the book profiles 15 gardens in which the owners and/or designers have overcome challenges to create their own interpretations inspired by the Bancroft Garden.

It is the authors' hope that this book will be a hands-on manual for garden design. "So please, read on, dog-ear pagers, highlight helpful tips—even bring this book outside while gardening. We totally give you permission to get the pages dirty." I think Mrs. Bancroft would have approved.

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

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear NHS Members,

As you are reading this issue of Garden Notes, the days are growing longer than the nights, something all the flora of the Pacific Northwest is appreciating. Thanks to the hard work of the Symposium Committee, NHS volunteers, our speakers, and the plant vendors, the NHS Spring Symposium was educational, a great place to socialize during breaks and lunch, and an opportunity to acquire fine—and maybe not so very common—plants for your own garden. There were challenges, too, and the speakers handled well the malfunctioning microphones.

The Membership and Volunteer Committee is preparing for a number of somewhat new-to-NHS member events called "After Hours at Nurseries." These events, as planned, will offer members the opportunity to visit a nursery, enjoy refreshments, time to socialize, listen to presentations by the nursery staff and, perhaps, a special-to-the event plant discount opportunity. Please watch the website and the weekly Tuesday emails for more information.

The Educational Travel Committee is currently planning for tours in 2027 and 2028. Soon it will be possible to register for tours to the English Channel Islands and Brittany, France. If you have suggestions for places you would like to see NHS travel within the United States or elsewhere, email us at info@northwesthort.org.

We are looking for volunteers to assist with hosting at NHS classes and workshops and in aiding with the management of Zoom presentations for our webinars. Once again, our email address, info@northwesthort.org, is a great way to let us know of your interest. Your information will be sent to the people working with volunteers, and they will be in touch with you.

Wishing you much fun gardening this spring,

Tanya DeMarsh-Dodson
NHS President

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Geranium himalayense 'Plenum'
Image by Richie Steffen